



# *newsletter*

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Dear colleagues,

This issue brings you a selection of must-read articles about some of the activities of the National Contact Centre for Gender in Science in the past six months.

First of all, we are bringing you a report from the 5th national conference on gender and science, which also includes main findings of our survey of academics and their work conditions, well-being and job satisfaction.

We are proud to announce that we launched the Czech translation of Angela Saini's *Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong*. Angela Saini was present at the book launch and she was also the keynote speaker of the above-mentioned conference on gender and science.

The months of October and November were filled with debates, lectures and presentations and one award giving..

On behalf of the Centre we wish you inspiring reading and great Christmas and Happy New Year!

Nada Straková and Marcela Linková

## 5<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONFERENCE: SCIENCE AS A VOCATION

On 30 October 2018, the Czech Academy of Sciences hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> national conference on gender and science, this time titled *Science As a Vocation*. The conference was organized by the Centre for Gender and Science of the Institute of Sociology of Czech Academy of Sciences. We were honoured that Angela Saini, acclaimed science journalist and author of the book *Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong*, accepted our invitation to deliver a keynote presentation.



Marcela Linková, head of the Centre for Gender and Science, opened the conference and welcomed Eva Zažímalová, President of the Czech Academy of Sciences. In her welcome speech Professor Zažímalová said that no law in the Czech Republic discriminates against women. “However, there are plenty of various rules and conditions, for example, the requirement of foreign mobility, which is difficult to meet for mothers with small children,” said Zažímalová. “The stereotype that women take care, men take charge is weaker and weaker with each generation, and yet, it still exists,” said Zažímalová. She added “there is no scientific proof that female brains differ from male”. That was an allusion to one of the topics of Saini’s book *Inferior*.



Researchers at the Centre for Gender and Science presented the results of a survey and a qualitative study conducted among Czech academics, about their work conditions, wellbeing and job satisfaction. This study was carried out within the framework of the project “Analysis of Barriers and Support Strategy for Equality in Science and Research”, funded by the EU Operational Programme Employment grant no. CZ.03.1.51/0.0/0.0/15\_028/003571. In our summer newsletter 1/2018 we brought you the results of the [quantitative research](#) and promised to present the main findings of the qualitative research in our winter newsletter. Here they are – please see in the article below.

## ACADEMICS 2018: MAIN FINDINGS FROM QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The qualitative study focused on a more detailed analysis of the conditions of scientific work and the manifestations of gender culture in Czech academia. The research was conducted at four institutions - two HE institutions and two public research organisations. The sample included institutions in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and engineering, and small, medium and large-sized institutions.

We carried out 40 semi-structured interviews with academics and researchers at these four institutions. The interviews focused on topic of professional career, the conditions for research and teaching, professional and career development, research assessment systems, gender equality, the position of men and women in research in general and in the given field and workplace in particular, parenthood and work-life balance. The interviews with individuals in managerial positions included topics such as the transformation of the academic and research environment in

the CR, changes in professional careers and their gender dimension, access to evaluation of scientific work and HR policies, and support for gender equality.



The qualitative study showed that, regardless of the type of institution, researchers face similar problems in three main thematic areas. The first concerns the neo-liberalisation of Czech research associated, in particular, with changes in research funding and evaluation over the last decade.

The second theme is lack of transparency of rules in research organisations that affects the impact of the neo-liberal reforms on individuals.

The third area entails primarily the causes for the on-going gender inequality in Czech research.

Research participants across fields and types of institutions felt strongly about the current changes in the design and funding of Czech research. While they appreciated the possibilities offered by mobility and inclusion in the global research community, they felt that they were expected to provide "world-class" results in financial and physical conditions that they often considered inadequate. The impact of these processes (particularly those concerning the changes in research funding) on individuals is, to a large degree, age-dependant. Younger researchers express stronger negative feelings about these processes.

