



# *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 about the International Day of Women and Girls campaign.

The centre was also represented at the Women In Science conference, which was organised by the British embassy.

Last but not least, we are proud to announce that the Czech translation of Angela Saini's *Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong* was awarded a prize for translation.

On behalf of the Centre I wish you inspiring reading,

Marcela Linková

## WOMEN IN SCIENCE CONFERENCE



On 5 March 2019 the inspirational all-day conference Women In Science took place in the premises of the Liechtenstein Palace in Prague. The event was organised by the British Embassy Prague in cooperation with the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

Among the speakers were Baroness Greenfield, Professor of Physiology at Oxford University; Dame Ottoline Leyser, Professor of Biology at Cambridge University, and Sainsbury Laboratory Director at Cambridge; Jessica Wade, Physicist at Imperial College

London and Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Astrophysicist and discoverer of pulsars.

The Centre for Gender and Science was represented by its head Marcela Linková, who discussed advances achieved as well as the continued gaps in GE in Research and innovation among European countries. Please see below the summary of her presentation.

## GE IN R&I: 20 YEARS OF EU ACTIVITIES AND STILL A LONG WAY TO GO

*By Marcela Linková*

Over the past twenty years big strides have been made in Europe to advance gender equality in research and innovation. We have far more knowledge about the complexity of the issues involved and the ways they interact. Many countries have adopted (more or less complex) gender equality policies, including those specifically focused on research. Sophisticated tools have been developed to advance cultural and institutional changes through gender equality plans in research organisations and universities (such as the GEAR tool and those available on the various structural change project websites), as well as in research funders. And today more researchers and policy makers accept that research and higher education are not immune to gender and other forms of inequality. Despite these important developments, we continue to see stark differences among EU countries.

Last year, the European Research Area and Innovation Committee's (ERAC) Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (SWG GRI) analysed the ways in which member states and associated countries implemented the 2015 Council Conclusions on Advancing Gender Equality in Europe. Twenty-two out of 29 delegations from member states and associated countries participated in the study. The analyses concluded that significant steps have been made in several countries and in their research funding organisations. However, a large gap persists between higher and lower innovators. Lower innovation countries tend to have a lower gender equality index and fewer actions and strategies to promote gender equality in research, while higher innovation countries have a higher gender equality index and larger number of more complex actions and strategies to promote gender equality in research. It is clear that money matters both for promoting innovation and gender equality. The SWG GRI presented recommendations to member states and associated countries as well as to the Commission, including stepping up actions toward gender equality in lower innovation countries and focusing on monitoring and evaluation of gender equality policies in higher innovation countries. The integration of sex and gender analysis (or attention to the gender dimension in research) requires further action across the board in the EU.

The European Research Area initiative has also been a major boost for gender equality. Ten countries adopted a new policy document in response to the 2015 Council Conclusions and in eight

of these, the new document was the ERA National Action Plans and Strategies. Often, this was the first policy document to address gender equality in research, especially in the EU-13 countries.

Another topic that the SWG GRI engaged with was gender bias in research evaluation. The resulting policy brief shows again differences among countries, which can be clustered in five groups: 1) countries with poor awareness of the issue and no existent action taken to redress gender bias; 2) countries where some awareness exists, together with uncertainty as to which actions to take; 3) in several countries awareness is growing and measures are under preparation; 4) in another cluster of countries research funders adopted actions to eliminate gender bias; and lastly 5) in few countries we see coordinated action taken by research funders and research and higher education institutions that are embedded in national policy.

In the policy brief, the SWG GRI also presented recommendations concerning: 1) sex-disaggregated statistical data collection and monitoring; 2) gender bias training for staff and evaluators; 3) having gender experts on evaluation panels; 4) having gender observers on evaluation panels; 5) formalisation and transparency of the evaluation process; 6) having gender balance on evaluation panels; 7) introducing double-blind review; 8) gender mainstreaming of funding programmes, particularly eligibility rules and evaluation criteria; 9) Open Science; and finally 10) gender proofing of language of call texts.

