



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2015)0311

Women's careers in science and university

European Parliament resolution of 9 September 2015 on women's careers in science and universities, and glass ceilings encountered (2014/2251(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Articles 8, 10, 19 and 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
- having regard to Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 21 September 2010 entitled ‘Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015’ (COM(2010)0491),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 March 2010 entitled ‘A Strengthened Commitment to Equality between Women and Men, A Women’s Charter’ (COM(2010)0078),
- having regard to the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020) adopted by the Council on 7 March 2011,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 15 September 2014 entitled ‘European Research Area Progress Report 2014’ (COM(2014)0575),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 17 February 1999 entitled ‘Women and Science: Mobilising women to enrich European research’ (COM(1999)0076),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 17 July 2012 entitled ‘A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth’ (COM(2012)0392),

¹ OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23.

- having regard to the Commission report of 3 September 2014 entitled ‘Gender Equality Policies in Public Research’ and based on a survey of the members of the Helsinki Group (the Commission’s advisory group on gender, research and innovation),
 - having regard to the ‘She Figures 2012 – Gender in Research and Innovation Statistics and Indicators’, published by the Commission in 2013,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 5 December 2014 on ‘The European research area – Progress Report 2014’,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 29 May 2015 on the European Research Area Roadmap 2015-2020,
 - having regard to its resolution of 10 March 2015 on progress on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2013¹,
 - having regard to Article 40 of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women,
 - having regard to its position of 21 November 2013 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 21 May 2008 on women and science³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 3 February 2000 on the Commission communication entitled ‘Women and science – Mobilising women to enrich European research’⁴,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A8-0235/2015),
- A. whereas gender equality is a fundamental principle of the European Union, enshrined in the Treaty on European Union, and is one of the Union’s objectives and tasks;
- B. whereas gender equality is a basic precondition for the full enjoyment of human rights by women and girls and is essential for their empowerment and the achievement of a sustainable and inclusive society; whereas the insufficient use of human capital decreases potential advantage for research and innovation-related business and for overall economic development, as well as having devastating social consequences;
- C. whereas ensuring that women and men are equal partners and have the same rights and responsibilities and the same working opportunities and that their contribution to society is equally valued and respected is of the utmost importance;
- D. whereas according to the available statistics and surveys, women are under-represented in most scientific, engineering and management posts and at higher hierarchical levels, even

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0050.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0499.

³ OJ C 279 E, 19.11.2009, p. 40.

⁴ OJ C 309, 27.10.2000, p. 57.

in sectors where they form a majority such as the educational sector; whereas women are hugely under-represented in STEM-related educational fields and careers, accounting for just 24 % of science and engineering professionals; whereas female representation varies depending on the STEM specialism, for example, the chemistry specialism faces a retention problem whilst engineering and physics face a recruitment problem;

- E. whereas science is of key importance to Europe in economic terms and needs constantly growing teams that are capable, inter alia, of the ground-breaking research essential for increased productivity and competitiveness, and the existence of a sufficient number of individuals with STEM skills is an essential precondition for implementing the European Agenda for Growth and Jobs and the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy; whereas demand for STEM professionals is expected to grow until 2025, while the latest available statistics reveal an ageing research sector; whereas positive cross-fertilisation between STEM subjects and the arts and humanities (STEAM) holds enormous economic, social, and cultural potential, and women researchers and innovators are well placed to develop links from STEM to STEAM; whereas female researchers are an asset for the EU, which needs all available resources in order to recover definitively from the economic and financial crisis and be able to face the changes in society as a whole; whereas there is a need to promote and facilitate women's career development and a higher presence of young people, especially women students and academics, in STEM fields;
- F. whereas there have been some positive developments regarding female researchers and their share has been growing faster than that of men in recent years, but the numbers of women researchers are still significantly lower than those for men, with the biggest gap being in the business sector;
- G. whereas academic careers for women remain markedly characterised by strong vertical segregation, with only a very low proportion of women occupying the highest academic posts; whereas according to the 2012 She Figures women account for only 10 % of university rectors;
- H. whereas few Member States appear to have provisions on gender equality in their legal framework governing research, and little attention is paid to integrating the gender dimension into national research programmes;
- I. whereas women still encounter obstacles in setting up their own business owing to the persistence of prejudices and stereotypes; whereas there is a need to promote and support greater entrepreneurship among women and develop an environment in which female entrepreneurs and family businesses can prosper and in which enterprise is rewarded by taking the necessary measures based on an exchange of best practice and by paying particular attention to mothers;
- J. whereas the reasons for this situation are numerous and complex, including negative stereotypes and prejudices and conscious and unconscious bias;
- K. whereas statistics consistently show that girls become disengaged from STEM subjects at school and are less likely to pursue a science-related degree at university; whereas there is no one single explanation for the low levels of women in STEM and reasons include: lack of knowledge about STEM careers on the part of teachers in schools, a lack of female role models, a high number of precarious short- term contracts, unconscious bias on interview panels, women being less likely than men to put themselves forward for senior positions,

and a tendency for women to be steered into teaching and pastoral roles rather than research and academia;

