



European Platform of Women Scientists

20

YEARS

A N N U A L C O N F E R E N C E

**EMPOWERING WOMEN SCIENTISTS:
20 YEARS OF EPWS AND THE ROAD AHEAD**

20 - 21 NOVEMBER 2025

MAISON DES ASSOCIATIONS INTERNATIONALES
BRUSSELS





European Platform of Women Scientists



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EMPOWERING WOMEN SCIENTISTS:
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MAISON DES ASSOCIATIONS INTERNATIONALES
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This year's EPWS Annual Conference marks a significant milestone for the European Platform: the 20th anniversary of its foundation. Over the years, by representing the voices of its member associations, EPWS has continued its commitment to gender equality in research and to the integration of gender perspectives in science.

The year 2025 also commemorates the 30th anniversary of the launch of the Beijing Platform for Action, which initiated a global movement for women's and girls' rights and for gender equality.

Anniversaries offer important opportunity to reflect and assess whether the hopes and convictions that inspired EPWS, its European associations, and international women's rights organizations have led to the results they aspired to achieve.

European policies have improved the position of women in research and innovation, although much remains to be done. Today, however, we must recognize that we are living in a historical moment in which the values upon which our organizations of women scientists and EPWS —along with its identity and mission— are founded are being challenged. Concepts such as gender, equality, and inclusion are increasingly portrayed as controversial or even “inappropriate” in the political discourse of countries that were once considered beacons of democracy.

It is therefore essential to ask ourselves how, in this international context, to encounter a possible risk that this regressive wave could also influence the European outlook, by advocating for and strengthening the policies that have so far supported cultural and structural changes to promote the situation of women in research and innovation and the integration of the gender dimension in research.

Against this background, this conference sparks lively discussions, fosters new connections, and opens fresh perspectives on how we continue shaping the future of EPWS together — united in our mission to empower women scientists across Europe.

Accordingly, the program is strong and engaging, to inspire active participation and meaningful dialogue. Invited speakers are representatives of the European Union and acknowledged scientists of various disciplines. As part of a special session, EPWS member associations present their contributions, in line with the Call for Abstracts.

The Scientific committee of the EPWS Annual Conference 2025
Lucia Martinelli, Colette Guillopé, Maren Jochimsen, Dalia Šatkovskienė, Lígia Amâncio,
Eija Tuominen, and Mirella Orsi



European Platform of Women Scientists



P R O G R A M



20 NOV. 2025, 14:00 – 17:30

14:00

WELCOME – 20 YEARS OF EPWS

- **Lucia Martinelli**, President of EPWS and Board Member of *Donne e Scienza*
- **Maren Jochimsen**, Treasurer of EPWS and of Netzwerk Vorsorgendes Wirtschaften e. V. – Network Caring Economy
- **Dalia Šatkovskienė**, Member of the EPWS Board and President of BASNET Forumas Lithuania
- **Yuri Lopes Pereira**, EPWS Communications

14:30

EUROPEAN UPDATE

Chair: **Maren Jochimsen**, Treasurer of EPWS and of Netzwerk Vorsorgendes Wirtschaften e. V. – Network Caring Economy

Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Member of the European Parliament, Chair of Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality - FEMM, member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) and Vice-chair of STOA - Panel for the Future of Science and Technology of the European Parliament. *FEMM Committee's perspective on gender equality issues in EU science: problems, perspectives and solutions.*

Kateřina Svíčková, European Commission, Directorate General Research & Innovation, Head of the Gender Sector in DG Research and Innovation. *Women in Science and Gender in Research: Current Priorities and Future Perspectives in EU Policy.*

15:15

COFFEE BREAK



European Platform of Women Scientists



ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

EMPOWERING WOMEN SCIENTISTS:
20 YEARS OF EPWS AND THE ROAD AHEAD

20 NOV. 2025, 14:00 – 17:30

15:45

ROUND TABLE

Empowering Women Scientists: 20 Years of EPWS and the Road Ahead

Progress, challenges, and future aspirations in European research and science policy

Chairs: **Lucia Martinelli**, EPWS President and board member of Donne e Scienza;
Lígia Amâncio, EPWS board member and member of AMONET.

