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Dear Readers,

The offices of the European Platform of Women Scientists EPWS in Brussels are facing the European Parliament and for this and numerous other reasons which you will find in this Newsletter the fact that the elections to the European Parliament on 4-7 June 2009 are nearing is impossible to miss.

The European Commission formally kindly requested EPWS to join the European Commission’s efforts to encourage the female citizens of Europe to cast their vote.

As an association operating at European level, the Platform is fully committed to the up-coming elections and ready to communicate the Commission’s request to the EPWS Community and encourage you to exercise your voting rights.

Since, however, the European Union’s political will to promote women in science and research has become increasingly difficult to communicate regarding any serious present or future concrete actions, the Platform has taken this opportunity to address all members of the European Commission and all Members of the European Parliament on the coherence of current EU policies on women in science and research.

EPWS asked: Where and how does the Union’s political will to promote women in science and research, especially into decision-making positions, manifest itself in a sustainable, future oriented manner, in evidence for Europe’s women scientists? The issue is all the more pressing regarding the current financial situation and perspective of EPWS itself and the fact that the European Commission has created a permanent organisation to fulfil an identified public need but has enacted certain financial structures, which render the organisation unsustainable both in the short-term as well as the long-term. This runs the risk of both wasting the huge amount of financial and voluntary resources deployed in creating EPWS and of nullifying the European Commission’s efforts to address the problems facing women in science and the associated ill effects these problems have for European science and societies. What are European women scientists to expect from the future European Parliament and the future European Commission in the fact that the long-term sustainability of the European Platform of Women Scientists cannot be secured under current public and private funding schemes and that an institution once created to administer change is now in danger of ceasing to exist?


To join the strive for the promotion of women in Europe and for equal opportunities in science and beyond, two new colleagues have been recently appointed and took up work in Brussels: Luisa Prista has been appointed new Head of Unit L4 "Scientific Culture and Gender Issues" in the European Commission Directorate General Research; Virginija Langbakk has been appointed first Head of the European Institute for Gender Equality, located in Vilnius, Lithuania. (p.13) We wish Luisa Prista and Virginija Langbakk a good start and are looking forward to our collaboration.

The Platform also would like to thank former Head of Unit L4 Johannes Klumpers for our good collaboration in the past and wish him the best for his new endeavours.

We hope to see all of them together with as many of you at the up-coming EPWS Annual Conference 2009 “Scientific Culture, Communication, Gender - An Innovative Challenge for Women Scientists” in Brussels on 25-27 June 2009 and encourage all EPWS members to join us for the Third EPWS General Assembly in Brussels on 25 June 2009.

Before use your chance to promote women into EU politics and make a difference!

The event was an opportunity for MEPs and experts to debate on the role of women in science and ways to support female researchers. The participants actively discussed instruments to attract more women to Science and Engineering, to get women in the upper layers of the hierarchy of research and science organisations and to enhance networking among women scientists. Maren Jochimsen, EPWS Secretary General, was invited to speak on the last issue.

Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Science and Research, opened the Hearing and highlighted the positive and progressive impact of ten years of European policies aimed at promoting women in science. He added that the Commission is aware of the continuing imbalance between women and men researchers and of the work that still need to be done to achieve at least a 40% representation of women in Marie Curie scholarships, advisory groups, assessment panels and monitoring panels. According to Janez Potočnik, however, to improve gender balance in research decision-making, transparent and fair evaluation and promotion procedures alone are not sufficient, but in order to change the situation the commitment of research decision-makers and the European Commission is needed to fully support this idea.

The Hearing also provided several examples of best practices to attract women into research, notably at the Technical University of Munich, and examples of networking activities from the FP6 “Women in Nano” project and the Association of Women in Research and Technology in Spain (AMIT). MEPs strongly supported the idea to politically work toward more gender equality into science.

Maren Jochimsen emphasised the importance of networking to empower women scientists in their respective fields and the key role of networks of women scientists in ensuring a better integration of the gender dimension in research policy at national and European level. More specifically, she stressed the challenges faced by networks of women scientists in Europe, especially their difficulties to finance running costs of networks while most available public and private funding are targeted for specific projects. Maren Jochimsen also encouraged policy makers to find ways to acknowledge and value the financial worth of the impressive amount of voluntary work done by women scientists to ensure the sustainability and success of networks in Europe as part of a network’s income and financial contribution to the overall budget.

The hearing was followed by a cocktail in the presence of the President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering, who stressed the importance of the issue of women in science.

EPWS participation in European Parliament Joint Public Hearing on Women in Science

EPWS web page on Financial Contributors and Supporting

EPWS is proud to announce the launch of a new web page dedicated to its Financial Contributors and Supporting Members.

On this page, visitors will find information about the organisations that grant funding and annual contributions to support the sustainability, development, and actions of EPWS.

In each organization’s profile page visitors will be able to learn more about the Platform’s partners as well as their activities in scientific research.

The page also provides information on how to financially contribute to EPWS and foster the promotion of equal opportunities in science in all disciplines across Europe.

EPWS hopes in this way to encourage and increase the visibility of organizations and institutions that are committed to transform Europe into a knowledge-based society, with the full participation of women scientists.

To visit the web page, please go to http://support.epws.org.
On 3 April 2009, EPWS Vice-President Brigitte Mühlenbruch participated in a meeting of the European Network of Women in Decision-Making in Politics and the Economy of which the Platform is a member to discuss how professionally active women can maximize their influence to raise the levels of women in decision-making. In the contexts on the Network’s discussion on the importance of role models, EPWS more specifically raised the following points:

1. The importance of concrete examples

Studies have shown that the example of women active in all realms of society is an important factor for young women when choosing a profession and in making positions stereotyped as “male only” more attractive to women when facing career choices. In this respect, measures have to be encouraged that equip women with enhanced access to leadership roles and thus enable them to potentially serve as an example for others by connecting them to the wider population of women.

