

## SUMMARY

1. Editorial	1-2
2. EPWS Network Outreach, April-July 2006	2-5
3. Networking as important empowerment tool for women scientists	5-6
4. Political agreement on FP7	6
5. Research and innovation programme: priorities of the Finnish EU Presidency	6-7
6. Scientific Council announces ERC peer review panel structure	7
7. EU project to examine relationship between gender and scientific practices	7-8
8. EC launches study to assess the remunerations of researchers	8
9. WWF Kathryn Fuller Fellowships 2007-2008	8
10. Events	8-9

### Editorial



In April 2006, the European Platform of Women Scientists started its two-step outreach to the scientific community contacting existing networks of women scientists and to those promoting women scientists throughout Europe.

In quest of members of the Association and in preparation of the first EPWS Network Event on 20 October 2006, the Platform tried to obtain preliminary information on the existing networks of women in science, based on the European Commission's 2003 *Directory of Networks of Women Scientists*, and to extend its scope to any new networks created since then as well as to enquire so as to their eventual participation to our Network Event and their interest in becoming members of the Association.

The first successful contacts *via* Mini-Surveys, as a result of which more than 50 organisations from different countries and research fields expressed their interest in becoming members of the Platform, has been followed by a more in-depth Network Questionnaire sent out in June 2006.

The response to our outreach taken both steps together has been very encouraging: 109 networks provided information via the Mini Survey and/or the Network Questionnaire, 80 are interested in attending the First EPWS Network Event on 20 October 2006, 75% would like to join the Platform as Full Members or Associate Members.

Let me take this opportunity to thank all of you who supported our request and provided us with information and manifested their interest in the Platform as a new strategic instrument for the promotion of women in science. We highly appreciate your support and are looking forward to intensify our collaboration in the future.

In this Newsletter, we want to give you a short progress report and share with you the most prominent results with regard to the response rate, the geographical coverage, the disciplines represented as well as the categories of membership indicated.

The result is impressive. But since we know that even more networks of women scientists are out there, we still want to do better. Let me emphasise again, therefore, that it is in our interest to get in touch with as many existing networks of women scientists and networks promoting women scientists from as many

disciplines in as many countries in Europe as possible. The Network Questionnaire and the EPWS Membership Application Form continue to be found on the EPWS website and we highly welcome you making use of them.

The Platform has been created to strengthen the position of women in science by networking their networks and representing you and your interests in the research policy debate. To be

able to effectively do so, we need you to join our common endeavour. We appreciate your feed-back, your support, and your co-operation. In short: we want you as members of the Association!