- **Flavia Zucco**, Donne e Scienza, Member of the EPWS Founding Board. Research Director, Italian National Research Council (CNR), retired. *Women and Science: From Past Aspirations to Present Realities, Vision and Memory.*
- **Liisa Husu**, Helsinki Association of Women Researchers - HELWOR, Member of the EPWS Founding Board. Senior Professor of Sociology, Division of Gender Studies and Sociology, Centre for Feminist Social Studies, Örebro University, Sweden; Affiliated scholar, Department of Management and Organisation, Hanken School of Economics, Finland. *Gender, Equality and Higher Education: What Has and Has Not Changed?*
- **Marileen Dogterom**, Professor at the Kavli Institute of Nanoscience at Delft University of Technology and President of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. *Academy's role in times of geopolitical conflicts.*

17:15

CONCLUSIONS

18:00 – 20:00

INFORMAL SOCIAL GET-TOGETHER



European Platform of Women Scientists



ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

EMPOWERING WOMEN SCIENTISTS:
20 YEARS OF EPWS AND THE ROAD AHEAD

21 NOV. 2025, 9:00 – 13:00

9:00

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

9:15

KEYNOTE LECTURE

Chair: **Lucia Martinelli**, President of EPWS and board member of Donne e Scienza

Katharina Miller: Research Director of Miller International Knowledge (MIK) and member of the EU Delegation to the W20. *Equity by Design: Embedding Ethics and Inclusion into the DNA of science*

9:45

MEMBER PRESENTATIONS:
SHOWCASE OF INNOVATION AND
PROGRESS

Chairs: **Mirella Orsi**, board member of Donne e Scienza and EPWS board alternate;
Dalia Šatkovskienė, Member of the EPWS Board and President of BASNET Forumas Lithuania

Ana Costa Freitas, AMONET- Associação Portuguesa de Mulheres Cientistas. *New Challenges for Women in Science: Between Backlash and Reinvention.*

Dalia Šatkovskienė & Sandra Pralgauskaitė, BASNET Forumas, Saulėtekio al. 9(III), LT-10222 Vilnius. *BASNET Forumas initiatives in changing Young Researchers situation in the Baltic States.*

Silvana Badaloni, Lucia Martinelli, Maria Rosaria Masullo, Mirella Orsi. Associazione Donne e Scienza. *Donne e Scienza and the European Road Towards Inclusive and Responsible Research.*

Ines Crisostomo, Michaela Gindl, Dagmar Hoeppel, Ekaterina Masetkina, Evelyn Rusdea. EUMENT-NET. *Strengthening Gender Equality through Mentoring: The Contribution of eument-net.*

Florence Sedes and May C. Morris. Femmes & Sciences. *Celebrating 10 Years Of Femmes & Sciences Mentoring To Empower Women In Science And Extending Mentoring Dimensions Beyond Established Frontiers.*

21 NOV. 2025, 9:00 – 13:00

11:00

COFFEE BREAK

11:15

MEMBER PRESENTATIONS – PART II

Chairs: **Mirella Orsi**, board member of Donne e Scienza and EPWS board alternate; Eija Tuominen, EPWS board member and Helsinki Association of Women Researchers – HELWOR

Eija Tuominen, Helsinki Association of Women Researchers – HELWOR. *Helsinki Association of Women Researchers supports the equality, diversity, and wellbeing in Finnish science.*

Sara Pirrone, Anna Di Ciaccio, Nadia Martucciello, Maria Rosaria Masullo, Paolo Rossi, Silvia Soria. Società Italiana di Fisica, SIF. *Gender Equality Actions from Società Italiana di Fisica.*

Afsar Sattari, Women in Natural Science and Engineering NUT e. V. *The Working group Graduated Female Refugees and Migrants (AKAD FM-FM) in Germany.*

Alesia Salavei, EPWS Individual Supporting Member. *Professional orientations of women PhD applicant in academic and university science in the Republic of Belarus.*

Colette Guillopé, Femmes & Mathématiques. *Networks of Women in STEM: a path towards more gender equality?*



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EMPOWERING WOMEN SCIENTISTS:
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21 NOV. 2025, 9:00 – 13:00

12:30

PLENARY DISCUSSION

12:45

CONCLUSIONS

13:00

END OF THE CONFERENCE

20 - 21 NOVEMBER 2025

MAISON DES ASSOCIATIONS INTERNATIONALES
RUE WASHINGTON, 40 1050 BRUXELLES

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I N V I T E D S P E A K E R S





LINA GÁLVEZ MUÑOZ

Lina Gálvez Muñoz is a Member of the European Parliament (EP) for Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group, since July 2019.