2. The need of a more comprehensive understanding

The question of what kind of personality may serve as an inspiring example needs to be further addressed. What characteristics should go into our understanding of a role model? In how far might this set of characteristics be different for women active in different societal realms? Does gender awareness constitute a criterion for a future oriented and sustainable role model?

In this context, a review and discussion would be needed on the potential blind spots and inherent risks when stressing the importance of “role models”. One could also wonder, for example, if some capable women are ‘put aside’ not despite but because of their successes which might have been perceived as a threat to the well established male oriented environment rather than as the valuable contribution to society which they actually constituted. The presence of some outstanding examples of female contributions might also be used to distract society from the fact that women are still under-represented in decision making positions.

Last but not least, one might also ask whether the term “role model” constitutes a happy label in this context, again somehow suggesting specific “roles” which women need to assume (and to conform to?) when aspiring toward their place in society.

3. Enhancing the visibility of women in leading positions

Organizations and networks promoting gender issues are working to give publicity to the achievements of women in leading positions. Universities and industries could join them and also allocate means to change the working culture into one which is more open to the gender dimension and sponsor women activities and networking events. Greater gender awareness in all realms of society will help changing still persisting stereotypes and enhance the recognition of the contribution and successes of women in professional life.

In the scientific area, participation in events, panel discussions, nomination to awards is a powerful tool to diffuse information about inspirational women. Thus, more emphasis needs to be put on the participation of women in conferences, panel discussions, award competition to give women the chance to take the floor to talk about their work and experiences thereby inspiring students to take on scientific career paths.

4. Prospects

The upcoming European elections are an excellent opportunity to advocate for a more balanced parliament and for an increase of women’s participation at all levels of the society and more specifically at decision-making level. By having more women sit in the European Parliament, women have the opportunity to raise their ideas and concerns and to contribute to more socially and economically sustainable solutions for the benefit of all. The current context of the financial crisis should be seen as an opportunity for women to gain in importance and reach high level positions. Having more women at key positions will widen the pool of women role models and consequently will create a more welcoming environment for women to evolve.
The UNESCO-L’Oréal Support Programme in partnership with the Christine Nüsslein-Volhard Foundation in collaboration with EPWS are organising an event entitled “In Quest of Scientific Excellence” where the Final Report of the EU Expert Group on “Gender and Excellence” 2009 will be presented. This event will take place in Berlin, at the dbb Forum Berlin, Atrium IV, on 2 July 2009 from 10:30-12:00.

“Excellence” is one of the key words for the implementation of the European Union’s Lisbon goals, aiming at establishing a European Research Area and at making Europe the world’s most competitive knowledge-based economy.

But how is excellence being defined and how to be measured in science and research?

Existing procedures to measure and establish the scientific excellence of candidates and their research cover a variety of activities, in particular the appointment and recruitment of researchers, but also grant awarding systems. Are these criteria transparent and the evaluation procedures without bias?

The European Commission embraced the topic and in 2008 set up an international Expert Group on “Gender and Excellence” to provide recommendations on the improvement of transparency and accountability of procedures used in selection committees for grants and fellowships awards, and access to research funding in general – an important starting point also regarding the creation and provision of equal opportunities for women and men scientist in selection processes.

The final Report of the Expert Group on “Gender and Excellence” containing the most important recommendations is due to come out in May 2009 and will for the first time be presented and discussed at the national level by Dr. Rossella Palomba, Director of Research at the Institute of Population and Social Policy at the National Research Council in Rome, and member of the Expert Group.

The English speaking event will provide valuable information on the European context of issues which are on the top of the agenda in Germany and on the programme of the German speaking conference "Frauen für die Stärkung von Wissenschaft und Forschung", organised by the Center of Excellence Women and Science CEWS, supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, directly following the event on 2 and 3 July 2009.

To register for the event, kindly use the online registration form of the conference “Frauen für die Stärkung von Wissenschaft und Forschung” which can be found under the following link http://www.cews.org

The European Platform of Women Scientists EPWS has been contacted by the Vice-President of the European Commission Margot Wallström kindly requesting the Platform to join the European Commission’s efforts and reach out to the community of our association to contribute to increasing the turnout to the upcoming European Parliament elections between 4 and 7 June 2009.

In its written reply to the European Commission’s letter, the Platform confirmed that, as an association operating at European level, EPWS is fully committed to the up-coming elections and ready to communicate the Commission’s request to the EPWS community (see link to EPWS website below and p.14).

In view of the fact, however, that the European Union’s political will to promote women in science and research has become increasingly difficult to communicate regarding any serious present or future concrete actions, the Platform also asked the following questions:

What is it for Europe’s Women Scientists regarding the sincerity of the European Union’s political will to improve the situation of women in science and research to make them go to the ballot box in June 2009?

Where and how does the Union’s political will to promote women in science and research, especially into decision-making positions, manifest itself in a sustainable, future oriented manner, in evidence for Europe’s women scientists?

A copy of the letter sent to the European Commission and all MEPs can be found on the EPWS website at the following link: http://www.epws.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=414&Itemid=4545
FiF call for women expert applications as evaluators in FP7

The German contact point Women in EU Research (Kontaktstelle Frauen in die EU-Forschung – FiF), EPWS Supporting Organisation, in a recent publication emphasizes that analysis demonstrates the significant decline in the percentage of women evaluators during the first year of 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7).

In comparison to 2006, the overall number of evaluators in FP7 considerably increased (from 3379 to 7812), as did the total number of women evaluators (from 1135 to 2071). However, the increase in numbers of women evaluator grew to a lesser extent than the number of men, which rose from 2244 to 5741. Altogether, women counted for only 27% of the evaluators in 2007, while representing 34% in 2006.

As far as numbers of evaluators are concerned, therefore, the EU is far from reaching the objective of 40% of women in assessment panels set up by the Commission in 1999. This goal is only met in the “People” Programme with 41.2% of women evaluators; other programmes have a very low proportion of women such as the “Ideas” Programme with only 16%. Decisive efforts by all stakeholders need to be made to balance this situation.