Maren Jochimsen  
*EPWS Secretary General*

### EPWS Network Outreach, April-July 2006

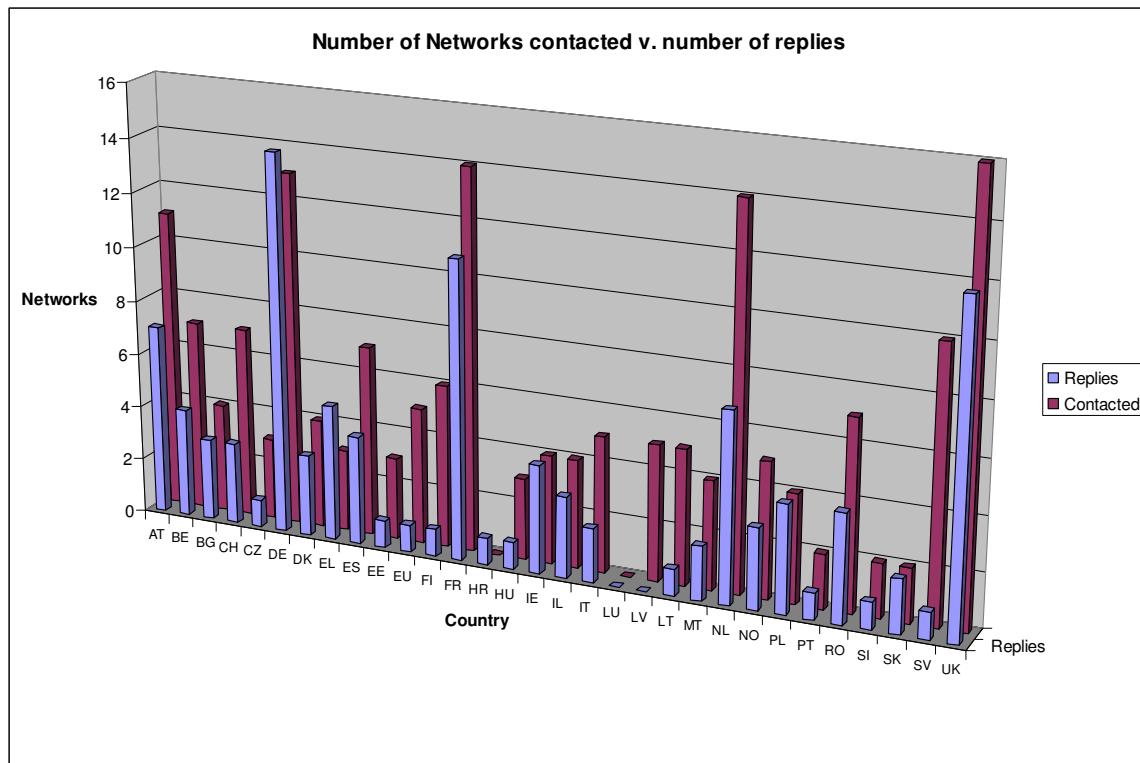


Chart 1: Number of networks contacted versus number of replies received

The European Platform of Women Scientists started its outreach to the science community in April 2006 with an initial screening of networks of women scientists across Europe via a Mini-Survey. The starting point for contacts had been the European Commission's Directory of Networks of

Women Scientists (Network Guide) published in 2003.

With the Mini-Survey, individuals not affiliated to any network and representatives of existing networks or associations were asked to either provide or update their contact details so as to revise the data listed in the 2003 Network Guide.

Following on this first stage, in June 2006 a Network Questionnaire was devised and sent to all networks of women scientists and those promoting women scientists in Europe that had previously received the Mini-Survey. Furthermore, the additional networks which had been in touch with the Platform after receiving information on our activities through various channels were also included in the reach out of the Questionnaire.

The Network Questionnaire seeks to gather in-depth information on the structure and activities of existing networks of women scientists in different fields of research as well as their interest and expectations as future members of the Platform.

This data will allow us to thoroughly prepare for a stimulating and interesting Network Event in Brussels on 20 October 2006, offering participants the chance to network in view of organising the first EPWS General Assembly in 2007.

Selected results from both Mini-Survey and Network Questionnaire are presented in the following.

#### *Response rate*

The above bar graph (Chart 1) illustrates the response of the EU25 and countries associated to the Community's RTD Framework programme to the Mini-Survey from April 2006 and the Network Questionnaire from June 2006.

By the end of July 2006, 109 networks had replied, surpassing the number of 83 networks presented in the 2003 Network Guide. It seems to us that some networks disappeared since then, but the majority are still active and new ones have been created. In improving the response rate from the various countries, solicitation from Helsinki group and EPWS Board of Administration members and their personal engagement led to positive results.

The repartition of the feedback from the networks follows this pattern:

- ✓ Reply to Mini-Survey (MS) only: 23
- ✓ Reply to Network Questionnaire (NQ) only: 54
- ✓ Reply to MS and NQ: 32

Nearly 50% of the total replies come from NQ outreach. The reply number increased by about 100% compared to first wave of MS contacts. This could be due to the online posting of the Network Questionnaire, the more targeted emails, and the Platform having been more extensively advertised.

#### *Geographical Coverage*

Excellent outreach was achieved in countries such as Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the U.K., as these countries already had the biggest amount of established networks and associations. Generally, the respective networks have been established for more than 10 years, and have been sustainable throughout this time.

Even though a good variety of networks dealing with women in science exists in the Nordic countries, response rates were rather low concerning this geographical area (7.3%).

