

Gesis
CEWS
Dreizehnmorgenweg 40-42
53175 Bonn
Germany

Telefon 0049-228-2281-0
Telefax 0049-228-2281-550

info-cews@gesis.org
www.gesis.org
www.cews.org

Gender Equality in FP8

Response to the Green Paper *From Challenges to Opportunities. Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation Funding*

(with focus on question 24 „What actions should be taken at EU level to further strengthen the role of women in science and innovation?“)

The Center of Excellence Women and Science CEWS highly appreciates that the European Commission takes an active role in strengthening women's participation in science and innovation. To increase equal opportunity and gender equality in research, these topics have to be treated as a priority of European Union's science policy making and actions engendering progress in those fields have to be integrated into the 8th framework programme.

During the 5th and 6th framework programme, the European Commission provided notable impetus to the field of gender equality and gave important impulses to the member states. To our regret that successful work was not seriously enough taken forward in the 7th framework programme. The Commission should take the chance to get back to its role as a trend setter. It should promote innovation in the field of gender equality as well.

The quality of European science and research depends on the ability to recruit the most skilled and talented researchers. To achieve this aim, it is essential to guarantee equal opportunity and create working conditions and a working culture that welcomes male and female researchers in the same way. The biased application and success rate of men and women researchers in the programs funded by the European Commission prove that European research has not yet accomplished to provide equal opportunity to men and women. The female participation rate in FP7 (25.5%) is lower than the female share in the European research population (30%).¹ Although 25.5% marks a progress compared to the female participation rate in FP6 (16-17%), the result is far from gender balance and the Commission's target of 40% female participants for FP7.

The situation of women in research in most member states is still very unsatisfying: While women often make up 50% (or more) of the students, their share of professors and especially of leadership

¹ Interim Evaluation of the Seventh Framework Programme. Report of the Expert Group, 2010, http://ec.europa.eu/research/evaluations/pdf/archive/other_reports_studies_and_documents/fp7_interim_evaluation_expert_group_report.pdf, p.44.

positions is very low.² In most countries there were too little activities in support of gender equality in the past, activities were implemented not straight enough or were faced with many obstacles. As a consequence, progress is made too slow.

The Commission should take the chance to use FP8 as a stimulus for national and European debates on gender equality and call for innovation in this field. We consider top-down-strategies as an important instrument to initiate gender equality debates and actions. Only if European efforts are supported and pushed forward by national science policy will the Commission achieve its 40% target.

We strongly recommend establishing a new program on gender and innovation. We ask the Commission not to limit gender equality to gender balance and propose a program with a multi-dimensional approach that focuses on:

- initiating European and national debates on gender equality policy and advancing innovation in this field;
- implementing binding and sustainable gender equality measures in all research projects;
- improving the quality of research by systematically integrating a gender perspective into every research design;
- promoting gendered innovations;
- funding research on the impact of gender equality actions, focussing on organisational change and recent developments in the higher education and research landscape;
- increasing the sustainability of gender equality activities.

We consider gender action plans to be a valuable tool that enables the implementation of several of the aforementioned actions. Therefore we propose to re-introduce the gender action plans (GAP) of FP6. These were evaluated to be a successful tool in general.³ Yet they were abolished in FP7 without implementing any new tools. **We strongly recommend including gender action plans as a mandatory part in all applications for collaborative projects in the 8th framework programme.** The gender actions plans should implement gender equality measures which target different levels like working culture, organisation structure, work-life-balance, empowerment of decision-makers, and career progression. Furthermore, the GAPs should include a systematic approach to integrate a gender perspective into every research design in all fields of science. Interdisciplinary collaborations will enrich the quality of the gender perspective as well as the quality of research in general and should therefore be actively supported by the Commission. Moreover, we consider mainstreaming a gender perspective not only as fruitful for gender equality, but for facing the grand societal challenges named in the European Commission's *Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovative Union*.⁴ A gender perspective improves the understanding of those complex challenges and enhances gendered innovations that will contribute to effective solutions.