EPWS would like to join FiF in its effort to raise the number of women experts/evaluators for FP7 and highly encourages women scientists to register as expert under: https://cordis.europa.eu/emmfp7/.

To find out more information (in German) about the analysis done by FiF, please check the following link: http://www.eubuero.de/arbeitsbereiche/fraueneuforschung/Download/dat_fif_3082.
Member of the month: Basnet Forum’as

Basnet Forum’as association was established at the very end of 2008 and became EPWS Full Member of the Platform beginning 2009.

Basnet Forum’as aims at demonstrating the systematic and complex approach to the gender equality problem in Science and High Technology in the Baltic States. The association offers women scientists in the Baltic States the possibility to register their profile in a database. This database is used for finding specialists, for creating scientific collaboration and fostering networking, and for monitoring the situation of women in science in the Baltic States. For more information please click here: http://www.basnet-fp6.eu/quest.php.

Before being established as an association, the Basnet network was an EU project, funded under FP6 and running from 2006-2008, and EPWS Full Conditional Member. The association is very active in the work of EPWS, notably via the work of Prof. Dr. Dalia Šatkovskienė, coordinator of the project and now President of Basnet Forum’as, who is a member of the EPWS Board of Administration. Upon invitation of Basnet, the EPWS Annual Conference “Women Shaping Science” took place in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 5-7 June 2008, and the active collaboration of Basnet strongly contributed to make the conference a success.

EPWS would like to congratulate the Basnet Forum’as team for their commitment and work leading to the successful establishment of the association and hopes that their example will be inspiring for fellow women scientists in countries without established networks structures promoting women scientists.

For more information, please go to: http://www.basnet-fp6.eu/about.php

Other news from EPWS members

1. Connect: the new service offered by UKRC to help you get in touch with other organizations in SET

Do you run a women in SET organisation or network? If so you can register your organization or network on with the UKRC community of groups and enjoy a range of free member benefits. To find out more about this recently launched service offered by UKRC and to register, please click here: http://www.ukrc4setwomen.org/html/connect/

Women in SET organisations and networks can connect you to women in your industry and region/nation. They offer services to women including networking events, newsletters and campaigning which are great ways to increase your pool of contacts and support.

By using the map and search boxes available on the UKRC webpage you can find groups to join. You can search by UK region/nation, Europe or Internationally. To use this map and find a network near you, download the map on their website: http://www.ukrc4setwomen.org/html/connect/

3. Fifteen women researchers receive UNESCO-L’Oréal For Women In Science International Fellowships

Fifteen women researchers from all over the world have received UNESCO-L’Oréal International Fellowships, awarded by UNESCO and L’Oréal every year since 2000, to support women’s research in the Life Sciences at the doctoral or post-doctoral level. The ceremony of the 4th of March 2009 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, recognized exceptional women, reflecting UNESCO and L’Oréal’s sustained commitment to encouraging talent.

Each of the 15 researchers has been awarded up to US$40,000 over two years to help finance her research, and will have a unique opportunity to pursue her studies at a renowned institution abroad. For more info, please check: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=44704&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Anything new in your organisation? Any upcoming event or recently released publication? Want to have more visibility given to your activities?

Let us know and we will publish your news here.

Contact: membership@epws.org
EPWS Annual Conference: Scientific Culture, Communication, Gender - An Innovative Challenge for Women Scientists


The creation of the European Research Area (ERA) as endorsed by the Lisbon Council in March 2000 has as its main goal to deeply root knowledge in society and free Europe’s knowledge potential in all its dimensions, in people, infrastructures, organizations, funding, knowledge circulation and global cooperation. One of the strengths of ERA will be its ability to educate, attract and retain excellent women and men researchers from a diversity of backgrounds. An inclusive, high-quality oriented and innovative scientific culture, reflecting the shared attitudes, values, goals, and the way people deal with each other in science and research is key in this context, a strong and coherent equal opportunities policy in research is a precondition as well as an integral part.

In all of this, science communication and the transfer of knowledge between science and society and the dialogue with society are vital. The Keynote Lecture, titled „Knowing and Living in Research: Gender Dimensions of Science-in-the-making“, will be given by Prof. Dr. Ulrike Felt, Head Department of Social Studies of Science, University of Vienna.

The conference aims at informing about core issues of scientific culture and communication and equipping participants with basic knowledge regarding their implementation in the running of networks. To this regard two training seminars on “Management of Networks” and “Access to Funding“ will be offered. The goal is to provide an overview on the variety of communication skills and tools in science and research, including the management of networks; to encourage women scientists to join the – so far male dominated – ranks of those active in the field; to actively communicate and promote their research results using their specific communication abilities and making full use of their potential in this respect.

A special visit to the Royal Belgium Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS), the Museum, in Brussels where a particular path of the most fascinating scientific stories will be delivered, including an introduction on how modern museums communicate science to the public and the young generation and the possibility to hands-on scientific experiences, will provide a concrete example of science communication to the participants.

The conference will be a lively market place of networks, ideas, and partnerships. Participants will have the opportunity to present their work both through participating in topical seminars and through a poster exhibition highlighting research conducted at EU level.

For more information about the conference, please check our website: http://www.epws.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=413&Itemid=4545

PARTNERSHIP OFFER: EPWS, your successful partner in European projects!

To be successful, applicants to European projects need to demonstrate a certain experience in communication and their capacity to disseminate project findings. Should you lack time and knowledge to focus on this issue, EPWS is the solution.

Conveniently located in the centre of the European Union, the European Platform of Women Scientists will be the perfect partner for European project consortia willing to gain high-level expertise in communication and dissemination of information.

EPWS has a strong expertise in dissemination of information and organisation of conferences, as well as the capacity to address the European research community and European research decision-makers. EPWS would therefore be a helpful partner for your project.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you look for a partner to execute the communication and dissemination of information work package of your project.