- L. whereas women working in research, as in all other areas, are forced to assume a higher share of obligations related to parenting or their families than their male counterparts, and, therefore, all proposed measures have to take into account the possibility of successfully reconciling professional and family life for women so as to include men in these spheres;
- M. whereas despite all ongoing efforts to promote gender equality and equal opportunities, women still experience unequal access to research positions, funding, publishing and academic awards, and are also affected by rigid criteria for promotion and recognition and lack of funding or suitable policies to support them, the prospects for young female scientists being particularly bleak; whereas all these are factors potentially contributing to the 'brain drain', a situation requiring radical rather than simple measures; whereas, furthermore, cooperation on a collective level is of utmost importance and should be undertaken and incentivised both at a personal level and within society;
- N. whereas the de facto low position of women in the scientific field in society, without this necessarily being justified by any objective criteria, as well as gender relations and gender-based stereotypes need to be revised and revalued; whereas offering women a wider range of career prospects and altering educational models could make a substantial contribution to narrowing the gender pay gap, for example by increasing the number of female scientists and engineers;
- O. whereas the Commission is already committed to ensuring 40 % representation of the under-represented sex in the membership of all its expert groups, panels and committees, and, in particular, will apply this to the specific programme Horizon 2020;
- P. whereas the most recent Council conclusions on reinforcing human resources in science and technology in the European Research Area have recognised the importance of promoting gender equality in research and the inclusion of women in positions of responsibility, and this has been the case since 2005, but the Council has made no further statement on the matter;
- Q. whereas the European Research Area Roadmap 2015-2020 calls on the Commission and the Member States to start translating national equality legislation into effective action, in order to address gender imbalances in research institutions and decision-making bodies and integrate the gender dimension better into R&D policies, programmes and projects;
- R. whereas the Istanbul Convention contains a commitment to addressing the root causes of violence and promoting greater equality between women and men by changing attitudes and eliminating stereotypes not only at the level of individuals, but also at the level of higher education institutions as well as in university and college campuses, which are not immune to gender-based violence, so that women can be free from violence and the fear it generates, which often prevents them from participating fully in academic and social life;
- S. whereas the European Institute for Gender Equality can play a fundamental role in monitoring the development of the gender pay gap in science and research, analysing its causes and assessing the impact of legislation;

Gender equality in academic positions

1. Notes that despite positive changes in recent years, gender equality in science and academia has still not been achieved, with the situation varying across Member States, fields of research and academic grade; points out the strikingly low presence of women in the highest academic and decision-making positions in scientific institutions and universities, which indicates the existence of a glass ceiling, that is, invisible barriers based on prejudices which stand in the way of women accessing positions of responsibility;
2. Deplores the fact that there is evidence of gender segregation in university and school hierarchies in Europe and other advanced economies which is both horizontal and vertical in nature, and that while 59 % of university graduates in the EU-28 are women, they account for only 18 % of full university professors;
3. Reiterates that gender equality is one of the principles on which the EU is founded and has to be respected also in the field of research and academia; stresses that all forms of direct or indirect discrimination against women must be eliminated;
4. Notes that the lack of women in science and research has resulted in a male default in R&D, and that in particular: (a) there are no female crash dummies; (b) medical research is usually carried out on male subjects; (c) radiation dosage calculations are based on the absorption rate of a middle-aged male; and (d) in the majority of anatomy textbooks images are of a man's body;
5. Regrets that unequal access for women to research positions, funding and publishing still persists, including a unadjusted gender pay gap in the area of science and academia, despite legal provisions on equal treatment and non-discrimination on the labour market, including provisions on equal pay, being in place in the EU and Member States;

Positive measures

6. Urges the Commission and the Member States to analyse the existing legal provisions with the aim of properly implementing and, if necessary, revising them in order to enforce equal treatment of women and men; urges the Commission and the Member States to ensure compliance with the principle of non-discrimination, considered as a target of the European Union by the Lisbon Treaty, in all types of employment contract or funding, as well as the legal right to equal pay for equal work for all elements of remuneration granted to men and women, including grants and scholarships, by, for example, ensuring wage transparency;
7. Notes that besides the enforcement of legal provisions, cultural and institutional barriers that generate direct or indirect discrimination against women in scientific careers and decision-making have to be removed in order to achieve gender equality; considers that these forms of discrimination, negative prejudices and conscious or unconscious stereotypes build on attitudes and standards which are continually reproduced, and that institutional changes can help remove them; calls on the Commission to introduce and support sensitisation campaigns and programmes and initiatives to reduce these barriers, both in the academic world and in society in general;
8. Criticises once again the fact that women are still paid less than men for the same work, also in the field of research and science as a consequence of their unequal representation;