In the EP, she is Chair of the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee (FEMM), member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and Vice-chair of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA).

She also sits on the Committee on International Trade (INTA) as substitute member. She is a member of the Delegations for Relations with the United States and the Korean Peninsula, Vice-Chair of the Sky and Space Intergroup.

Social scientist and feminist, her work focuses on the understanding and measuring of gender economic inequalities in the past and in the present, and the centrality of women's work paid and unpaid to understand development paths, state models, and technological choices over time.



KATEŘINA SVÍČKOVÁ

Kateřina Svíčková has more than 15 years of experience in the European Commission where she has worked on policy development, implementation, analysis and design in various areas such as security, knowledge for policy, rule of law and gender equality.

In her current role as Head of Sector for Gender in the Commission's Directorate General for Research and Innovation, she steers the development and implementation of policies promoting gender equality in research and innovation in the European Research Area.



FLAVIA ZUCCO

Flavia Zucco retired on 2009, after being Head of Research at the Institute of Neurobiology and Molecular Medicine (CNR) in Rome.

She is a biologist and has worked on in vitro cellular differentiation and toxicology. In 1994 she got specialized in Bioethics at the University “La Sapienza”, Roma.

She is Honorary Member of the European Society of in Vitro Toxicology (ESTIV).

She has coordinated two European project in FP5 (Anim.AL.See) and FP6 (Liintop) and has been expert of several national and international organisations for her field of research.

She is author of 80 scientific publications, 107 congress communication and editor of congress proceedings and books. She has organised courses and congresses at national and international level, and has given invited presentation in Belgium, Greece, Germany, Ireland, Italy, India.

She is active in the field of Women and Science since 1988. In 1998 she was appointed in the CNR’s Commission for women scientists promotion. She has been the President of the “Women and Science” Association in Italy. She has also been a founding member of EPWS.



LIISA HUSU

Following a femocrat career in the national equality machinery in Finland 1981-1995, Liisa Husu pursued an academic research career focusing on gender in academia, science and knowledge production, with strong European and international engagement, initiated by her PhD in 2001 *Sexism, Support and Survival in Academia. Academic Women and Hidden Discrimination in Finland*.

She has served widely as a gender expert and adviser for research policy and funding bodies across the Nordic countries, Europe, and internationally, contributing to gender equality in universities and research systems since the early 1980s. She has delivered invited lectures in over 30 countries and participated in seven EU gender and science projects. She contributed to the EC reports *Gender and Excellence in the Making* (2004) and *The Gender Challenge in Research Funding* (2009), and was a member of the EC expert group on the impact of COVID-19 on gender equality in research and innovation (2022).

She was Scientific Advisor to the European Women Rectors Association (EWORA, 2016–2023), and currently serves on the Scientific Advisory Board of CIEG, University of Lisbon (since 2023), and as Scientific Adviser to the GENIE gender initiative, Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden (since 2018).



MARILEEN DOGTEROM

Marileen Dogterom is a Dutch biophysicist and professor of bionanoscience at the Kavli Institute of Nanoscience at Delft University of Technology. She is President of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences since 2022.

She graduated cum laude in 1994 with a doctorate from the University of Paris-Sud, and worked as a postdoc at Bell Labs in the United States.

She is one of the pioneers in the field of biomolecular and cellular physics.

For her work she received several international awards among which an ERC Synergy Grant and the Dutch Spinoza Prize in 2018 for her research on the skeleton of the cell.

She is a fellow of the Biophysical Society (USA) and a member of EMBO as well as Academia Europaea member.

In 2025 she was elected member of the German National Academy of Sciences.