For more information contact Emmanuelle Causse: emmanuelle.causse@epws.org
A leaflet with the preliminary results of the She Figures 2009, the main collection of data of the situation of women in science, has been published by the European Commission. The full publication should be available soon. To give you a first insight of the trends in Europe as regard to women in science, we would like to share with you the main information already available.

**Critical mass**

In the EU, the share of women graduating at PhD level stood at 45% in 2006. This is an improvement with respect to 2002, when the EU average stood at 42%.

Between 2002 and 2006, the participation of women at PhD level has increased at a significantly higher rate than that of men (+7.3% for women and +3.8% for men per year). However, it should be noted that these figures include all disciplines and consequently hide significant gender variations across scientific fields.

Although the proportion of female researchers varies considerably between countries, there is a clear pattern of female underrepresentation. On average, women account for 30% of all researchers in the EU-27.

Between 2002 and 2006, the average annual increase in the number of female researchers was higher than that of men in the EU as a whole (+4.4% for women and +2.8% for men). While this is an encouraging trend, female researchers are substantially less numerous than their male counterparts and it could take a very long time to achieve a significantly improved gender balance.

**Scientific fields**

According to data collected on horizontal segregation of male and female researchers by broad fields of science in the higher education sector and the government sector. In the higher education sector, women are most poorly represented in the field of engineering and technology. The situation is only a little better in natural sciences. Female participation was higher in social sciences, agricultural sciences, medical sciences and humanities.

In the government sector, there is a similar gendered pattern by broad fields of science. In 2006, the lowest share of female researchers was found in engineering and technology (27%), followed by natural sciences (35%). Women comprised the majority in medical sciences (52%) and accounted for half of researchers in humanities. Data for the business enterprise sector are not equally comparable.

**Seniority**

Although the proportion of women has risen at all levels of higher education, the scissor pattern remains throughout the academic career.

The picture is vastly different in science and engineering. Between 2002 and 2006, despite an increase in the proportion of female academics in science and engineering, gender differences are extremely persistent and will not self-correct in the foreseeable future.

In the EU-27, the proportion of women in grade A academic positions stood at 20% in 2007. Although this represents a moderate improvement over 2002, a profound gender imbalance is still observed in many countries.

At EU-27 level, the Glass Ceiling index stood at an average of 1.7% in 2007, indicating that a glass ceiling effect can be observed in all countries, although its magnitude differs considerably between them.

The first Women in Science data collection on the proportion of female A grade staff by age group was carried out in 2007. A decrease in the proportion of female A grade staff as age increases could point towards the existence of a generation effect. However, even among the youngest age groups, women remain under-represented.

The distribution of grade A staff across age groups by sex indicates that, aside from Sweden and Poland, women in grade A are relatively younger than men.

**Setting the scientific agenda**

According to the She Figures 2009, the under-representation of women on boards and at the head of higher education (HES) institutions reflects their difficulty to influence the design and implementation of the research agenda. The gender gap in leadership could be one of the causes of the perpetuated gender imbalance in sciences.

The share of women on or presiding over boards (scientific, advisory, funding, etc.) is below 30% in 20 countries, with a more balanced situation in the Nordic countries (over 40%).

In Norway, Sweden and Finland, women comprise more than 25% of heads of HES institutions. In all other countries, their share ranges between 19% and 5% or less.

The gender gap is even more remarkable when considering heads of universities. The share of women heading universities was less than 10% in 16 countries, between 10% and 20% in 4 countries, and between 20% and 30% in 3 countries. Only in Sweden and Iceland were there sizable proportions of women presiding over universities, with 43% and 33% respectively.

A meeting of the Ambassadors for the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009 (EYCI) took place in Brussels on Wednesday, 25 March 2009. The Ambassadors’ discussions over the coming months will lead to a “Manifesto for Creativity and Innovation in Europe” to inspire future work at European level.

The Ambassadors for the Year are prominent personalities who are committed to the aims of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009 and are helping to make it a success by taking part in various events organised throughout the Year. They are not only raising its visibility, but also helping to shape the debate by contributing insights from their respective fields of expertise.

The heterogeneity of the ambassadors’ backgrounds and professions ensures that all aspects of innovation and creativity are taken into consideration. Ambassadors are scientists and entrepreneurs, but also conductors, designers, chefs or choreographers. Prominent women scientists are also involved in this initiative: the Nobel laureate and neurologist Prof. Rita Levi-Montalcini, the L’Oreal-Unesco Prize laureate the physicist Prof. Dominique Langevin and the molecular neuroscientists Prof. Christine van Broeckhoven, the President of the Karolinska Institutet Prof. Harriet Wallberg-Henriksson and the microbiologist Prof. Blanka Říhová. A full list of Ambassadors for the Year is available at: http://www.create2009.europa.eu/ambassadors.html.

The European Commission has proposed that creativity and innovation should be one of the pillars of future European cooperation on education and training. Building on the Ambassadors’ experiences, the Commission would now like to explore with them how to create an environment in which creativity can flourish.

During the first meeting of the Ambassadors in Prague on January 7 there was unanimous consensus that investment in education and in the skills and creative capacity of Europe should be the top priority of EU institutions and governments. It would be a fundamental mistake to cut spending on research and development and education in the context of the current crisis.

One of the most prestigious Ambassadors for the European year of Creativity and Innovation is Rita Levi Montalcini, one of the rare women who have ever won a Nobel Prize for Medicine. She shared the prize in 1986 with Stanley Cohen (USA) for their discovery of mechanisms that regulate the growth of cells and organs. Prof. Montalcini, who is still highly involved in the European research debate, has turned 100 on the 22 April 2009. Despite her age, she says that her mind is sharper then it was when she was 20.

Since 2001, she serves as a senator for life in Italy. Through the Rita Levi Montalcini Foundation, she has actively been working to help many African women by providing them with scholarships covering their expenses from the childhood until their post university training.