9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to include support for and promotion of peer support networks and the sharing of best practices across Europe and beyond;
10. Stresses that sensitisation campaigns should target men as well as women, since they (consciously or unconsciously) reproduce gender stereotypes which can cause women to internalise cultural and institutional barriers to career progress in science;
11. Urges the Commission to build on existing programmes and initiatives and to step up positive campaigns aimed at girls and women, encouraging them to enter academic and research careers in all scientific fields, with a special focus on engineering and the technology sector, where, despite recent positive changes, the participation of women remains below average;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote educational programmes which encourage synergies and positive links between STEM subjects and the arts and humanities and promote a gender perspective, facilitating the role women can play in making these links;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote positive female role models at all levels of education, including compulsory schooling and through to further and higher education and postgraduate level, and also in informal education and youth work; recognises that promoting positive female role models includes taking measures to emphasise the historical and contemporary achievements of women in science and technology, entrepreneurship, and decision-making positions; notes that such measures may include specific focus on International Women's Day, Science Weeks, and making use of existing best practice from Member States and across the world;
14. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and relevant stakeholders to strengthen initiatives and programmes encouraging women to continue their scientific and academic careers, such as coaching and networking programmes and supporting female scientists – in particular young female scientists – participating in research programmes and grant applications, as well as supporting the individual careers of female researchers and the advancement of their careers to the highest grades; believes women should also be encouraged to apply for decision-making positions, while at the same time action must be taken to combat all types of barriers that make it hard or impossible to apply;
15. Urges the Commission and the Member States, when designing any gender equality strategy in higher education, to include specific consideration for women who face multiple discrimination, such as LGBTI women, women with disabilities, women from minority or migrant backgrounds, refugees, and women carers;
16. Urges the Member States to develop effective and attractive STEM curricular and teaching methods to keep girls engaged in science, and to recognise and invest in teachers as drivers of cultural change, with their potential to boost the continuing participation of girls in science at school;
17. Urges the Member States to recognise the potential of quality career guidance and of engaging in training to encourage girls to continue STEM subjects at university;

Balancing professional and personal life

18. Underlines that the need to successfully reconcile professional and family obligations often represents a major barrier that specifically affects women advancing their scientific

and academic careers, and is one of the main reasons for them dropping out of those careers;

19. Calls for more flexible working conditions for both male and female researchers, allowing them to combine work with family life, and for elimination of the gender pay gap in the interests of gender equality;
20. Calls on the Commission, the Member States, research funding organisations and other stakeholders to design programmes to actively encourage women to continue their careers after maternity or parental leave, and to provide funding for re-entry programmes which should be tailored to the needs of each institution and include the training needed to keep up with scientific developments, as well as allowing more flexibility regarding women's scientific production following the birth or adoption of a child and providing adequate childcare services, also encouraging the integration of men into family life; these measures should also be applied to researchers working on individual stipends and staff on externally funded research projects;
21. Encourages the Member States and regions to promote the development of family-friendly universities and research institutes;
22. Urges the Commission to recognise the need for adequate paternity leave and paternity pay so that it is affordable for men to take time off to care for a child and to help combat the norm of the woman being the parent to take a career break, in order to overcome a major barrier to women advancing their careers in science and academia;

Institutional changes and projects

23. Takes note of the fact that, in addition to encouraging individual women's careers, institutional changes are needed in order to overcome the barriers to gender equality, especially with regard to vertical segregation and the participation of women in decision-making committees;
24. Stresses the need for institutional involvement in supporting and encouraging these changes by setting new standards, addressing questions arising and monitoring progress, so as to enable female scientists to take advantage of available information and, at the same time, make an active contribution to the European Research Area;
25. Urges the Commission to propose a recommendation to Member States containing common guidelines on institutional change to promote gender equality in universities and research institutions;
26. Believes there is a need for the systematisation of available information regarding gender distribution and the position of female scientists in the Member States in order to promote gender equality in all public and private research institutions; considers that there is a need for consensus regarding further action to encourage projects relating to female scientists;
27. Urges the Commission to step up its coordination role regarding the gender mainstreaming initiatives within the European Research Area, and to raise awareness and offer relevant training aimed at stakeholders regarding the importance of gender mainstreaming in science and academia; stresses the need for measures to encourage true gender equality regarding academic and scientific career development;