With regards to Central and Eastern European countries, even though the response rate was modest, the interest in EPWS and enthusiasm for creating new networks has been tangible. Our reach-out in those countries is promising. Apart from Latvia, at least one network or association from each New Member State and Accessing Country as well as Candidate Country Croatia have filled in the Network Questionnaire and expressed their desire to be part of EPWS.

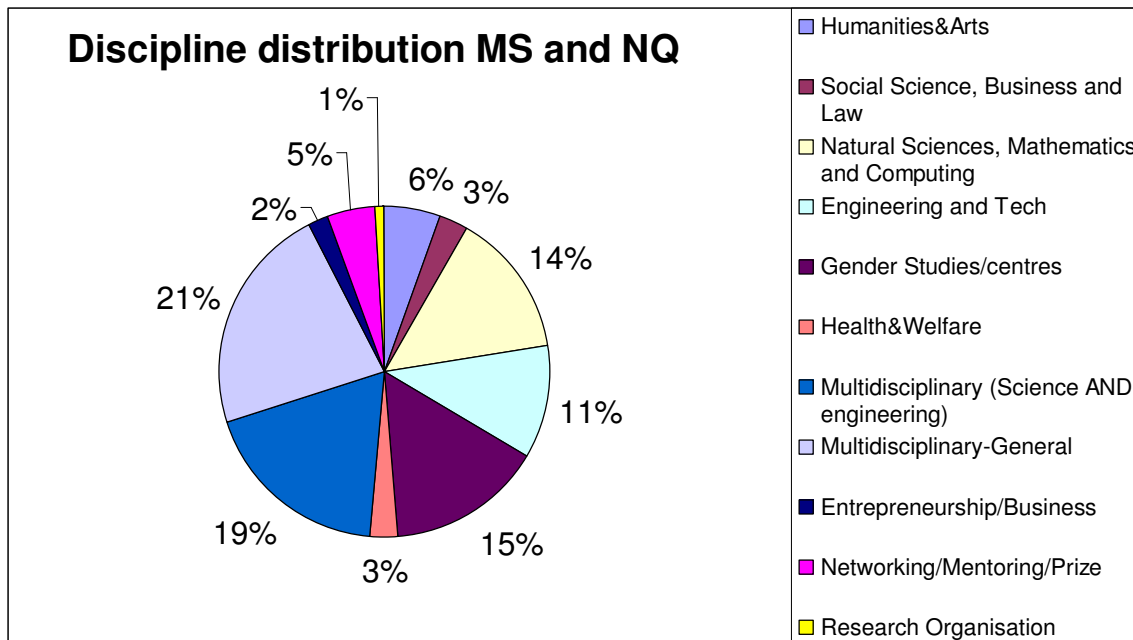


Chart 2: Discipline distribution in the replies to Mini-Survey and Network Questionnaire

### Disciplines

The pie chart above (Chart 2) highlights the various disciplines represented in the overall survey of women scientists' networks across Europe, undertaken over the past 4 months. The grouping of disciplines is broad, as a more precise classification would not give a general overview of the different fields.

Networks dealing with or around traditional hard sciences (44%) represent just under twice the amount of those representing humanities and social sciences (24%). More specifically, feedback has been good in the gender studies area (15%) and in the humanities (6%), but rather low in the other social sciences and law: only one network dealing with economics and one with political sciences has replied to our questionnaires.

Networks described as multidisciplinary have been divided into two different categories

- Those dealing primarily with natural sciences and engineering (19%)
- Those encompassing the whole spectrum of disciplines (21%)

Those covering the whole range of disciplines tend to include national or European networks

of university women or national associations of women scientists.

One of the Platform's main goals is to target networks of women in the private sector. As of now, it has proven difficult to reach out to this community (2% of the responses), as networks of women in industry are still rare, and furthermore not highly visible. They seem to be developed for in-house purposes. From conferences and meetings, the contacts we have established with women in industries and business have been good, but results are not yet showing.

Next to networks of women scientists, programmes promoting women scientists, such as mentoring, support or funding schemes, have also shown an interest in the Platform and we hope will continue to support the Association.