One of the largest problems is the low proportion of institutional funding. This makes it difficult or even impossible to secure stable jobs, since the number of jobs paid from institutional sources, as opposed to the number of jobs linked to grant projects, is not increasing. This situation elicits tensions between generations because young researchers often resent the fact that the conditions for the launch and development of their careers differs starkly from those of their senior colleagues and those in decision-making positions, and these conditions define the environment where the early-stage researchers seek to build their careers.



The qualitative study shows that the current research funding arrangements tend to pull the researchers' attention away from their research work. In a situation where grant funding frequently accounts for a significant part of their salary, they must spend a considerable portion of their time engaging in activities related to grant application and administration. As a result they have insufficient time for research and teaching.

### **Absence of written rules**

At all institutions where our research was carried out there was absence of written rules related to the evaluation and remuneration of research work, career progression, securing jobs paid from institutional resources and permanent contracts, and taking a parental leave and returning to work. This absence of rules adds to the already intense job insecurity, which has negative impact on the motivation and well-being of academics. The result is they do not have trust in fair assessment and, consequently, fair remuneration, and do not see a chance of getting a more stable job position.

The interviews also revealed that this non-existence of rules is one of the manifestations of an absence of a comprehensive vision for human resources development policy at the level of

institutional management. The managers interviewed indicated personal preferences as regards academic staff and their ideas of an ideal academic career. There was no mention of any clear objectives for human resources policies and ways of achieving them. One of the reasons may be the managers' workload related to funding administration, which put HR policy making on a back burner. Another reason appears to be uncertainty or outright blindness as regards possibilities for personal initiative in HR management. The responsibility for professional staff development and training and for work-life balance is commonly delegated to individuals or to lower organisational levels.

### **Inactivity perceived as support**

The study showed that researchers do not have gender-stereotyped views of the different intellectual capacity of women and men. Individuals in managerial positions are also aware of the impact of parenthood on female researchers in particular, and, in many cases, seek to actively deal with the issue. However, they are far less pro-active as concerns latent gender differences and inequalities of a systemic nature.

A major setback in eliminating gender inequalities at Czech research institutions is the general absence of reflection on the masculine set-up of the academic environment. The failure to take into account differences in the biographies of women and men that relate to their different duties and opportunities in family life and partnership is one of the manifestations of this. The masculine nature of the work environment is manifested, in particular, in the culture of overtime, the conditions for long-term mobility abroad and uninterrupted publication performance, the virtual incompatibility of a scientific career and active parenthood, or the low representation of women in management.



The inability or unwillingness to reflect on the masculine organization of research institutions results in a negative attitude towards redressing these inequalities. Respondents' answers implicitly suggest that not preventing women from studying and pursuing research careers means the same as supporting their research careers. In other words, inactivity is perceived as support.

This view is probably associated with yet another widespread idea that active support for equal opportunities means unfair favouring of women over men and disparaging men. This is related to another belief that, at the institutions under review, women face no disadvantages compared to men as regards research careers and career development opportunities. The failure to see gender differences in pursuing academic careers was often equalled with their non-existence and used as a proof of gender equality.

## **BOOK LAUNCH – INFERIOR: HOW SCIENCE GOT WOMEN WRONG**

On 29 October 2018, the Centre for Gender and Science launched the Czech translation of *Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong* by British writer and science journalist [Angela Saini](#) in the Louvre Gallery under the title *Od přírody podřadné: Jak se věda mýlila v ženách*.



The book was published in 2017. It received rave reviews in the [Financial Times](#), [Economist](#), [Guardian](#), [Observer](#), [The Independent](#), [Daily Mail](#) and [New Statesman](#). *Inferior* is out now in Czech, Spanish, Dutch and Swedish, and other translations are on their way from South Korea, Brazil, Italy and Japan. According to the figures from the Academia publishing house, the Czech version is soon to be sold out.

Angela Saini also appeared as the keynote speaker at the 5<sup>th</sup> national conference on gender and science, which took place the next day 30<sup>th</sup> October at the Czech Academy of Sciences. In her presentation *How Science Got Women Wrong* she talked about the development of attitudes towards women in research from Darwin's times until today, the prejudice and barriers female researchers have had to overcome, diverse roles women play across the world etc.