28. Welcomes the fact that the Commission is financing the creation of gender equality plans through projects under the 7th Framework Programme and Horizon 2020, and also welcomes the joint project of the Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality for creating an on-line tool for gender equality plans as a means of identifying and sharing best practices with relevant stakeholders; underlines that proposed best practices should take into account the independence of universities and research organisations and the variety of their organisational structures across the Member States;
29. Invites the Member States to engage in partnerships with research organisations and universities to foster cultural and institutional changes on gender;
30. Calls on Member States to work with academic institutions to provide support and more opportunities for career progression at key transition points such as between Ph.D., postdoctoral and lectureship posts;
31. Stresses the need for full integration of the gender dimension in research and gender balance in participation into Horizon 2020; believes that this will require renewed efforts to integrate the gender dimension into the formulation and implementation of the next work programme; welcomes the creation of the Horizon 2020 Advisory Group on Gender (AGG); strongly believes that the objectives of Horizon 2020 will only be reached with the full participation of women scientists;
32. Calls on the Member States to work with academic institutions to proactively encourage women to apply for positions and ensure female representation on interview panels where possible;
33. Strongly believes that the gender dimension is a source of added value for research and provides a return on investment; highlights that gender analysis can foster innovation and multidisciplinary cooperation in science and technology;

Steps forward

34. Calls on the Member States to provide incentives to research institutes and universities to introduce and apply gender equality plans, to introduce a gender dimension in their national research programmes, to remove legal and other barriers to the recruitment, retention and career progression of female researchers, and to implement comprehensive strategies for structural change in order to overcome the existing gaps in research institutions and programmes;
35. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to address gender imbalances in the decision-making process and within the bodies responsible for hiring and promoting researchers, and to consider the creation of gender equality plans as a precondition for access to public funding in research, science and academia, in particular by encouraging research and science establishments to produce reports on their efforts to integrate women scientists and by ensuring open and transparent selection and promotion processes;
36. Recognises that gender equality strategies in higher education must also address the phenomena of gender-based violence; calls on the Commission and the Member States to devise strategies to address gender-based violence on university and college campuses, including awareness-raising, facilitating access to justice for women affected, and involving male students, academics and staff in the fight against violence;

37. Calls on the Member States to encourage employers to take measures to combat all forms of workplace mobbing affecting women, which may lead to victims being discouraged and, finally, resigning;
38. Encourages Member States to facilitate regular communication between national ministers for universities and science and ministers for equality, or the appropriate equivalent, so as to develop national policies which encourage and support women in science and academia;
39. Calls on the Member States to involve media and the private sector in eradicating gender stereotypes and promoting mutual respect; emphasises the role of the media in perpetuating or fighting to dispel gender stereotypes, and the media's potential for proactively promoting positive role models for women and girls which should be encouraged;
40. Calls on the Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality to further develop the existing methodology for maintaining gender-disaggregated statistics for all academic and scientific activity, in addition to human resources statistics, and to develop valid indicators for measuring institutional change processes, both nationally and across the European research area;
41. Calls on the Member States, the academic sector and all relevant stakeholders to introduce specialised programmes in education, and in particular tertiary education, in order to highlight the significance of gender equality;
42. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to consistently apply gender -balanced budgeting to all programmes and measures providing funding in the area of science, academia and research, and to develop guidelines and methods for monitoring and assessing the inclusion of the gender dimension in these areas;
43. Calls on the Member States to develop statistical measures to monitor the destinations of women leaving academia in order to enhance policymaking by academic institutions and governments in related areas;
44. Encourages the Member States to consider providing positive recognition of academic institutions that have taken measures to address gender inequality;
45. Asks the Commission to integrate the gender dimension into scientific and technological content in order to put an end to subtle forms of discrimination, by means of incentives to take sex and gender into account in research development;

Getting involved

46. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to further strengthen networking among female scientists at national, regional and EU level;
47. Encourages the Member States to consider implementing mentoring schemes with a particular focus on encouraging women to apply for funding grants, promotions or other opportunities and supporting them through that process;
48. Reiterates the importance of ensuring increased participation of women in decision-making and of ensuring gender balance on evaluation panels, selection boards and all other relevant committees, as well as nominated panels and committees taking decisions

related to recruitment, funding, research programmes and publishing; believes that research institutions and universities should be encouraged to introduce targets for the participation of women in such bodies; calls on the Commission and the Member States in this regard to base themselves on the Commission's proposal for a directive on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures¹, with a view to proposing similar legislative measures concerning senior positions for women in science and academia;

49. Calls on the Council to adopt, during the Luxembourg presidency, conclusions concerning gender equality in research in order to ensure greater representation and participation of women in the decision-making process in the research sector;
50. Calls on Parliament to introduce a 'Women and Science in Europe' prize, to be awarded to employers (undertakings, institutions or authorities), that lead the way in promoting women in academic and scientific circles, supporting female managers and ensuring equal pay;
51. Call on the Commission to promote, through information campaigns, the schemes and programmes intended to increase women's participation in scientific research;

o

o o

52. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments of the Member States.

¹ COM(2012)0614.