As we are preparing for the next Framework Programme, Horizon Europe, it is important to keep these findings in mind. The European Commission and its Framework Programmes have historically played a very important role in supporting gender equality; the funding for cultural and institutional change projects has been instrumental for this, especially where such support is not available at the national level. As we can see, member states, their research funders and research institutions and universities, also have a huge role. They can learn from each other and share what has worked and what has not. Our experience in the SWG GRI underscores the vital importance of such policy coordination at the EU level.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE: CAMPAIGN

#ZenyVeVede  
#WomenInScience

The International Day of Women and Girls in Science, established by the United Nations General Assembly on 11 February, is to promote full and equal access to and participation in science for women and girls. Science and gender equality are both vital for sustainable development. Yet women and girls continued to be excluded from participating fully in science: less than 30% of researchers worldwide are women.

This year the Centre for Gender and Science celebrated successes of global and Czech women researchers achieved in 2018. With a hashtag campaign titled *#ZenyVeVede* (*#WomenInScience*), we asked people to name women researchers who achieved some kind of success and/or noted progress in their research in 2018.

There were over hundred participants, naming about 40 women researchers – from Nobel Prize winners to high school science students. Among the participants were for example the head of the Czech Academy of Sciences Eva Zažímalová, minister of education Robert Plaga, chairwomen of Czech Science Foundation Alice Valkárová, Forbes magazine editor-in-chief Petr Šimůnek, Swedish, British, American, French,



Norwegian and Finnish embassies, majority of Czech universities, acclaimed researchers and academics, students, journalists and many others.

## 2017 MONITORING REPORT ON THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN SCIENCE

In June 2019 the Centre for Gender and Science published its yearly report on the position of women in Czech science – Monitoring report on the position of women in science in 2017.

The overall number of employees in research and development is increasing. A growing number was also observed within individual professions: researcher, technician, and other positions in research and development.

Women made up 30.2 % (28.1 % of FTEs) of all positions in research and development in 2017. Men are more numerous in all research and development professions, and their share is increasing.

The share of women among researchers displays a stable decreasing trend, with the number in 2016 and also 2017 being the two lowest values since the start of the monitoring in 2000. International comparison places the Czech Republic among EU countries with the lowest share of women in research positions.



48.5 % of researchers in the Czech Republic have a university degree (BS, MS equivalent) and 41.8 % have a doctoral degree (2015).

The proportion of women in graduate university programmes has remained roughly stable over the last 10-11 years (ca 60 % in 2017), but the share of female doctoral students displays a growing trend (currently nearly 45 %). These trends, however, have little effect on the situation in research: The highest dropout of women in ideal and typical career path in research happens in the postdoctoral phase and later.

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. The number of women in STEM has remained low, with a slightly decreasing tendency in recent years – in 2017, it was 13.2 % in technology and engineering and 25.1 % in the natural sciences.

In the agricultural sciences, medicine, the social sciences and humanities, women prevail over men on graduate and doctoral levels, but men are more numerous in research professions.

International comparison shows the number of female university graduates in the Czech Republic roughly matches the EU average, but the number of female fresh doctors falls below the EU average.

The highest equality is traditionally observed in medicine where women made up 48.2 % of researchers (51.6 % of FTEs) in 2017.

In 2017, the overall employment of academics was 17 882 FTEs, of which women made up 35.9 %. Unlike in research, where prevalence of men over women is stable or gradually growing, the share of female academics seems to stagnate.

Decision making in science is still dominated by men. The share of women in top positions in research institutions, universities and other research and development institutions (Academy of Sciences, Czech Science Foundation, Council of Czech Universities, Czech Rectors Conference, R&D Council, etc.) was mere 14.1 % in 2017.

For more details please click here. /dejte sem odkaz., až date Main Findings na aj web/.

## GENDERACTION: FUTURE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN EUROPE

On 9 April 2019 GENDERACTION organised a conference to mark its two year's existence together with the 20th anniversary of EU activities to promote gender equality in research and innovation in Brussels. With the next framework programme and a review of the European Research Area and its priorities on the horizon, the conference brought together 68 key stakeholders to discuss recent developments in Member States and the European Commission and address priorities and concerns for the future.