For over a century, Prof. Montalcini has been the witness of many events and difficult moments. Born in Torino in 1909, she made brilliant medicine studies and graduated in 1936 with a summa cum laude degree in Medicine and Surgery, and enrolled in the three year specialization in neurology and psychiatry, still uncertain whether she should devote herself fully to the medical profession or pursue at the same time basic research in neurology. Her perplexity was not to last too long. The same year, Mussolini issued the Manifesto of Race signed by 10 scientists that was rapidly followed by the promulgation of numerous laws banning non-Aryan Italian citizens to have access to any academic or professional careers. After a short period spent in Brussels as a guest researcher, Rita Levi Montalcini came back to Torino in 1940 where her family had decided to stay. She created a small laboratory in her bedroom in order to keep on working on her research on the effects of limb extirpation in chick embryos.

After the war, she was invited by Prof. Viktor Hamburger to join him in St Louis, USA, and repeat the experiments which she had performed many years earlier in the chick embryo. She remained in St Louis where she became a full professor. In 1962, she established a research unit in Rome and divided her time between the two cities until she retired in 1977.

We take this opportunity to congratulate Prof. Montalcini for her work, discoveries and contribution to the world of science and to wish her a belated happy birthday and the best for her future endeavours.
On 29 April 2009, the European Commission presented a progress report covering the first two years of the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. According to the report, the biggest EU R&D funding programme ever, proves to be well suited to answer economic and societal needs. The following points are the main issues underlined in the report.

Unfettered demand for EU funding and a successful launch of new R&D instruments

In its first two years, with around 25,000 proposals reaching the final evaluation stage, 5,500 were selected to receive grants totalling around €10 billion. Demand was high for the new European Research Council, with around 11,000 proposals for its first calls. Over 600 grants have been provided to excellent EU researchers. Responding to the needs of industry for strategic technology development, five Public-Private Partnerships (JITS) have been launched. The Risk Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF), managed together with the European Investment Bank, has approved loans of €2 billion to support high risk R&D projects.

Realising the European Research Area

The FP7 overall objective is to build the Single Market for research and support open innovation. It supports transnational cooperation, promotes “brain circulation” through mobility grants and improves EU research and innovation capacities by supporting research infrastructures. The programme supporting collaborative research has attracted more than a third (36.7%) of all submitted proposals, followed by the scheme for mobility of researchers (23.5%).

Boosting sustainable development and the economy

In the first two years, 44% of the budget for collaborative research has been allocated to interdisciplinary research such as environment, energy, agriculture, transport, nanotechnologies, ICT, supporting the EU's renewed sustainable development strategy. As part of the EU economic recovery plan, FP7 will support the “greening” of the EU automotive, manufacturing and construction sectors through three public-private R&D partnerships.

Opening EU research to the world

Stronger and more strategic international cooperation is among the FP7 priorities. For instance, new countries have been associated to FP7, bringing their total number to 12; a specific EU-Africa Partnership on Science, Information and Space has been signed; and the International scientific collaboration was promoted by the launch of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER).

Cutting red tape

FP7 has made progress in cutting red tape, notably through a new Guarantee Fund and a Unique Registration Facility. Two new Executive Agencies have been set up to specialise in the efficient implementation of EU research programmes: the Research Executive Agencies (REA) and the European Research Council (ERC). Audit processes have been improved and streamlined.

The way ahead

According to the report, some issues need further attention, such as the rather low participation of SMEs. Also, successful participation of researchers from new Member States can be improved. Progress on simplification and the effective operation of new instruments may require changing the ground rules.

To further improve FP7, the Commission will be seeking advice from an independent expert group, which will undertake a FP7 Interim Evaluation by autumn 2010.

On the same day, the Commission also adopted a response to the ex-post evaluation of the FP6, which provides further input to the interim evaluation exercise.

Focus on Gender in FP7 in the European Commission FP7 progress report

The Commission progress report covering the first two years of FP7 also stresses the gender aspects of FP7, including gender participation and the gender dimension of research. The following elements and data have been reported.

**Patterns of Gender Participation in FP7**

The CORDIS database contains a considerable amount of data on individual participants in FP7 funded projects for which grant agreements have already been signed, including gender identity. Out of an estimated total of 53,687 project participants whose gender identity has been recorded in the database, a quarter (25.8% or 13,831) is female. In this population, women represent 29.1% (3,227) of project coordinators and 24.9% (10,604) of project participants, which implies that women have a relatively stronger presence as coordinators.

More than a fifth (21.5%) of individuals characterised as "contact person for scientific aspects" in signed grant agreements are women. Female participation makes up more than a third (35.4%) of participants in signed grant agreements in the category "fellow", under the Specific Programme "People" (Marie Curie Actions). This is the category with the highest female participation, and it confirms the good track record of Marie Curie Actions in achieving balanced gender distribution ratios. Female participation makes up a fifth (20.7%) of participants in the category "principal investigator", which corresponds to ERC grant agreements (Specific Programme "Ideas").

**Gender Repartition in FP7 Advisory Groups, Programme Committees and the European Research Area Board (ERAB)**

According to the report, 15 Advisory Groups were set up for FP7 in Summer 2006. A sixteenth Advisory Group (for Security) was created in November 2007. For 2007, the percentage of women in the 13 Advisory Groups managed by DG RTD was 36.6%, while the percentage of women in all FP7 Advisory Groups was 34.1%. These percentages were still under the general target of 40%, but they have been clearly improved from FP6. Following a reduction of the number of Advisory Groups and a membership renewal in most groups in 2008, the percentage of women in the 11 Advisory Groups managed by DG RTD is now 38.5%. These numbers are still slightly below the 40% target, but they have been further improved from 2007 to 2008. The percentage of women in all FP7 Advisory Groups is 34.4%, i.e. almost unchanged compared to 2007.

The overall percentage of female members of FP7 Programme Committees in the first two years of FP7 is 34%. Throughout its existence, the percentage of female members of the European Advisory Board EURAB, the high level advisory board established for FP6, was 33%. The European Research Area Board ERAB, the new consultative body responsible for advising the EU on the realisation of the ERA, has 40.9% of female members. At the time of the writing of this report, the percentage of female members of the ERC Scientific Council is 26%.