KATHARINA MILLER

Katharina Miller is a lawyer and expert in ethics, compliance, and governance, with over fifteen years of experience advising international organizations, corporations, and EU-funded research projects on integrity, diversity, and accountability frameworks.

She is the Founder and Managing Partner of Miller International Knowledge (MIK), a law firm dedicated to knowledge valorization and the ethical, legal, and social impact of innovation. She also presides over the Fundación Hajo MILLER, which is currently developing a Knowledge Valorisation Platform to promote inclusive and responsible research and innovation ecosystems. Katharina is currently Work Package Lead in the Horizon Europe project IP4OS, focusing on governance and sustainability frameworks for open science infrastructures. Previously, she served as WP Lead for Research Culture and EDI issues in reproducibility within the iRISE project, advancing equality, diversity, and integrity in research environments.

As Adjunct Professor at IE University, she teaches Ethics and Values, Corporate Compliance, and Comparative Law, inspiring students to integrate ethics and equality into leadership. A former Task Lead for the Ethical Framework of DivAirCity and advisor on IntelComp and IMPACT EdTech, she brings a unique perspective at the intersection of law, ethics, and innovation. Her work bridges legal rigor and social purpose—advocating for systems that foster trust, transparency, and equitable participation in science and society.



European Platform of Women Scientists



I N T E R A C T I V E S E S S I O N

S h a p i n g t h e F u t u r e o f
G e n d e r E q u a l i t y i n
R e s e a r c h

A B S T R A C T S



New Challenges for Women in Science: Between Backlash and Reinvention

Ana Costa Freitas

AMONET- Associação Portuguesa de Mulheres Cientistas

<https://www.amonet.org/>

Associação Portuguesa de Mulheres Cientistas Women scientists' organizations were founded on the conviction that there can be no excellent science without diversity, equality, and inclusion. Today, these values are under open attack. In countries such as Afghanistan, girls and women are excluded from education and scientific research, facing the denial of their future. Yet even in democratic contexts, discourses are re-emerging that push women back into the role of “angels of the house,” undermining achievements once thought secure. What once seemed a democratic consensus — gender equality as a fundamental value — is now portrayed as “ideology” or “political imposition.” This shift compels us to reflect: are we responding effectively? The vision of the future we advocate is one of active resistance against backlash, but also of reinventing strategies of mobilization. We need strong narratives that connect science to society, and inclusive practices that leave no space for simplistic delegitimization. Within this framework, EPWS has a decisive role: uniting voices, strengthening international alliances, and advocating at the European level so that gender equality remains a criterion of scientific quality. Yet it is also important to acknowledge the growing internal diversity of the debate itself. The proliferation of identities and “genders” — beyond the traditional male/female dichotomy — may be contributing to fragmentation and, paradoxically, to weakening the struggle of women in science. In the end, one difficult question remains: when we speak, who are we speaking for? In Portugal, AMONET has been seeking answers through multiple formats: podcasts and radio programs that bring science and gender equality to diverse audiences; webinars that create accessible spaces for debate; and an annual meeting which, although less attended in person, remains an important moment for sharing and networking. Yet experience shows that online formats are rarely fully absorbed, while in-person participation demands a time investment many cannot, or don't want to, afford. Finding the right balance between accessibility and impact is one of the central dilemmas of our action. Finally, one worrying reality must be stressed: the majority of women in science do not appear to be fully aware — or alert — to these emerging threats. Studies show that many women scientists still perceive gender equality as “achieved” and thus underestimate the persistence of structural barriers (EC, She Figures 2021; UNESCO, Gender Equality in Science, Technology and Innovation 2023). This lack of awareness makes it even more urgent to strengthen advocacy, education, and collective mobilization.

BASNET Forumas initiatives in changing Young Researchers situation in the Baltic States

Dalia Šatkovskienė, Sandra Pralgauskaitė

BASNET Forumas, Saulėtekio al. 9(III), LT-10222 Vilnius

<https://www.basnetforumas.eu/>

In today's rapidly evolving world—shaped by scientific breakthroughs and the **increasing role of research in global economic competitiveness**—the structure of science itself is undergoing profound transformation. It is gradually aligning with a business-oriented model, leading to the destabilization of traditional linear scientific careers. This shift has resulted in decreased motivation to pursue and remain in scientific professions. Taking into account, that young generation of researchers are the future scientific potential, it became a challenge for the science. The presentation highlights the latest BASNET Forumas initiatives in changing Young Researchers (YR) situation in the Baltic States from the gender equality perspective.