### Categories of membership indicated

The majority of questionnaires come from either formal networks or registered associations (54% of those who indicated their type of network), with a few networks being informal or over the internet. Of the networks who have indicated their preference in terms of

membership category, just over 50% indicate their interest in full membership, whilst 25% opt for associate membership, thereby manifesting interest of the community to gain visibility on the European scene by becoming part of the Platform.

#### *Interest in attending the first EPWS Network Event on 20 October 2006*

Over 80% of the networks/associations which sent back either the Mini-Survey or the Network Questionnaire have expressed their desire to attend the Network Event on 20 October in Brussels.

#### *Replies from individuals*

Aside from networks, around 50 individual scientists not affiliated to any network have expressed their interest in the Platform. Through their Mini-Surveys and their Membership Application Forms, they have communicated their interest to join an existing or found a new network.

#### *Possibilities to get involved in EPWS*

The Network Questionnaire, as well as the EPWS Membership Application Form, is available online. The June edition of the EPWS Newsletter provides detailed information on membership issues and categories

Link to the Network Questionnaire:

[http://www.epws.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=53&Itemid=62](http://www.epws.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=53&Itemid=62)

Link to the EPWS Membership Application Form:

[http://www.epws.org/index.php?option=com\\_performs&formid=5&Itemid=4603](http://www.epws.org/index.php?option=com_performs&formid=5&Itemid=4603)

Link to the EPWS June Newsletter:

[http://www.epws.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogsection&id=18&Itemid=4591](http://www.epws.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogsection&id=18&Itemid=4591)

For additional information please contact: Marianne Schwarz da Silva, Project Manager Networking, Tel: +32-2-234 37 51, Fax +32-2-234 37 59, e-mail [marianne.dasilva@epws.org](mailto:marianne.dasilva@epws.org).

### **Networking as important empowerment tool for women scientists**

Since 1999, when the European Commission published its Communication on “Women in Science: Mobilising Women to enrich European Research”, networks of women scientists have been identified as an important empowerment and policy tool to promote and to increase the number of women scientists in top positions.

Networks also have a key role to play in ensuring a better integration of the gender dimension in the policy debate.

The rationale behind networking of women scientists is:

- ✓ To support, enhance and empower members in their professional career
- ✓ To inform, encourage and motivate girls and young women to choose scientific subjects
- ✓ To provide a database of role models and mentors
- ✓ To take part in decision making and policy processes to improve the gender balance in science

The European Platform of Women Scientists has been established precisely against this background and to take the instrument of networking to the European level. The aim of the Platform is to promote the interests of women in science in the EU policy debate by networking the networks of women scientists. This entails integrating and coordinating already existing networks as well as providing advice for structural reinforcement and on financial support for the creation and sustainability of networks.

EPWS met the Brussels community of European Institutions, national permanent representations to the EU, research councils, a variety of Brussels-based research oriented associations and representatives of the private sector during its Launch Event in Brussels on 28 March 2006.

We are now keen and curious to know and meet the networking community of women scientists and those promoting women in

science who are the main stakeholders in our common endeavour.



Members of the EPWS Board of Administration, the EPWS Secretariat and the Project Coordinators, 28 March 2006

That is what has been the aim of our networking activities and our membership outreach for the last four months.

### Political agreement on FP7



On 24 July 2006, the Competitiveness Council met in extraordinary session in Brussels, under the Chairmanship of Mauri Pekkarinen, Finnish Minister

for Trade and Industry, with the purpose of adopting the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development for the period 2007 to 2013 (FP7) of the European Community. The debate in the Council was based upon the Commission's revised proposal from 28 June 2006, following the adoption of the European Parliament's report from 15 June.

On this occasion, agreement was reached among Member States on funding research activities involving human embryonic cells, a controversial ethical issue. As in FP6, certain areas will not receive EU funding: human cloning for reproductive purposes, research intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable, and research intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of

research or the purpose of stem cell procurement.

The Council also decided upon an indicative breakdown of spending among the programmes. The 4 specific programmes (Cooperation, Ideas, People and Capacities), initially proposed by the Commission remain unchanged.