To set the agenda for the conference, GENDERACTION prepared a policy brief on the future of gender equality in European research and innovation which identifies key recommendations for future policy. The key recommendations include: taking an intersectional approach to gender equality, developing provisions in Horizon Europe to incentivize Widening countries to take concrete actions for gender equality, involving the Business Enterprise Sector in gender equality work,

reinforcing the requirements related to the integration of gender dimension in research and innovation in Horizon Europe and national funding programmes, and active promotion of gender equality in international cooperation.

GENDERACTION invited Professor Mieke Verloo, a prominent feminist political scientist, to frame the conference discussions. Professor Verloo addressed the complexity of gender equality from three perspectives: intersectionality, the dynamic nature of gender relations including the engagement of mainstream non-gender actors and the embeddedness of these processes in fast changing Europe, which has seen a resurgence of conservative politics and attacks on gender equality. Verloo concluded with a call for more research into how Bad Practices travel and how to continue safeguarding gender equality work in a situation of negative feedback loops.

Research funders have a potent role in research and innovation today: They have the power to set the rules for working conditions and institutional practices as well as the requirements for how sex and gender is addressed in research. GENDERACTION invited Research Council of Norway, the Czech Technology Agency and the Spanish State Research Agency to share their vision for further gender equality work and concrete actions they take.



The Spanish State Research Agency provides incentives for gender equality measures, focusing on flexibility, human resources and work-life balance; also, gender studies are supported and the gender dimension has become a sub-criterion on evaluation.

The Research Council of Norway (RCN) recognizes that gender equality work must be sustained, otherwise other priorities become more important. It has instituted a moderate preference for women investigators all other things being equal, and the gender perspective is integrated in all work programmes. There is recognition that the Business Enterprise Sector and STEM fields pose the biggest problem. The RCN also aims to stop the prevalence of temporary contracts and address hyper-competition in the system to manage quality and productivity. According to Jesper Simonsen, hyper-competition is the main problem today.

### **Need to Address AI**

Artificial intelligence is one of the hottest research areas today and there is a growing body of research showcasing how the failure to address gender and racial biases negatively affects AI.

GENDERACTION wanted to highlight AI as a research field requiring immediate gender equality action, and invited Sabine Theresia Köszegi, a member of the Commission High Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence and a Full Professor of Labour Science and Organisation at the TU Wien, Gina Neff, Senior Research Fellow and Associate Professor at the Oxford Internet Institute, and



Milagros Sáinz Ibáñez, the leader of the Gender and ICT research group at the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. Algorithms are an aggregation of the world, and we have no idea of what can happen when they enter the world.

We need to study the everyday practices of people using AI. We need to track systemic failures of systems in a database of AI abuses and carry out detailed audits on general AI and machine learning systems. Gender inequalities in AI are canaries in the coalmine, said Professor Neff, and the ICT research community must take ownership of the problem in AI. It was suggested that AI should get a pass to enter the market. In the final discussion Professor Verloo noted that AI is most used today in the military and sex industry, and we need public budgets to counter-balance this.



work at Member State level.

It indeed appears that we are at a breaking point. We are making advances in gender equality and awareness in some quarters is growing while, at the same time, opposition to “gender ideology” and attacks are mounting. Representing European Commission’s Directorate-General for Research, Jean-David Malo called for new, disruptive solutions. GENDERACTION will take up this call and provide further policy recommendations on the missions Europe will set out to tackle through Horizon Europe while continuing the

## CZECH VERSION OF INFERIOR AWARDED



We are proud to announce that the Czech version of Angela Saini book *Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong* was awarded a prize for translation. There has been recently a reprint of the book and Angela Saini recorded this [video message](#) for us.

## ARTICLE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS JOURNAL

Nina Fárová, Blanka Nyklová and Kateřina Cidlinská of the Centre for Gender and Science published an [article](#) in the *International Relations Journal*. In the article they strive to explore what are some of the causes of the scarcity of women researchers in Czech international relations in comparison to the representation of women students in the field. They analysed a set of semi-structured interviews with international relations students and accessible syllabi using the conceptual framework of Sandra Harding's gendered universe. They identified some gendered barriers that might be blocking women researchers' access to the field.

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