To increase the quality, significance and impact of GAPs, we recommend that the Commission takes various measures accompanying the different project stages: project preparation period: provide trainings and tool-kits for GAPs to the applicants; evaluation period: provide trainings and guide-

2 In 2007 the female proportion of students (ISCED 5–6) in the EU-27 was 55.2% (source: Eurostat), while the female proportion of the highest academic positions was 19% and only 9% of the heads of universities were female (She Figures 2009).

3 European Commission: Monitoring progress towards Gender Equality in the Sixth Framework Programme. Synthesis Report, 2009, http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/gender-monitoring-studies-synthesis-report_en.pdf

4 The challenges named are for example demographic changes, climate change and energy and resource scarcity (European Commission: *Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovative Union*, 2010, http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/innovation-union-communication_en.pdf).

lines to the evaluators to ensure a qualified assessment of the GAPs; for funded projects: include a section about the progress of the GAPs in reporting and initiate exchange of experience among different projects. Past European projects on gender equality have produced a valuable resource of knowledge and tools that can be used for those tasks.⁵

In the submissions for the current Green Paper consultations that comment on question 24 (*strengthening the role of women in research and innovation*) most proposed actions focus on individual women, like suggestions for campaigns to increase girls' interest for (natural) science and engineering or supporting women researchers' networks.⁶ Although CEWS appreciates those kinds of actions we'd like to emphasize that research has proven that measures trying to "change the women" are not enough.⁷ To cause effective and sustainable change in advance of gender equality, organisation structures and the academic culture have to be changed. These aspects need to be highlighted in debates about gender equality; innovations are needed in the field of organisation and culture transformation strategies. We highly appreciate the current *Science in Society* program "Implementing structural change in research organisations/ universities" and recommend continuing and expanding this strategy. There is still a gap in systematic research on the linkages of gender equality measures and organisational and cultural change. Therefore CEWS recommends funding research in this field, especially projects that provide a comparative analysis between different European academic cultures. Additionally, we regard it as important to explore which impact the Bologna reforms and the turning of universities into entrepreneurial universities have on gender equality.

We consider the sustainability of some successful projects of the "Science in Society" program as problematic. Data bases and networks, like they have been set up in several EU-projects,⁸ are an important tool for the transfer of knowledge about gender and science. To keep them a valuable resource of information they need to be frequently updated. Otherwise, data will soon be outdated and the data base will be of limited use. The institutions running data bases cannot provide maintenance without funding after the end of a project. Here, new ways of funding have to be established to increase sustainability and provide a reliable infrastructure for gender equality politics and gender in research.

Bonn, 19 May 2011

The *Center of Excellence Women and Science* (CEWS) is the national hub for realization of equal opportunities for both women and men in science and research in Germany. CEWS serves as a think tank for this political field, offering impetus for new ideas, initiating and evaluating processes of change as well as actively creating and engaging the necessary transfer processes between science and politics. CEWS is part of *GESIS* – Leibniz Institute of the Social Sciences, the largest infrastructure institution for the Social Sciences in Germany and member of the *Leibniz Association*, one of the four big German research organizations.

5 To name just a few: PRA.G.E.S (<http://www.retepariopportunita.it/defaultdesktop.aspx?page=2749>), genSET (<http://www.genderinscience.org/>), Toolkit by the European Commission: Gender in EU-funded research (http://www.yellowwindow.be/genderinresearch/downloads/YW2009_GenderToolKit_Module1.pdf).

6 http://ec.europa.eu/research/csfri/index_en.cfm?pg=responses (last review 10 May 2011).

7 See for example the findings of the *Meta Analysis of Gender and Science Research*, <http://www.genderandscience.org>.

8 For example the Gender and Science Database of the project *Meta Analysis of Gender and Science Research*, http://www.genderandscience.org/web/gsd_present.php, and the *European Platform of Women Scientists*, <http://www.epws.org>.