Policy Brief 1 – *Recruitment and Promotion of Female Researchers*

Where to start?

GenPORT

PB1 - Encouraging the recruitment and promotion of female researchers: Where to start?

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For those countries identified as having no measures and below EU average levels of implementation.[1]

This policy brief provides evidence-based, concrete recommendations for national level policy makers on how to improve efforts to recruit and advance more women in the research workforce.

Why is this important?

Despite various national and EU level gender equality policies in science, the research sector in Europe continues to waste and under-utilise highly skilled and talented women: Whilst in 2012 47% of all PhD graduates in the EU 28 were women - they only made up a third of researchers in all sectors.[2]

Europe needs to find a way to ensure the full participation of women in science and technology if it is to maximise its capacity and ability to respond to the challenges facing Europe as well as guarantee its competitive edge in the global arena.[3] It must also make sure that the applications and innovations developed – reflect the needs of all citizens.[4]

Factoring in the different roles that gender plays in science and innovation systems and taking advantage of these new opportunities is essential to improving the effectiveness of research and innovation outcomes for women and men whilst fostering socio-economic progress for all.[5]

National bodies that want to maximise the full innovation potential of their human capital resources must take into account the barriers hindering the participation of women in science and innovation and develop innovative solutions. [6]

What is the extent of the problem?

This policy brief addresses specifically those countries that have no national measures for recruiting female researchers. In addition, less than 59% (EU average)[7] of their research performing organisations self-report implementing recruitment and promotion measures for female researchers. In concrete terms, this "Where to Start"-brief targets specifically: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, France, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and, Slovakia.[8]

In 2013 women represented 47% of grade D academic staff, 45% of grade C academic staff, 37% of grade B academic staff and just 21% of grade A (the highest academic level, full professor level) academic staff in the EU 28.[9] The average proportion of female academic staff in this group of countries–is significantly above average for grade D (57%) slightly higher than average for grade C (46%) slightly higher for grade B (38%) and average for grade A academic staff (21%).

There is a wide variation between countries- for example in Romania (30%) and Bulgaria (32%) the proportion of females at grade A is substantially higher than the EU-28 average- as it is for the total number of researchers.[10] This can be explained by academic science loosing prestige in these countries- coupled with growth in the private sector – attracting male scientists.[11] It has been contended that there is a higher proportion of women in research in those countries with a poorer R&D financial investment.[12]

Some Member States have taken a more pro-active approach than others in gender equality and gender mainstreaming in science and the gap between pro-active and inactive Members States is widening.[13] The danger is that those Member States with higher than EU-27 average levels of female representation fail to recognise that providing incentives for the recruitment and promotion of female researchers - as part of a wider push for institutional change - is still needed to achieve gender equality and benefit the entire science system.

What are the options?

The 2012 ERA Communication invites Member States to "create a legal and policy environment and provide incentives to remove legal and other barriers to the recruitment, retention and career progression of female researchers".[14] This can take the form of:

- enacting legislation requiring provisions for ensuring compliance with existing and new legislation,
- developing 'soft strategies', i.e. targets as well as supporting and promoting Concordats that establish principles for organisations to comply with
- Ministries can also initiate specific guidelines and practices.

Legal provisions can establish a number of requirements for recruitment and promotion.[15]

In Austria the Federal finance law of 2013 is a legal provision which specifically regulates a balanced representation of women and men in young scientists positions as well as in academic leadership.[16] The University Act also states that 40% of the staff of universities must be women, whilst gender monitoring must

be implemented in recruitment coupled with a targeted recruitment approach.[17]

In Spain Law 19/2013 regulates transparency in recruitment and applies to public universities, independent organisations and state agencies[18] This is designed to support the open recruitment of researchers in publicly funded organisations.[19] Increased transparency in recruitment, promotion and tenure processes have been demonstrated to create a fairer system for all – as women tend to be excluded from informal networks where valuable professional information is often shared.[20]

Soft strategies can also encourage the recruitment of more female researchers, for example in Flanders, a regulation adopted in 2012 allocates special research funds for tenure track appointments. This includes a precedence rule for recruitments of the underrepresented sex in order to reach a representation of 2/5 to 3/5.[21]

In Austria the Elise Richter Programme (implemented by the government agency FWF) is a career development programme that provides funds for female scientists and academics for post-docs and senior post-docs. It aims to enhance their university career after completion of the program a level of qualification should be accomplished to enable the participant to apply for professorship posts.[22]

In Lithuania- Equal Opportunities in Research (LYMOS) – have awarded 34 scholarships to researchers returning to work after maternity leave.[23]

Recommendations

- Enact legal provisions specifically regulating gender balance of staff in universities – particularly targeting academic leadership positions.
- Enact legal provisions promoting transparency in recruitment and promotion. This requires a recognition that these are complex processes that need to be thoroughly understood in order to be improved. On the one hand, there are several stages (definition of position, call, selection rounds, interviews and trial lectures, research seminars) that need to be taken into consideration. On the other hand, multiple actors besides academics contribute to the final decision (the department, research group, faculty, boards, scientific committee, equality office…) and need to be made aware of the benefits of promoting transparency in recruitment and promotion. If a gender component is not taken into account at every stage there is a greater risk that women are more likely than men to fall out of the process at a specific phase.
- Whilst implementing gender mainstreaming throughout all policy fields is a must gender mainstreaming should also be implemented specifically in the realm of science. [24]

- Establish or consolidate organisational structures on gender and science – at the highest possible government level – with sufficient resources, in terms of personnel, expertise and funding – to provide an institutional basis for concerted action in the field.[25]
- Increase the cooperation between state agencies – in order to more effectively regulate and monitor different activities.[26]
- Provide competence development for recruitment staff at research performing organisations. Hiring committees need gender expertise to avoid gender bias in the recruitment of academic staff.[27]
- Offer support for career advancement of women such as training courses, mentoring programmes and actions on empowerment, specially for early careers female academics and for those who are re-entering an academic career after their maternity period.