The presentation is based on knowledge gained from OECD policy paper [1], experience implementing COST Action VOICES [2] and on the materials of organized by BASNET Forumas events [3-4], resulting in Recommendations to the policy makers and other stakeholders of the science ecosystem, submitted to the governments of the Baltic States.

References

- [1] Reducing the precarity of academic research careers, OECD Science, technology and industry policy papers, May 2021 no. 113
- [2] Liudvika Leišytė, Ivana Načinović Braje, Almog Shulamit, Sultan Baysan, Teresa Carvalho, Dovilė Daunoraitė, Sara Diogo, Panourgias Papaioannou, Anna Farmaki, Shlomit Feldman, Rakibe Külcür, Inga Matijošytė, Sandra Pralgauskaitė, Vanya Rangelova, Dalia Šatkovskienė (2026) Early Career Researchers as Stakeholders in University Decision-Making in Europe: Comparative Perspectives. Social Inclusion, Volume 14, Article 9683
- [3] International Conference: The situation of young researchers in the Baltic States: Development or waste of future scientific potential? <https://www.basnetforumas.eu/international-conference-basnet-15-year/>
- [4] <https://www.basnetforumas.eu/international-meeting-of-stakeholders-2024/>

Donne e Scienza and the European Road Towards Inclusive and Responsible Research

Silvana Badaloni, Lucia Martinelli, Maria Rosaria Masullo, Mirella Orsi

Donne e Scienza (Italian Women and Science Association)

<https://www.donnescienza.it/>

Donne e Scienza, (D&S, The Italian Women and Science Association) was one of the founding members of the European Platform of Women Scientists (EPWS). Over the past twenty years, D&S has played an active role in promoting the presence, visibility, and recognition of women in science in Italy and across Europe. Since its foundation, the association has brought together women scientists working in Higher Education Institutions and Public Research Organisations, fostering interdisciplinary exchange, mentoring, and the development of gender-sensitive research practices. D&S activities are closely aligned with the mission and vision of EPWS. They focus on empowering women researchers and increasing their participation and career advancement; advocating for gender equality in research policies and evaluation systems; and integrating the gender perspective into research and innovation processes. Through its initiatives, D&S has contributed to the broader European dialogue on gender mainstreaming in science, supporting EPWS in influencing research policy frameworks and promoting inclusive scientific cultures.

At the same time, D&S engages with the cultural and ethical dimensions of science, reflecting on the role of scientific knowledge in advancing social justice, equality, and democratic values. In the current global context —marked by wars, humanitarian crises, and a worrying resurgence of anti-gender and anti-equality narratives and policies — D&S has opened an internal reflection on the civic and ethical responsibilities of women scientists. Its most recent annual conference, held in Genoa (9–11 December 2024), was dedicated to these issues, discussing the values that the scientific community —and particularly women scientists— should uphold and promote in times of social and political uncertainty. A crucial current focus concerns technological development and the STEM fields, not only as areas where young women’s participation must be encouraged, but also as domains where gender perspectives are essential for responsible innovation. Particular attention is devoted to Artificial Intelligence, emphasizing the need to counteract bias and stereotypes that risk turning technology into a tool of exclusion rather than human progress.

Another key commitment of D&S, shared with EPWS, is the fight against gender-based violence, including violence within research institutions. The joint conference organized by D&S and EPWS in Pisa (20–21 September 2018) highlighted institutional responsibilities and collective strategies to address this persistent challenge. Through these initiatives, D&S continues to contribute actively to the EPWS mission of building a more equitable, inclusive, and ethically grounded European research landscape.