The Parliament's proposal on having 10 thematic areas under the "Cooperation" specific programme was retained as well (health; food, agriculture and biotechnology; information and communication technologies (ICT); nanosciences, nanotechnologies, materials and new production technologies; energy; environment; transport; socio-economic sciences and the humanities; space; and security).

The Council also reached a unanimous political agreement on FP7 with regard to the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research activities for 2007 to 2011.

The political agreement on FP7 reached by the Council clears the way for a second Parliament reading of the FP7 proposals in autumn, and the timely launch of the programme on 1 January 2007.

Source: Cordis Express, No. 197, 28 July 2006

### Research and innovation programme: priorities of the Finnish EU Presidency



On 1 July 2006, Finland took over the EU Presidency from Austria for the second half of

2006.

For this period, the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme (2007-2013) – FP7 – will be the most important matter for decision in the area of research and innovation policy. Finland's aim is to successfully conclude the negotiations on the Framework Programme package, so that the programme can be launched at the beginning of 2007.

Another priority is to gain approval for the necessary agreements regarding the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), so that the project can be implemented.

Finland will also promote the development of a broad-based innovation policy, largely on the basis of the recommendations outlined in Former Finnish Prime Minister Esko Aho's innovation report, prepared on behalf of the European Commission.

On the occasion of the informal Competitiveness Council on 10 and 11 July 2006 in Jyväskylä, a background paper on innovation was presented. According to this document, the way to improve the EU's innovation policy is to develop markets that encourage innovation and create new demand. Important factors listed include standards, public procurements, enhancing the efficient operation of the market, mobility of research resources, and closer cooperation between universities and businesses.

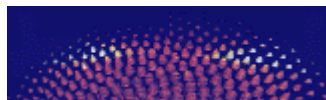
More information on the area of competitiveness during the Finland's EU presidency:

[http://www.eu2006.fi/eu\\_and\\_policy\\_areas/policy\\_areas/en\\_GB/competitiveness/](http://www.eu2006.fi/eu_and_policy_areas/policy_areas/en_GB/competitiveness/)

and

<http://cordis.europa.eu/finland>

### ERC Scientific Council announces peer review panel structure



On 14 July 2006, the Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC) published its initial strategy for the peer review of Starting Independent Researcher Grants ("ERC Starting Grants"), which will be the subject of the ERC's first call for proposals.

The document sets out the ERC's initial view on the number and structure of these panels, based on the following principles:

- ✓ Coherence across all broad research domains and fields

- ✓ A forward-looking approach
- ✓ Encouragement to interdisciplinarity
- ✓ Funding allocations independent of the panel structure
- ✓ Flexibility and inclusiveness

For more information on the guiding principles and Initial Peer Review Panel Structure for ERC Starting Grants:

[http://ec.europa.eu/erc/pdf/erc-scientific-council\\_strategy\\_note\\_peerreview\\_panels\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/erc/pdf/erc-scientific-council_strategy_note_peerreview_panels_en.pdf)

EPWS is currently preparing a Position Paper on the peer review panel structure as well as on "The ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant", referring to the importance of gender mainstreaming and gender balance in all aspects of peer review and grant applicant evaluation. The position paper will be soon available on the EPWS website [www.epws.org](http://www.epws.org).

### EU project to examine relationship between gender and scientific practices



An EU funded project has been launched to compare the development of scientific communities, practices and cultures in Europe from a gender and East-West perspective.

The KNOWING comparative study will examine scientific institutions specialising in sociology and biology in Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom. Specifically, it will compare the workload of researchers (research, teaching, university services), work patterns (collaborative, solitary), interests, research topics and epistemological frameworks (dissertation topics, journal articles, conference proceedings), rates of promotion within employment (hiring, promotion, retirement), and work satisfaction and experiences of discrimination.

A particular focus will be placed on the new EU Member States, where research environments are in transition. The study will also seek to identify structural and institutionalised practices

and procedures that may hinder or promote the participation of women and young people in science. These will include committee decisions (hiring, promotional, programmatic, editorial), expert evaluations (peer reviews), dissemination arenas (conference proceedings, funding) and access to and standing in epistemic communities.