Further Reading

Further, in-depth reading concerning the recruitment and promotion of female researchers is available through the report *Structural Change in Research Institutions* (see footnote 3) published by the European Commission and *She Figures 2015* (see footnote 9), also published by the EC.

Resources shared in the GenPORT e-discussion on Recruitment and Promotion of Women Researchers:

Carrots or Sticks? A Study on Incentives to Attract and Retain Women in Science, Engineering and Technology in South Africa by Elaine R. Salo, Felix Liersch, Lieketseng Mohlakoana-Motopi, Marinda Maree

Women's Networks in Academia: Practical Advice for Positive Impact by Women@TUoS

GenPORT Research Syntheses on Gender and Science by Rachel Palmen and the GenPORT Consortium.

ADVANCE at a Glance by National Science Foundation's (NSF)

Strategies for Effecting Gender Equity and Institutional Change (StratEGIC Toolkit) by ADVANCE programme.

COACHE's Special Reports on Academic Careers in Higher Education by Harvard University.

Tools For Change Project by AWIS.

Recruitment Bias in Research Institutes by CERCA

Constructing excellence: the gap between formal and actual selection criteria for early career academics by GARCIA Project

Gender Issues in Recruitment, Appointment and Promotion Processes by FESTA Project

Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality by Danielle Gaucher and Justin Friesen & Aaron C. Kay

Searching for Excellence & Diversity: Recruiting Resources for Search Committees by University of Wisconsin & Madison.

Mapping organisational work-life policies and practices by GARCIA Project.

Academic duets: On the professional and private life in science by Marta Vohlídalová (ed.)

PLOTINA : Promoting Gender Balance and Inclusion in Research, Innovation and Training Project

Gender Bias Learning Project by Center of WorkLife Law, with support from a NSF ADVANCE

[1] Please see 'Gender and Science Policy Briefs: From "Where to start" to "How to innovate": An Introduction', for a description of the methodology used. Available at: http://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource_pool/pb_introduction_.pdf
[2] On average the number of women PhD graduates in the EU has been growing by 4.4 percentage points each year between 2003 and 2012, whereas men PhD graduates have grown by 2.3 percentage points annually. European Commission, (2015c). Preliminary Results of She figures, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union.
[3] European Commission, (2012b). Structural change in research institutions: Enhancing excellence, gender equality and efficiency in research and innovation, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p13.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Pollitzer, E. & Schraudner, M. (2015). Integrating Gender Dynamics into Innovation Ecosystems, Sociology and Anthropology, Vol. 3, No. 11, p624.
[6] Ibid.
[7] It should be noted that these figures concern RPOs which answered the ERA survey in 2014, which employ 515 000 researchers (around 20% of total EU researchers).
[8] European Commission, (2015a). ERA Facts and Figures 2014, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p30 & p84.
[9] European Commission, (2016). She Figures, 2015: Gender in Research and Innovation, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p129.
[10] European Commission, (2016). She Figures, 2015: Gender in Research and Innovation, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p129.
[11] Stretanova, N. (2010), 'Introduction' in M.Palisak, N. Stretanova, R. Takács & N. Vallès, Meta-analysis of gender and science research. Country Group Report: Eastern Countries.
[12] Caprile, M., Addis, E., Castaño, C., Klinge, I., Larios, M., Meulders, D., Müller, J., O'Dorchai, S., Palasik, M., Plasman, R., Roivas, S., Sagebiel, F., Schiebinger, L., Vallès, N. & Vázquez-Cupeiro (2012). Meta-analysis of Gender and Science Research, Synthesis Report, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union.
[13] European Commission, (2014a). Gender Equality Policies in Public Research, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p 18.
[14] European Commission, (2012a). A Reinforced European Research Area: Partnership for Excellence and Growth, COM (2012) 392, p12.
[15] European Commission, (2014a). Gender Equality Policies in Public Research, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p26.
[16] Lipinsky, A., Ahlzweig, G., Steinweg, N., & Getz, L. (2015). GenPORT (D4.1) Analysis of Policy Environments Report, p40.
[17] Ibid.
[18] "Any organisation receiving public subsidies of more than EUR 100,000, or for whom public subsidies represent more than 40% of their annual income, are required to make their procedures public (active dissemination of information) and ensure free access to the related information.
[19] Deloitte, (2014b). Researchers' Report 2014, Country Profile: Spain.
[20] European Commission, (2008a). Mapping the Maze. Getting more women in the top in research, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
[21] European Commission, (2014a). Gender Equality Policies in Public Research, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p26.
[22] https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/fwf-programmes/richter-programme-incl-richter-peek/
[23] European Commission, (2014b). Researchers' Report 2014, Deloitte, p136.
[24] Müller, B. (2008). Innovation and Excellence by Women in Science: University recruitment procedures under scrutiny, Swiss Confederation, State Secretariat for Education and Research SER.
[25] European Commission, (2012b). Structural change in research institutions: Enhancing excellence, gender equality and efficiency in research and innovation, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p 44.
[26] Linková, M., Mladenić, D., Oleksy, H., Palasik, M., Papp, E., Piscová, M. & Velichová, D. (2008). Re-claiming a political voice: women and science in central Europe. This was written in the context of Slovenia – but can be applied to this country group.
[27] European Commission, (2012b). Structural change in research institutions: Enhancing excellence, gender equality and efficiency in research and innovation, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p. 34.