**Gender Dimension of Research in FP7**

According to the report, the FP7 Decision states that "The integration of the gender dimension and gender equality will be addressed in all areas of research". The two previous sections refer to female participation in various bodies and in proposals submitted to FP7. The gender dimension of research is rather treated in the Work Programmes. The introduction of the Cooperation Work Programmes state that: "All projects are encouraged to have a balanced participation of women and men in their research activities and to raise awareness on combating gender prejudices and stereotypes. When human beings are involved as users, gender differences may exist. These will be addressed as an integral part of the research to ensure the highest level of scientific quality. In addition, specific actions to promote gender equality in research can be financed as part of the proposal [...] ."

In addition, the report states that the topics where gender may be a relevant are signaled as such in the various Work Programmes. Also, applicants have the possibility if they so wish to address gender issues (both in research and in terms of female participation) in their proposals. This is then taken up at negotiation. Data on how gender issues are tackled at project level are currently being collected.

The European Research Career Fair

For the first time an event entirely dedicated to researcher careers will be held in Berlin on 28 May 2009. This Franco-German initiative is a major event aimed at promoting R&D activities across Europe. The Franco-German Forum, the Association pour l’emploi des cadres (APEC), and the Franco-German University are bringing together an expected 1 500 doctorates at the European Research Career Fair.

The event will provide European researchers with a great chance to network and to see what sort of career opportunities are open to them. More than a career fair, the event will allow researchers to build and expand their career plans. Visitors will be able to talk to and get advice from various organisations represented at the fair such as doctoral associations and the European Commission.

The European Research Career Fair allows researchers to:

- exchange ideas with other researchers;
- talk with research organisations who are recruiting;
- benefit from the advice of researchers and organisations about careers and mobility.

There will also be a series of conferences, round tables and keynote speakers about major issues pertaining to research and mobility in Europe.

The event will allow visitors to compare their profiles and research interests with the needs of research centres. Researchers are also able to submit their resumes online and schedule meetings with research institutes. For research centres and companies, both public and private, the event facilitates communication between centres and possible candidates as well as the chance to interview candidate and previously scheduled meetings.

Under the patronage of the Commissioner for Research Janez Potočnik, the fair focuses on the issues of research in Europe. Many large European firms will be present at the event and recruiting talented researchers from across the EU and beyond.


New Head of Unit “Scientific Culture and Gender Issues”

As from 16th March 2009, Luisa Prista has been appointed new Head of Unit “Scientific Culture and Gender Issues” in the European Commission DG Research managing the Science in Society Programme within FP7.

Trained as a mechanical engineer, Luisa Prista holds a degree in Applied Thermodynamics, Energy Policy and Management & Business Administration. She started her career in 1978 at the University in Portugal as a researcher in combustion and as lecturer. She then joined the industry as a project and industrial engineer in different sectors (steel plant, manufacturing industries and tunneling) in Portugal and Switzerland. Before joining the Commission she was working in Switzerland for the Swiss Federal Government as Head of the Office Infoenergy.

She joined the Commission in Brussels in 1994 to work at Directorate General for Research as Head of Sector on “Processes and Organisation of Production”. In 1999, she became Head of Unit “Materials, Nanotechnology and Steel Research”. In 2002, she became Head of Unit of “Policy and Strategy” unit for the Directorate “Space and Transport”. In May 2004, she has been appointed Head of the Unit “Surface Transport” responsible for the implementation and management of part of the 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7) dealing with road, rail and maritime sectors. In parallel, she was also the responsible for the Marine and Maritime Research Strategy within the new European Maritime Policy.

During her whole career as a research and teacher engineer and international officer she has been engaged in women related issues in particular gender equality in science and engineering. She is a member of relevant networks and working groups. Ms. Prista is looking forward to her new role.

New Director of European Institute for Gender Equality

Virginija Langbakk has been appointed first Head of the European Institute for Gender Equality, located in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Virginija Langbakk, a long time senior international consultant at SIPU (Swedish Institute for Public Administration) in Stockholm, took up work in Brussels on 16 April 2009; the announcement was made to the Network of Women in Decision Making in Politics and the Economy during their last meeting in Brussels on 3 April 2009.
Why voting on the June European Parliamentary elections?

The year 2009 is an important year for European democracy. The elections of the European Parliament (EP) will take place from 4 to 7 June 2009. By voting and choosing your candidate, you can make your voice heard in Europe. EPWS encourages all women in Europe to go to the polls and exercise their democratic right to shape the future of the European Union. It is time to make women’s voices count in Europe. It is your chance to promote women into EU politics!

The EP deals with a wide range of policies. Some 80 % of national legislation stems from EU decisions. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) therefore have a real impact. Which issues should the EU tackle over the next five years? How do you want to shape Europe? By voting, you can help set the direction that Europe will be taking and contribute to making it a better place. It’s your choice.

The European Parliament website gives you some hints on some of the issues your vote might have an influence on:

**How should we help balance family and career?**

Equal opportunities for men and women, equal pay for equal work, freedom from unfair discrimination: these are fundamental European values. But how far should we go to achieve them? How far should we go to ensure that people don’t have to choose between career and family? How much do we invest in making these things happen? There are practical choices to be made, laws to be enacted and action to be taken.

**Where should we invest our money?**

Building roads and pipelines, ensuring food safety, improving education, fighting discrimination, fostering research and boosting jobs are all funded from the EU budget. In addition, the EP supports the financing of the protection of the environment and aid for the Third World. MEPs set the annual budget and check how your money is spent. What do you want your MEPs to do?

**Consumer protection**

One the keys areas where the EP can make a difference is consumer rights in everything from product labelling, toy safety, roaming charges for mobiles phones to compensation for late trains.

The choice of food in the EU is huge, but are citizens well-informed enough to choose well? MEPs insist on European labelling rules that ensure consumers know where their food comes from and under what quality standards it has been produced, packaged and sold. They insist that food safety is essential in the EU. What standards should we hold our farmers and food companies to?