Strengthening Gender Equality through Mentoring: The Contribution of eument-net

Ines Crisostomo, Michaela Gindl, Dagmar Hoeppel, Ekaterina Masetkina, Evelyn Rusdea

EUMENT-NET

<https://www.eument-net.eu/>

The 20th anniversary of EPWS is a timely moment to reflect on both achievements and current risks for gender equality in European academia. While significant progress has been made, recent political and societal developments show that the core values of gender equity cannot be taken for granted. Political frameworks, the persistence of the “leaky pipeline” and regression in diversity and inclusion policies demand renewed strategies and strong alliances.

As members of the European Network of Mentoring Programs (eument-net) for the Advancement of Equal Opportunities and Cultural and Institutional Change in Academia and Research, we see mentoring as a proven and forward-looking measure to address these challenges. Equality-oriented mentoring developed from focusing on the individual career progression of female researchers (“fix the women”) to driving cultural and institutional change (“fix the institution”, “fix the structure”, “fix the culture”). By connecting programs across Europe, eument-net contributes to knowledge exchange, mutual learning, and the strengthening of gender equality strategies within research institutions.

Looking to the future, we propose that mentoring schemes with an innovative, intersectional approach should continue to be a pillar in advancing gender equality and inclusive research environments. Mentoring conversations provide space not only to address structural barriers for underrepresented groups and foster equality but also to impact the culture of an organization – participants are empowered to act, for themselves and as allies and sponsors for others. Mentoring builds communities, and participants in mentoring programs act as change agents. They also create a framework that strengthens networks, safeguards progress against backlash, and shapes policies promoting equitable and balanced research careers.

In this contribution, we will present experiences and best practices from eument-net and invite reflection on how mentoring can continue to drive cultural and institutional change, advance gender equality, and foster inclusive research environments across Europe

Networks of Women in STEM: a path towards more gender equality?

Colette Guillopé

Femmes & Mathématiques (Women & Mathematics)

<https://femmes-et-maths.fr/lassociation/>

The French association Femmes & Mathématiques (Women and Mathematics) was founded in 1987 by a group of female mathematicians and female mathematics teachers who predicted at the time that, even though there very few female mathematicians in France, there could be even fewer in the future following a change in the way female students were recruited in competitive higher education programs. In the 2000s, the European Commission helped European countries to do more to promote gender equality in all areas of society, whether political, academic, or professional.

In France, the association Femmes & Mathématiques cofounded the association Femmes & Sciences in 2000, one of many French associations that became members of the newly formed EPWS. Indeed, EPWS has been and remains a place where different national associations come together, could exchange ideas or organize events. To take an example, Femmes & Mathématiques, the CPED (Permanent Conference of Equality-Diversity Officers of French Universities), and BuKoF (the German Federal Conference of Gender Equality Officers in Higher Education) all contributed to in a workshop organized during the International Conference against Gender-Based Violence in December 2017 in Paris. Another example is the collaboration between EPWS associations during the conference organized by Donne e Scienza and EPWS about Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions and Research Performing Organization in 2018 in Pisa.

In this presentation, we will show how networks are essential for developing activities aimed at women scientists in all countries as well as for implementing actions with governments that could lead to changes in legislation.

*Celebrating 10 Years Of Femmes & Sciences Mentoring To Empower Women In Science
And Extending Mentoring Dimensions Beyond Established Frontiers*

Florence Sedes and May C. Morris

Femmes & Sciences <https://www.femmesetsciences.fr/>

In 2015 Femmes & Sciences, a French Association that promotes science and technology, and supports women throughout their scientific careers, established a mentoring programme to encourage, guide and support young women during their PhD. Thanks to a network of scientific mentors, mentees can benefit from a trustworthy and nurturing environment to discuss their career path, to learn how to value their skills and reflect on their professional perspectives. The originality of the programme lies in the combination of one-on-one mentor-mentee meetings with collective meetings, including mentoring discussion circles, career development workshops, and testimonies by female role models. Beyond the impact and success of the programme for young women in the early years of their career, this incentive has yielded a network of scientists engaged in good practices.

Initially established in Montpellier, Toulouse and Paris-Saclay the programme has extended broadly throughout France, with the support of several Universities and the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research. In 2022 an incentive at Aix-Marseille University adapted the mentoring programme to guide and support female scientists who have been hired by scientific institutions. Overall, this has inspired two French scientific institutions, CNRS and INSERM, to launch similar programmes for female scientists within their institutional frames.

