



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

On the way to the top: providing equal opportunities for men and women in science and technology

**ERC Executive Agency, Covent Garden, 16 Place Rogier, Brussels
Auditorium (25th floor) - 2 December 2013**

Final Summary

The analysis of gender segregated data from all the ERC calls since 2007 has revealed that:

1. The proportion of women applications is overall low: 30% to Starting grants, 15% to Advanced grants.
2. This proportion is lower than the corresponding proportion of qualified women in Europe.
3. The disparities are country specific.
4. The success rate of women is on average 85% of that of men. A figure that is relatively stable since 2007
5. There is no correlation between the number of women in the evaluation panels and the success rate of women, suggesting that increasing the number of women in the panels will not be a 'quick fix' to equalize the success rates of men and women.

To identify effective measures and policies to reach the goal of providing equal opportunities for men and women in science and technology, the GBWG organised a Workshop on December 2nd 2013 in Brussels.

The Workshop gathered representatives from national research organisations and gender experts to discuss the diversity of practices and approaches to gender mainstreaming in various European countries.

GENERAL FACTS AND PERSPECTIVES:

Although some progress has been made, the number of women in science and technology is still low with a particularly large gender gap at the top. At the current pace closing this gap remains a distant dream. As highlighted by the speakers at the workshop there are several reasons to call for more effective action:

- From a purely economic perspective, the loss of highly trained and skilled individuals is a waste of resources.
- Increasing diversity through better gender balanced working force will provide wider creative and innovative capacities to foster a knowledge based and world wide competitive society.
- Providing equal opportunities to men and women is simply a matter of social justice.

The workshop pointed to some key issues that underlie the slow progress towards a more gender balanced landscape in Science and technology:

- More than half of the European states have no gender strategies and only a few have reached a gender sensitive level.
- If overt discrimination is now probably uncommon, stereotypes and implicit bias are strong.
- The scientific career path is not attractive to all women: there is a need to rethink subjective norms about the 'ideal academic' and the metrics of excellence.



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

On the way to the top: providing equal opportunities for men and women in science and technology

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1- A strong and clear commitment of both men and women is essential at all levels:

- Governments have to get involved, send clear messages and show dedication. Each country should analyze the data concerning women's participation in the ERC calls and their success rates and compare their data with those of other countries to identify specific weaknesses and strengths. Specific measures taken by some countries can be found in the workshop presentations (as for example establishing a dedicated Committee in Norway or a systems of recognition through prizes and awards in Norway and the UK).
- Institutions should work at providing a transparent and gender sensitive working environment. A very specific list of measures recommended by the successful Athena Swan program in the UK can be found in the workshop presentations.

2- New policies and measures for support have to be designed and they should be adapted to fit the environment and its different needs. This requires first gathering information and in-depth analysis.

3- Implicit gender bias has to be addressed at all levels (through awareness raising and training).

4- The definition of excellence should be carefully revised and novel methods for gender blind evaluation established.

5- The number of women in top decision-making positions has to increase (to provide efficient role models and increase diversity into selection/decision making processes).

6- Sex and gender analysis have to be integrated into research.

7- Gender data have to be monitored periodically and made publicly available (at all levels).