

European Platform of Women Scientists



EPWS Position Paper

Commission Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the European Institute of Technology (COM(2006)604 final/2)

In the EPWS position paper commenting on the *Third Stakeholders' Meeting on the European Institute of Technology*, sent to the European Commission on 25 September 2006, the European Platform of Women Scientists acknowledged the potential of the European Institute of Technology for the promotion of science, research and innovation in Europe. EPWS pointed out the need for gender mainstreaming and gender balance: Ensuring gender balance and finding fair, objective and stimulating measures for excellence is in the interest of the EIT if it seeks to become a truly innovative institution. EPWS therefore welcomes the Commission's consideration of gender balance as an important criterion of appointment for the EIT. EPWS proposes clarifications of four aspects of the current proposal:

1) Definitions of "excellence" and "innovation"

The Commission proposal does not explicitly define excellence. As pointed out in the EPWS position paper dated 25 September 2006, who is 'excellent' and what is 'excellence' in science is established through a social (decision) process of various stages – through visible indicators of "quality" (such as publications, social network, behaviour), criteria (such as research agenda, bibliometrics) and procedures (such as gatekeepers, transparency, accountability) - and hence influenced by and dependent on a specific social context. As a consequence, not always the most innovative ideas or the best researchers will succeed in open competition.

A more objective notion of excellence and innovation takes contextual factors into account: what are the achievements of a researcher given his age, family or other commitments and scientific environment, in terms of the publication, teaching and research experience record? How innovative is a researching individual's career? How successful has the researcher been in guiding a research group, creating a rewarding work environment and encouraging young researchers to develop their own scientific thinking? To what extent has the researcher practiced in interdisciplinary contexts? Does the researcher demonstrate a sense of social responsibility concerning the scientific work and its outcomes? Is the researcher able and available to communicate to research and research results to society?

2) Requirements for Knowledge Communities

Under article 5 of the proposal, the Commission takes into account the need for Knowledge and Innovation Communities to demonstrate various management capacities of Knowledge Communities. These management capacities should also include the gender awareness and the degree to which gender balance is sought in research teams and institutes.

3) Gender neutral language

EPWS welcomes the explicit demand for gender balance as regards the EIT governance board as mentioned in the proposal. To reach this goal, the Platform strongly encourages the usage of gender neutral language or language addressing both men and women.

4) EIT staffing policy

The Commission's proposal does require gender balance throughout the Institute's staffing and funding policies. Gender balance is the goal of a general EU policy. A requirement of gender

balance does not place any restrictions on the actual selection strategy – other than the need to ensure a fair balance of female and male representatives. Gender balance does not limit the choice of who the selected individuals are, what their specialisation is, which qualifications are required or how they are to apply. At the same time, achieving gender balance is an important tool to encourage female researchers to remain in science.

Amendment suggestions

Proposal text

Article 2: Definitions

Revise the definition of innovation:

“**Innovation**” means the process and outcomes of this process through which new ideas respond to societal or economic demand, **improve societal structures and create social innovation**, and generate new products [...].

Include the following paragraph:

“**Excellence**” means outstanding achievements in science and research through which the researcher, under consideration of age, societal commitment, scientific environment and research experience, responds to the requirements of innovation, social responsibility, the need for interdisciplinarity, management abilities (team-building, supervision) as well as the ability to communicate science to society.

Article 5, paragraph 2: The Knowledge and Innovation Communities

The selection shall also take account of:

[...]

e) the commitment to gender balance and the consideration of gender-related research aspects by the partners of the knowledge communities

Annex: Statutes of the European Institute of Technology

Article 5: The Director

Add the following words:

1. **She or** he shall be appointed by the Governing Board...
2. **She or** he shall be responsible..., She or he shall be accountable...

Article 7, paragraph 1: Staff of the EIT

Add the following phrase:

The selection and appointment of staff shall consider the policy of gender balance.

Article 8, paragraph 2: Principles guiding the organization and management of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities

Add the following phrase:

[...]

d) how to ensure gender balance and the consideration of gender in research

Dr. Adelheid Ehmke
President

Contact details for further correspondence:

Dr. Maren Jochimsen
Secretary General

Dr. Irina Michalowicz
Project Manager Research Policy

European Platform of Women Scientists EPWS
Rue d'Arlon 38
B-1000 Brussels

Tel: +32 2 234 37 50
Fax: +32 2 234 37 59

<http://www.epws.org>

The European Platform of Women Scientists EPWS is a non profit association with an international aim. The Platform seeks to promote women scientists by networking their networks and engage women scientists in the research policy debate.