Based on our experience in mentoring, and our aim to reach out and support women with a broad perspective, we are now extending our programme both geographically and in cybersecurity.

The WEM Cyber programme aims to empower women in cybersecurity by providing structured support, role models and long-term professional guidance through combination of individual guidance with group sessions to reinforce confidence, leadership skills and career visibility. The objective is to create a sustainable network of female professionals who will become tomorrow's mentors, thus amplifying the impact across generations.

The IDBIO project/ UNESCO Chair is a Franco-African academic collaboration that aims to create higher education training programmes in sustainable engineering of bio-based products in six African universities, thereby facilitating emergence of new sub-sectors for bio-based products recovered from renewable resources and waste, to boost a sustainable economy. Within the frame of IDBIO a partnership with F&S aims to establish a mentoring programme for female doctoral and master students at African Universities, through training of local mentors and coordinators, thereby promoting implementation of best practices and equal opportunities for women and men in scientific academia. By fostering cross-cultural collaborations Femmes & Sciences contributes to a global movement for inclusivity, reinforcing resilience and innovation at a time when both continents face urgent digital and sustainable challenges.

Helsinki Association of Women Researchers supports the equality, diversity, and wellbeing in Finnish science

Eija Tuominen

Helsinki Association of Women Researchers - HELWOR

<https://blogs.helsinki.fi/tutkijanaiset/the-helsinki-association-of-women-researchers/>

The Helsinki Association of Women Researchers (HELWOR) was founded in early 1980s and has since united women from diverse disciplines and career stages from universities and research institutions in the Metropolitan Helsinki region, with a strong commitment to promoting the status of women within the scientific community. To fulfil this mission, HELWOR monitors and shares information on events and issues concerning gender equality and diversity in academia and science, engages in both national and international science policy discourse, and organises and supports initiatives and dialogues advancing equality and well-being in academia. How equality and diversity planning that is a legal obligation in Finland has been implemented in practice in universities and in the national research council Academy of Finland, and challenges this includes, has been a topic of recent HELWOR events.

HELWOR has consistently prioritised efforts to address sexual harassment, recognising its persistent role within academic environments. In this context, HELWOR Vice Chair, Professor Liisa Husu, has significantly contributed to the EU-funded UniSAFE project that systematically gathered data on gender-based violence and sexual harassment in research institutions and provided recommendations for effective prevention measures. In the realm of wellbeing, board member Professor Hanna Vehkamäki has served as vice-dean for wellbeing and equality at the University of Helsinki's Department of Science, marking the first appointment to such a position at Finnish universities.

Gender Equality Actions from Società Italiana di Fisica

Sara Pirrone, Anna Di Ciaccio, Nadia Martucciello, Maria Rosaria Masullo, Paolo Rossi, Silvia Soria

Società Italiana di Fisica - SIF

<https://www.sif.it/>

The Italian Physical Society (Società Italiana di Fisica, SIF), since 2017, with the foundation of the CPO (Comitato Pari Opportunità) promotes and realizes initiatives and affirmative action to support gender equality in Physics, in line with the European policy.

The focus of this contribution is on the initiatives carried out especially during the Annual National Congress (the most important meeting of the Society), concerning activity as: family support during the congress, the proposal of positive women role model in science, organization of interviews and round tables with different components of the civil society, appointment of Awards for Women in science.

CPO-SIF key actions include also the monitoring of gender balance and career progression in physics, looking at research institutional data and realizes aimed at raising awareness and promoting systemic change.

SIF also supports educational and outreach activities that challenge stereotypes and encourage underrepresented groups to pursue careers in physics. These efforts reflect SIF's commitment to building a more equitable and diverse scientific community, in alignment with broader European and international EDI strategies.

The Working group Graduated Female Refugees and Migrants (AKAD FM-FM) in Germany

Afsar Sattari

Women in Natural Science and Engineering NUT e. V.