You can read an [interview](#) the Centre conducted with Angela Saini for the Czech Academy of Sciences. To see snapshots from the event [click here](#).

## BRUNCH WITH PRESIDENT OF ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

On 15 October 2018, the Centre for Gender and Science organised a brunch with Eva Zažímalová, President of Czech Academy of Sciences and early-career women researchers. The room was packed, with 75 researchers, some with small babies.

"It just shows there are big problems and obstacles that young female researchers face. Those require immediate attention and systematic solution," says Marcela Linková, head of the Centre.

Professor Zažímalová talked about her personal path to science. Her father, also a researcher, was very supportive of her and her interest in science, which she considers a great asset. "If young girls who want to study science do not have support in their family, they are handicapped and have to overcome plenty of barriers," she said.

The rich discussion that followed highlighted the many issues facing early-career women researchers, including work-life balance issues, the constraints of the grant system and research evaluation. Some women researchers also talked about experience of outright discrimination, including pay discrimination. We had great feedback from the participants and plan to organize such an event soon again.

## 2016 MONITORING REPORT ON POSITION OF WOMEN IN SCIENCE

The latest 2016 Monitoring Report shows the same trends as our previous reports.

- Research fails to use the potential of highly qualified women.
- While the percentage of women increases in all levels of study. The share of women displays a stable decreasing trend, with the number in 2016 being the lowest since the start of the monitoring in 2000. Women made up 30.3 % of all positions in research and development in 2016.

- International comparison places the Czech Republic among EU countries with the lowest share of women in research positions.
- Women in STEM are under-represented at all levels of their academic and professional careers from the graduate level on. Their dropout among doctoral and postdoctoral researchers is more intense than in other fields.
- Gender pay gaps were observed at all levels of the academic career.
- Decision making in science is still dominated by men.



For more details see [this article](#).

### MILADA PAULOVÁ AWARD WINNER: PROFESSOR ELIŠKA WALTEROVÁ

On 27 November 2018, Professor Eliška Walterová of the Institute for Research and Development of Education at the Faculty of Education, Charles University received the 2018 Milada Paulová Award, awarded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in cooperation with the Centre for Gender and Science and. The award is given annually in recognition of research achievements and contribution to advancement of science. This year it was given in the field of education and pedagogy.

Professor Walterová teaches general education, comparative education and higher education for doctoral students, comparative education and European studies for school managers. She is also a member of scientific and editorial boards in international and national institutions.

The main focus of her professional interests is comparative education, global and European studies, educational policy, management and school education. She has been a PI of important projects, e.g. Centre for Research of Basic Education, Transformation of Education in Central European Countries, School Education Abroad. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies.



Professor Walterová published chapters in international handbooks on comparative education, teacher education and school education. She is also a co-author of the Czech Dictionary of Education (7<sup>th</sup> edition 2013).

### EUROPEAN RESEARCHERS' NIGHT WITH CONSTITUTIONAL JUDGE KATEŘINA ŠIMÁČKOVÁ



Our 2018 [European Researchers' Night](#) looked into the ways law has been historically gendered. In her public talk “Man's Law - Are Laws Truly Neutral?” constitutional judge Kateřina Šimáčková discussed the impact of law on the lives of women and men, gender equality and discrimination of women in the Czech legal system.

With this lecture we wanted to commemorate the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918 and the year when the Faculty of Law of Charles University opened to women.

## WEEK OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: LECTURE ON ATTITUDES TO WORKING WOMEN



On 5 November 2018, the Centre for Gender and Science organised a lecture at the [Week of Science and Technology](#) at the Czech Academy of Sciences. The Centre invited historian Dana Musilová of Hradec Králové University to speak about attitudes to working women in the 19th and 20th century. Professor Musilová talked about women who worked in family companies and about the society's idea of women's appropriate career back then and now.

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