

**2nd EUROPEAN GENDER SUMMIT**

European Parliament, Brussels 29-30.11.2012

**REPORT FROM THE 2012 EUROPEAN GENDER SUMMIT**

**to**

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL,  
THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,  
THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE,  
EU MEMBER AND ASSOCIATE STATES,  
SCIENCE INSTITUTIONS

**Developing Systematic Implementation Strategy  
to Advance EU Policy on Gender Equality in Science,  
as part of HORIZON 2020, European Research Area and Innovation Union**

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#### 1. Executive Summary

The European Union introduced three major policy initiatives, HORIZON 2020, ERA and Innovation Union as key mechanisms for using research and innovation to address the societal challenges prioritized in the EU2020 strategy for growth, with HORIZON 2020 as the comprehensive financial instrument integrating the envisaged actions.

*"Excellence, relevance and impact are key words in research and innovation. We cannot properly advance on these, without advancing on gender equality, both in research content and how research is performed. This is an issue not only of equal treatment but also of economic growth in order to help us all get out of the crisis, onto a sustainable economic and social path"<sup>1</sup>.*

This Communication reports on the debate and recommendations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gender Summit<sup>2</sup> held at the European Parliament in Brussels on 29-30 November 2012. 400 participants from 30 countries, representing over 200 science institutions and other organizations have reviewed latest research evidence and agreed on the following major recommendations:

1. **HORIZON 2020 "Gender Equality" Article 15 and national research programmes should include specific conditions for addressing gender issues in project proposals.**  
The Summit recommends that HORIZON 2020, and all publicly funded research programmes, should require applicants to address the role of gender dimension in their proposals for evaluation and impact assessment across the whole research process - design, execution and communication of results.
2. **The processes used for awarding research grants should be scrutinized for possible sources of gender bias.**  
The Summit recommends that the advisory and award panels should be trained to recognize the risk of gender bias in the different way they assess women and men and their work, which evidence shows systematically disadvantages women.
3. **The Innovation Union Scoreboard needs a gender equality indicator.**  
The Summit supported the recommendation of the ERA Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility, made in spring 2012, to introduce the indicator "% of women in Grade A researcher positions" (from SHE figures) in the Innovation Union Scoreboard.

The Summit benefited from the participation of the highest-level EU policy makers as speakers, including:

- European Parliament Vice-president Mr **Oldrich Vlasak**
- DG Research and Innovation Commissioner, Mrs **Maire Geoghegan Quinn**
- DG CONNECT Commissioner, Mrs **Neelie Kroes**
- DG Joint Research Centre Director General, Mr **Dominique Ristori**
- DG Research and Innovation Deputy Director General, Dr **Anneli Pauli**<sup>3</sup>
- EC Scientific Adviser to the President, Prof **Anne Glover**

They stressed the EU's commitment to gender equality as a strategic approach to the enhancement of European competitiveness and the full realization of European innovation potential.

**Europe can be smarter, sharper and more focused in its scientific endeavour if it deploys fully the talents of both women and men and recognizes their different needs and preferences as a matter of quality in research and innovation process and in creating markets for science knowledge.**

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<sup>1</sup> Deputy Director General, DG Research and Innovation, Dr Anneli Pauli, in her speech given at the Summit

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gender-summit.eu>

<sup>3</sup> copy of Dr A. Pauli's speech is attached at Appendix

## 2. Summary of the Summit Discussion

Since 2011, the European Gender Summit has provided a high-level platform for dialogue between the scientists, policy makers and gender research scholars to jointly assess and agree on the best, evidence-based gender equality strategies for science.

This Communication sets out the case for a systematic implementation of gender equality measures in the training and the work of researchers, and for establishing a standards-based approach to the integration of gender as a dimension of quality in research and innovation process. The aim is to include gender as a strategic component of excellence in science knowledge production, application and communication. Sound technological advancement requires equality and quality in science.