<http://www.nut.de/>

Associação Portuguesa de Mulheres Cientistas Women scientists' organizations were founded on the conviction that there can be no excellent science without diversity, equality, and inclusion. Today, these values are under open attack. In countries such as Afghanistan, girls and women are excluded from education and scientific research, facing the denial of their future. Yet even in democratic contexts, discourses are re-emerging that push women back into the role of “angels of the house,” undermining achievements once thought secure. What once seemed a democratic consensus — gender equality as a fundamental value — is now portrayed as “ideology” or “political imposition.” This shift compels us to reflect: are we responding effectively? The vision of the future we advocate is one of active resistance against backlash, but also of reinventing strategies of mobilization. We need strong narratives that connect science to society, and inclusive practices that leave no space for simplistic delegitimization. Within this framework, EPWS has a decisive role: uniting voices, strengthening international alliances, and advocating at the European level so that gender equality remains a criterion of scientific quality. Yet it is also important to acknowledge the growing internal diversity of the debate itself. The proliferation of identities and “genders” — beyond the traditional male/female dichotomy — may be contributing to fragmentation and, paradoxically, to weakening the struggle of women in science. In the end, one difficult question remains: when we speak, who are we speaking for? In Portugal, AMONET has been seeking answers through multiple formats: podcasts and radio programs that bring science and gender equality to diverse audiences; webinars that create accessible spaces for debate; and an annual meeting which, although less attended in person, remains an important moment for sharing and networking. Yet experience shows that online formats are rarely fully absorbed, while in-person participation demands a time investment many cannot, or don't want to, afford. Finding the right balance between accessibility and impact is one of the central dilemmas of our action. Finally, one worrying reality must be stressed: the majority of women in science do not appear to be fully aware — or alert — to these emerging threats. Studies show that many women scientists still perceive gender equality as “achieved” and thus underestimate the persistence of structural barriers (EC, She Figures 2021; UNESCO, Gender Equality in Science, Technology and Innovation 2023). This lack of awareness makes it even more urgent to strengthen advocacy, education, and collective mobilization.

Professional orientations of women PhD applicant in academic and university science in the Republic of Belarus

Alesia Salavei

EPWS Individual Supporting Member

Women PhD applicant belong to a feminine socio-demographic group in society, whose status is determined by the fulfillment of a number of female gender roles. On the other hand, they are part of a professional community aimed at fulfilling a number of work duties that ensure the development and functioning of science. Traditionally, women are more often than men involved in domestic responsibilities. This "double burden" can be a factor influencing a woman's life and career choices. The study of women's career orientations is necessary for the further development of mechanisms for retaining women motivated by science.

In the Republic of Belarus, the proportion of women among postgraduate students in 2024/2025 is 57.1%. Among doctoral students – 53.5% are women.

The specificity of women's professional activity is characterized by an orientation toward a mixed type of scientific career – *monetary-qualification with an orientation toward recognition among professionals and responsible performance of official duties*.

The majority of women surveyed believe that scientific work is their vocation – 71.0%. Interested in building their scientific career – 75.7%. Moreover, more than half of the respondents – 57.6% – consider science to be their final professional choice.

However, almost one in three (29.1%) plans to complete postgraduate/doctoral studies and defend a dissertation. This figure falls within three years of completing postgraduate/doctoral studies – 35.0%.

Thus, the majority of women's focus on building a scientific career is not only an awareness of scientific activity as a vocation and a desire to defend dissertations, but also a desire to promote new ideas and develop new research topics and scientific directions.

Based on the results of a comprehensive sociological study (in 2024, 1,050 respondents were surveyed, 664 of whom were women) the professional and career orientations of women seeking academic degrees (graduate students, doctoral students, as well as those who have completed graduate/doctoral studies, but have not yet defended their dissertations) are analyzed (Table).

Table. – Career orientations of women PhD applicant (in %)

Monetary career	% women
Receive a fair reward for the results achieved	40,2
Have the maximum salary for your work	13,8
Qualifying career	
Promote your own research topics	41,0
Suggest new ideas, plans	55,0
Executive career	
Do whatever is required of you	5,0
Perform official duties responsibly	35,7
Status career	
Achieve recognition among professionals	38,2
Achieve a high official position	9,6



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