**Energy and climate change**

Energy policy and climate change have raced up the political agenda in the last few years. The UN’s climate change panel has alerted all to the dangers of inaction. Over the last few years MEPs have supported cuts in the EU’s CO2 emissions and steps to set up a low carbon market to increase efficiency and to use more energy efficient things around our houses. But is it enough?

Europe is looking away from fossil fuels and towards things such as biofuels, electricity or hydrogen. Recently, the MEPs maintained the 2020 target for renewables to account for at least 10% of energy use in road transport. Is this feasible? Is it enough?

**How much security is too much?**

Since 2001 and with the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 and in London in 2005, security has become a top priority for the EU. Europe has taken measures to protect its citizens, but are they enough? Or do they go too far? The EP is here to protect people’s security, but also their fundamental rights. How much security do we need? At what price?

How much should we tame financial markets?

The US and Europe are in the worst economic crisis since the 1930s. With unemployment rising dramatically and businesses failing, fear is spreading. Against this backdrop the excesses of the financial sector and the credit and prosperity bubble they helped create seem to be sheer recklessness. As governments struggle to fix or mend global capitalism, one of the key issues of the EP elections this year will be the extent to which financial markets should be tamed.

**How far should standardisation go?**

A key component of the EU’s internal market for goods and services is the possibility of buying and selling across Europe. To ensure safety, stimulate trade and ensure that no business has an unfair advantage, similar standards are often required. This can lead to a change of size or name in well-known products, which often arouses opposition. MEPs help regulate the single market so the extent of product standardisation is a key issue for them and the people who elect them.

**How open should our borders be?**

Literally thousands of people have lost their lives trying to get into Europe for a better way of life. How should the EU tackle the immigration question in a responsible way?

**Have your say by voting in the European elections in June 2009!**


2009 marks the bicentennial of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species*.

Inspired by these events, the European Science Foundation (ESF) and the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) are organising a multidisciplinary High-Level Conference “The Complex Systems and Changes - Darwin and Evolution: Nature-Culture Interfaces” at which different scientific domains, such as life sciences and medicine, humanities and social sciences, meet around the guiding mechanisms of evolution and the legacy of Charles Darwin. The conference will take place in Sant Feliu de Guixols, Spain, 15-20 September 2009.

The conference will be organised around the following four basic Darwinian principles:

- Variation and diversity (variations among individuals form the driver of evolution);
- Abundance (more offspring (progeny) are produced than that grow to adulthood);
- Selection (the one that is best adapted to his environment, has more chance to survive);
- Reproduction and transfer (Organisms reproduce and pass-on their beneficial traits (inheritance))

Some grants are available for young researchers to cover the conference fee and possibly part of the travel costs. Grant requests should be made by ticking appropriate field(s) in the paragraph "Grant application" of the application form.

Full conference programme and application form accessible online from [www.esf.org/conferences/09309](http://www.esf.org/conferences/09309). Closing date for applications: 3 July 2009.

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**II International Summer School: Policies for Innovation and Growth**

The viability of innovation processes leading to increases in productivity and faster growth depends mainly on the coordination of the accumulation of physical capital and the complementary accumulation of human capital. This will be the theme of the II International Summer School organised by *Istituto per la Cultura e Storia d’Impresa ‘Franco Momiglione’* (ICSIM) and Observatoire Français des Conjonctures Économiques (OFCE) in Villagallo (Terni, Italy) from 21 to 25 September 2009.

The school will focus on the financial and the human constraints that hamper the required coordination (and their removal), in particular with reference to the skill-biased technical changes that characterize the most innovative general purpose technologies. Contrary to the dominant policy consensus that assigns to macro (fiscal and monetary) policies the task to set just the stable environment for micro structural policies to actually bring about innovation and growth, it will be stressed that in a systemic phenomenon like innovation, characterized by the interaction of heterogeneous economic agents, macroeconomic policies can have structural effects and vice versa, thus providing an altogether different policy approach to the problem.

The exposition of theories and models in the mornings will be followed in the afternoons by empirical studies and quantitative and econometric analyses in order to provide the students with suitable investigation tools.

Theory and analysis will be backed by the results of research work carried out within the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Union.

If you want to apply, you can do so until 30 June 2009. More information about the Summer School and application process can be found under: [www.icsim.it](http://www.icsim.it).

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**Contribute to set up the GAID agenda**

The United Nations Global Alliance for ICTs and Development (GAIID) has invited the global online community to help it determine its themes for the coming year, with *gender* being one of the suggestions (the others are poverty eradication and financial crisis, climate change and education and health), with the purpose of aligning "itself more closely with the broader UN Development Agenda and addressing the critical issues that the world is currently facing." To do this, GAIID has set up four separate discussion groups, with the one on gender located at [http://un-gaid.ning.com/forum/topics/gender-1](http://un-gaid.ning.com/forum/topics/gender-1). The overall purpose of the discussions is to "identify ideas and suggestions on how GAIID can contribute with clear deliverables to progress on these issues, using ICT."
Global survey on women and ICTs

A questionnaire aiming at learning more about girls and women with a background in science and research has recently been launched and is available on the European Center for women and technology website. This questionnaire aims at

- seeing if there is a change in the attitude towards women scientists and in particular those working in ICT
- identifying the consequences in terms of career progress
- determining how women themselves feel about their work in information and communication technology

The data will be then analyzed and the coordinator of this survey would like to have as much as possible a global perspective on this matters so we encourage you to go on the ECWT portal and fill in the questionnaire available at:


Project “Gender in EU-funded research”:
Information seminars

To further promote gender equality in research, the DG Research is developing a gender toolkit and training activities. These will provide the research community with practical guidance on gender mainstreaming in FP7. The training sessions are planned to start in the autumn of 2009 and will run until the end of 2010.