The gender bias in science has been evidenced through numerous studies. It disadvantages women much more than men: in terms of their unequal participation in decision-making roles, exclusion of females from studies and funding, prevalence of 'male' as the norm in science knowledge and methods; and technological development driven by men's decisions and preferences<sup>4</sup>. The gender issues highlighted at the Summit include:

- Toxicology – women and men can suffer different toxic effects as a result of exposure to environmental pollutants, but past studies used mainly male subjects and lack data for women
- Transport – the risk of injury in a car collision is much higher for women, but cars continue to be tested on male crash dummies
- Research assessment – the success rates in grant applications to the European Research Council is lower for women than for men, across all disciplinary submission areas
- Regenerative medicine – the impact of stem cell treatment can be significantly affected if the source/target is female/male, but the sex of the cells used in studies is often not reported
- Biomarkers – metabolic profiles of males and females differ significantly, requiring that sexual dimorphism forms part of design of diagnosis and treatment of complex diseases such as Alzheimer's, cardiovascular and metabolic disorders
- 4500 scientists signed the Manifesto for Action on Gender in Research and Innovation within one year of it being published on-line, but 15 years after the policy for gender mainstreaming was introduced in the Amsterdam Treaty, still only 20% of 'A' grade professor positions in Universities are held by women
- 2005 Eurobarometer study of the attitudes of Europe's citizens to innovation reported strong gender bias identifying women as being "anti-innovation", such gender bias creates significant barriers to addressing women's needs, and their role as consumers - it has been estimated that globally women control \$20 trillion of annual consumer budget
- Exclusion of women from Innovation Union - among the 30 progress indicators in the Innovation Union Scoreboard none addresses gender issues even though only 8% of the applications to the European Patent Office come from women but almost 50% of PhDs are awarded to women
- 2009 Eurobarometer study of the attitudes of Europe's young people to careers in science concluded that whilst appreciating what scientists do, they – girls more than boys – rejected science as a career, but according to the recent EC predictions, Europe needs an additional one million researchers to realize its R&D&I goals.

## 3. Conclusions and Recommendations for the European Parliament and the Council

The speakers and participants in the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Gender Summit, recognize that the European Union expects great deal from research and innovation as tools for sustainable economic and societal advancement for all its Member States and regions. Europe needs to deploy all its human and intellectual resources, women's and men's, and build on all its scientific and gender research expertise and leadership established so far. To achieve this, action is needed to:

- **Create a systematic and standards-driven approach for implementing the HORIZON 2020 "Gender Equality" Article 15** (and related Articles 12 and 13) by adding specific operational detail

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<sup>4</sup> Source: 2<sup>nd</sup> European Gender Summit: Prof Marie Vahter, Karolinska Institutet; "From Ideas to Markets: the Gender Factor, conference report"; Prof Teresa Lago, European Research Council; Prof Curt Rice, University of Tromso; Prof Thomas Illig, Hannover Medical School Biobank

to ensure that gender issues are properly addressed in research proposals, their evaluation and impact assessment.

- **Address the reasons why women continue to be less successful in securing research funding.** Research funding bodies should scrutinize the processes used for awarding research grants to identify possible sources of gender bias that may systematically disadvantage women. Improvements can be achieved by training advisory and award panels on the risks of gender bias when assessing women and men and their work.
- **Ensure that Innovation Union is not 'gender blind'** by including in the Innovation Union Scoreboard a new progress indicator representing gender equality. The Summit supported the recommendation of the ERA SGHRM spring 2012 to introduce the indicator "% of women in Grade A researcher positions" (from SHE figures) in the Innovation Union Scoreboard.

In addition, the conference discussed **establishing a Gender Equality Standard for institutions and projects** as a systematic, evidence-based approach for integrating gender dimension in research and innovation, which recognizes the needs of different fields and sectors. It has also identified the wider impact of **mainstreaming gender research scholarship and expertise to inform cross-cutting actions** and raise awareness among all relevant research and innovation actors and structures at national/regional/local levels.

#### 4. Explanatory Notes

The hosting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Gender Summit at the European Parliament was supported by the following Members of the Parliament:

- **Oldrich Vlasak**, Vice-President of the European Parliament, responsible for Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA)
- **Britta Thomsen**, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality - [leading the MEP's support for the Summit](#)
- **Kent Johansson**, Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Member of the Bureau, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
- **Silvana Koch-Mehrin**, Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
- **Antigoni Papadopoulou**, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
- **Teresa Riera Madurell**, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
- **Joanna Senyszyn**, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
- **Marita Ulvskog**, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

The Policy Partners and Patrons of the Gender Summit also included: the Cyprus Presidency of the EU Council and the Council of Europe.

Participants included representatives from countries outside Europe including: the US, Canada, Egypt, Nigeria, Malaysia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Iran, Tanzania, Botswana, Congo, Myanmar, Bangladesh.

The convenors of the event were Portia Ltd/genSET<sup>5</sup>, European Science Foundation<sup>6</sup>, and COST<sup>7</sup>.