The aim is to provide recommendations for better practices, accountability and transparency and gender mainstreaming in research and development that will contribute to ongoing educational reforms in several of the countries involved in the study.

This Specific Targeted Research Project is funded by the European Commission in the "Structuring the ERA" specific programme of FP6.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.knowing.soc.cas.cz/>

### EC launches study to assess the remunerations of researchers

On 19 July 2006, the European Commission (EC) has launched a study to assess the remunerations of researchers in the public and business enterprise sectors in the European Union and countries associated to the Community's RTD Framework programme, by putting a questionnaire online.

In this context, a researcher is considered as any person who devotes at least 50% of her/his time in order to carry out research activities.

The study aims at obtaining a better understanding of the key elements of a researcher's career, with a view of improving the attractiveness of Europe for researchers.

The questionnaire is anonymous and should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete.

For further details and access to the questionnaire in different languages: <http://www.carsa.es/research/InitialEmail.htm>

### WWF Kathryn Fuller Fellowships 2007-2008

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is announcing the opening of its 2007-2008 Kathryn Fuller Fellowship competition.

Two post-doctoral fellowships will be awarded for a two year period to individuals with outstanding research proposals that are of fundamental and immediate importance to global biodiversity conservation. Fuller Fellows can be based at any institution, including WWF, and will co-advised by one academic and one WWF mentor. Fellows are provided a stipend of \$50,000 per year as well as a \$15,000 annual research allowance.

Applicants should have received a doctoral degree between January 2002 and January 2007. The deadline for applications is 15 November 2006.

Offers will be made in the spring of 2007, with fellowships to begin in the autumn of 2007.

For more information, application guidelines, and on-line application forms, please visit [www.worldwildlife.org/sfn](http://www.worldwildlife.org/sfn), or contact [fuller.fellowship@wwfus.org](mailto:fuller.fellowship@wwfus.org)

### Events

#### 1. *Equal Chances in Europe. EU-Enlargement – Gender Equality – Participation*

On 7-8 September 2006, WOMNET (Gender und Globale Strukturpolitik), from Germany, is organising the conference: "Equal Chances in Europe. EU-Enlargement – Gender Equality – Participation" in Bonn.

Eastern and Western NGOs, scientists, experts and politicians will analyse the new programmes and financial instruments that the European Union will launch in 2007, and how these new opportunities will contribute to gender equality.

Contact: [nadine.heller@womnet.de](mailto:nadine.heller@womnet.de)

#### 2. *BA Festival of Science*

The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC)

will be hosting three events at this year's "BA Festival of Science" in Norwich on 2-9 September 2006 [n.a. BA stands for the British Association for the Advancement of Science]:

- ✓ *Mentoring for Women - Why Bother?*, 4 September 2006

[http://www2.shu.ac.uk/nrc/section\\_0/0.4.cfm?id=576](http://www2.shu.ac.uk/nrc/section_0/0.4.cfm?id=576)

- ✓ *Return to a Career in Science, Engineering or Technology!*, 5 September 2006

[http://www2.shu.ac.uk/nrc/section\\_0/0.4.cfm?id=577](http://www2.shu.ac.uk/nrc/section_0/0.4.cfm?id=577)

*Making it in Science* (This event is part of the Young Person's Programme), 7 September 2006

[http://www2.shu.ac.uk/nrc/section\\_0/0.4.cfm?id=578](http://www2.shu.ac.uk/nrc/section_0/0.4.cfm?id=578)

### 3. *Biennial European conference on Artificial Intelligence*

ECAI, the biennial European conference on Artificial Intelligence (AI), will take place from 28 August to 1 September 2006 in Riva del Garda, Italy.

The conference aims to give researchers from all over the world the chance to identify important new trends and challenges in all areas of AI as well as to provide a forum for potential users of innovative AI techniques.

In parallel, a 'Gender and Science' event is organised on 28 August, with a talk on *Science, knowledge and gender: challenges for a social Europe*.

For more information, please visit: <http://ecai2006.itc.it/>

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#### **References**

The articles published in the EPWS Newsletter are based on articles featured in different EU publications and information portals, booklets, advertising, seminars, conferences, etc.

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