Before the training activities begin, four half-day information seminars on the project are scheduled to take place in Brussels between June and November 2009. These information seminars follow a dynamic format: short presentations (max 45 min) on the toolkit alternating with glimpses into the actual training sessions in different fields are run through the afternoon.

You are kindly invited to attend the first half-day information session, that will be held on the 24th June 2009, at the Social Platform (Square de Meuûs 18, B-1050 Brussels), from 13.00 to 17.00. This information session will provide you with valuable information on this opportunity offered to the European research community of acquiring pragmatic gender competences. We also invite you to promote the initiative and to encourage other researchers to follow one of the training sessions that will be scheduled in the coming months.

Yellow Window has been entrusted with the management of this project. Please register your attendance on the project’s website (http://www.yellowwindow.be/genderinresearch).

Natural Resources Forum:
Call for viewpoints and call for paper

The Natural Resources Forum (NRF), A United Nations Sustainable Development Journal, is inviting your views on the following question for the Viewpoints section of the November 2009 issue: "What would be the three key preconditions for jumpstarting or scaling up the transfer of environmentally sound technologies for climate change to developing countries?"

The Viewpoints section offers a platform for academics, practitioners and experts to share their individual perspectives and to feature these perspectives alongside other thoughtful responses in the journal. The deadline for submission to the Viewpoints for the August 2009 issue is 30th July 2009.

The NRF also calls for papers for a new series on Sustainable-Consumption and Production Patterns, Transport, Chemicals, Waste Management and Mining - themes of the United Nations Commission of Sustainable Development at its 18th and 19th sessions-over the 2009-2011 period.

In addition, the journal will be dedicating special sections to selected topics in the following issues of the series: climate change (deadline for submissions: 15 June 2009) and sustainable consumption and production (deadline for submissions: 15 August 2009).

Researchers and practitioners interested in participating in this series and/or to contribute to the Viewpoints section are invited to visit the journal's manuscript submission website at http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/nrf.
Upcoming Events

1. 7th European Feminist Research Conference: Gendered Cultures at the Crossroads of Imagination, Knowledge and Politics, Utrecht, The Netherlands, 4-7 June 2009
   This conference is an international event based on cutting-edge scholarship. The conference will reflect a diversity of feminist and gender studies research incorporating perspectives from across the broad spectrum of the humanities and social sciences. The focus is on the way in which knowledge, politics, and the imagination inform gendered cultures in contemporary Europe.
   Registrations are open until 28 May 2009. For more information, please visit the website:
   www.7thfeministconference.org

2. SERI European Research & Innovation Exhibition, Porte de Versailles, Paris, France, 3-5 June 2009
   The Exhibition aims to bring together the major European players in scientific, entrepreneurial and institutional circles, as well as the general public, to explore science-related R&D and R&I subjects.
   More info under: http://seri.info/pro/fiche/quest.jsp;jsessionid=839C4E2003E5C07496F2288738A790B3.kl1?surveyName=Default&locale=1

   Organised in collaboration with Belgian Women in Science (BeWiSe), the EPWS Annual Conference 2009 will take place in Brussels and on the second day for the first time include the running of two EPWS Seminars, one on “Management of Networks” the other “Access to Funding”. The programme is available on the EPWS website: www.epws.org.

4. Joint event “In Quest of Scientific Excellence”, Berlin, Germany, 2 July 2009
   This event will be dedicated to the question of gender and excellence in research. At this occasion, the Final Report of the EU Expert Group on “Gender and Excellence” 2009 will be presented.
   To register, please check the following link: http://www.cews.org

5. Conference "Frauen für die Stärkung von Wissenschaft und Forschung", Berlin, Germany, 2-3 July 2009
   This German speaking conference is organised by the Center of Excellence Women and Science CEWS and supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research in the framework of the European Year of Creativity and innovation. The goal of the conference is to discuss the developments generated by the different German initiatives for the promotion of women scientists and researchers.
   To register, please check the following link: http://www.cews.org

6. The 4th Congress of the International Society of Gender Medicine (IGM), Berlin, Germany, 6-8 Nov 2009
   During this congress relevant issues in gender research from a broad spectrum of medical fields, in basic and clinical research, and health care, prevention, and medical education will be discussed. The congress aims to promote gender research and to network gender researchers all over the world. It is supported by the International Society of Gender Medicine, its national member societies, the Organization for the Study of Sex Differences (OSSD), the German Heart Institute Berlin (DHIZB), and the Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin.
   For more info, please contact their website (www.charite.de/gender).

   The conference aims to tackle the question of the scientific and technological careers of women, to pursue the dialogue between Human and Social Sciences and to address the preoccupations and reality of corporate life.
   For more information about this, please visit: www.prometea.info/conference2009

4 to 7 of June 2009: European Elections
Your chance to promote women into EU politics!
Published Calls

EPWS does not take responsibility for the correctness of the information below. New up-dates might have come out. Please go to http://cordis.europa.eu/ for official information.

1. FP7-PEOPLE-2009-IAPP: Marie Curie Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways (IAPP)
   Theme: PEOPLE
   Publication Date: 24 April 2009  Deadline: 27 July 2009  Budget: € 65 000 000

2. FP7-PEOPLE-2009-IEF: Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowships for Career Development (IEF)
   Theme: PEOPLE
   Publication Date: 18 March 2009  Deadline: 18 August 2009  Budget: € 95 000 000

3. FP7-PEOPLE-2009-IIF: Marie Curie International Incoming Fellowships (IIF)
   Theme: PEOPLE
   Publication Date: 18 March 2009  Deadline: 18 August 2009  Budget: € 28 000 000

4. FP7-PEOPLE-2009-IOF: Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowships for Career Development (IOF)
   Theme: PEOPLE
   Publication Date: 18 March 2009  Deadline: 18 August 2009  Budget: € 28 000 000

5. 2009/S 57-081602: Calls for tender IPv6 Curricula
   Theme: Information and Communication Technologies
   Publication Date: 24 March 2009  Deadline: 07 May 2009  Budget: € 150 000

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