The Gender Summit builds on the approach for advancing gender equality in science developed by Portia as part of the FP7-funded genSET, gender in science, project. Key to this approach is scientific evidence, dialogue involving all relevant actors, consensus on common issues, and recommendations on which actions are most likely to deliver the improvements needed.

Further details regarding the content of this Communication can be obtained from Dr Elizabeth Pollitzer, [ep@portiaweb.org.uk](mailto:ep@portiaweb.org.uk)

**Appendix** below contains the text of the speech given at the Gender Summit by DG Research and Innovation Deputy Director General, Dr Anneli Pauli.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.portiaweb.org.uk>, responsible for scientific content and programme

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.esf.org>, responsible for venue, logistics and communications promoting the summit and its objectives. The conference team was led by Benita Lipps, Gwenaelle Le Cochenec, and Caroline Nsenda

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.cost.eu>, responsible for Café Scientifique 4 on the genderSTE initiative



**Deputy Director-General Anneli PAULI**

**European Gender Summit, Quality Research and Innovation through Equality - Aligning agendas for excellence -  
Brussels, 29-30 November 2012**

**Day 2 – Session 6: The role of research evidence in shaping science making and science policies  
Friday, 30 November 2011  
European Parliament – Room Jozsef Antall 4Q2, building JAN  
09h00 – 09h20**

**SPEAKING POINTS**

Ladies and gentlemen,

- I am very happy and honoured to address you, at this European Gender Summit.
- Excellence, relevance and impact are key words in research and innovation. We cannot properly advance on these, without advancing on gender equality, both in research content and how research is performed. This is an issue not only of equal treatment but also of economic growth in order to help us all get out of the crisis, onto a sustainable economic and social path.
- The Commission adopted this summer the Communication "A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth". It is a response to the repeated calls by the European Council to achieve ERA by 2014.
- In a time of scarce public resources, the ERA Communication shows how to do more with less. We need more effective, open and competitive national research systems. This will offer the best conditions to increase research performance and excellence and thus fully capitalise on Europe's scientific and creative potential.
- Promoting gender equality in research means pursuing three objectives in parallel: improving gender balance in decision-making, involving more women as scientists at all levels and integrating the gender dimension in research content.
- Our overall policy focus has shifted as you know from "empowering the women in research" to "fixing the institutions". In other words, what we are aiming for is a change of culture and a modernisation of universities and research institutions when it comes to Human Resources management, funding and decision-making.
- The ERA Communication bets on smarter, sharper, much more focused approach that identifies not only clear actions and targets but also says who should assume ownership of the actions.

- Member States remain the major drivers for change. By making the necessary reforms at national level, they have the power to remove most of the barriers to the achievement of ERA in general and to gender equality as part of ERA. It is essential therefore that Member States commit themselves to implement key actions. To know if there is progress and how much, a robust monitoring mechanism has to be in place.
- The ERA Communication will be followed by a Commission Recommendation on gender equality to Member States, which will propose common guidelines on measures needed in order to achieve gender equality in universities and research institutions.
- But this is not enough. There are issues for which the research stakeholders themselves, such as the research funding councils, universities and other research performing organisations have the power to implement the necessary actions.
- On the day of adoption of the ERA Communication, The Commissioner also signed a Joint Statement or Memoranda of Understanding with European organisations representing universities, other research performing organisations and funding agencies (EUA, EARTO, LERU, Science Europe and NORDFORSK). These organisations commit themselves to implement a number of specific actions, one of which is gender equality through institutional changes.
- Science Europe also committed itself to review and revise its 2008 Roadmap, a 'Vision on a Globally Competitive ERA and Roadmap for Actions'.
- The Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 includes a provision on the commitment to effectively promote gender equality and the integration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content. This article 15 is a first in the history of European framework programmes. It aims at reinforcing action on gender equality across the different parts of Horizon 2020. Horizon 2020 will be Europe's biggest ever funding programme for research and innovation, so I hope that its approach to gender will be influential.
- The first ERA-Net on gender will (hopefully) also be launched next year. The objective of this ERA-Net will be to step up the cooperation and coordination of actions and initiatives carried out at national or regional level. These actions should promote both gender equality and the integration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content. It may also open the way to new strong EU initiatives on gender equality in research and innovation.
- By helping women reach their full potential in science, technology and innovation, we include them and their ideas in enhancing growth, and creating more jobs and a better society.
- Given the level of speakers and wide participation, I am confident that this conference will lead to fruitful discussions and concrete ideas on how to move forward on the implementation of measures which will make gender equality a reality.