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Editorial

Dear Readers,

On 27 April 2007, the European Platform of Women Scientists lived a historic moment: Delegates of the Platform's member networks convened in Brussels for the EPWS First General Assembly! The highest authority of the Association is thus in place, bringing to the Platform the voice of more than 8 000 women scientists from all over Europe.

Within the first year of its existence, the Platform stepped on the European scene with more than 100 pioneering members. We thank all of those who manifested their interest in the mission and the goals of the Platform and their wish to join forces to actively shape the policy debate on the European level by becoming members. And we encourage and welcome all

others in Europe to join the Platform in the course of the coming months.

It is networks of women scientists and networks promoting women scientists, their endeavour as actors and members of the Platform, which EPWS is here to make visible to the public. It is your voices that it strives to make heard!

Its close links with the European community of women scientists are the Platform's key asset and distinguishing feature with respect to other groups, institutions and initiatives in the field. Through the direct contact with the science community, the Platform is able to establish an active and ongoing exchange of ideas on major topics in science policy, identify and harness the concerns, needs, aspirations and interests of European women scientists, bundle their forces and coordinate their voices in the European policy debate.

Let us play this card, and together shape the European Platform of Women Scientists into an important strategic instrument to ensure that

the contribution of women scientists to the policy debate is heard and their impact in the shaping of society is made visible. Let us use the Platform to induce a structured, informed and targeted dialogue between women in science and policy makers.

If you take a closer look at the Platform's membership composition described in more detail below, you will find the visible proof that the interest and the commitment of the research community are there, throughout all disciplines and all over Europe.

By joining EPWS as members and attending the First General Assembly, women scientists in Europe took a decisive step. A step all the more important considering the challenges to European research and research policy ahead. The contribution of women scientists is key to excellence and innovation.

To turn this key, to retain the present momentum and to ensure its sustainability, the Platform needs the support of European and National institutions, of foundations and corporations. The challenges ahead can only be met together.

Maren Jochimsen
EPWS Secretary General

EPWS First General Assembly



A dream comes true: the European Platform of Women Scientists held its first General Assembly in Brussels on 27-28 April 2007.

Following an extensive one-year membership outreach, EPWS now counts 107 members – networks of women scientists and networks promoting women scientists, individuals and supporting organisations – together representing more than 8 000 scientists. All full members of the Association attended the General Assembly. The disciplines represented cover a variety of areas, such as: humanities, social sciences, engineering, physics, chemistry and economics.

The new members expressed their views and voted on the strategic direction and future work programme of the Platform. The existing Board of Administration members were unanimously confirmed by the Assembly. The General Assembly also extended the Board of Administration to expand its geographical representation to Eastern Europe (Lithuania) and Southern Europe (Portugal).

The convention and the constitution of the Standing Committees on the second day marked the last formal step in putting all bodies of the Association to work.

CALL FOR MEMBERSHIP

Applications for Full, Associate, Organisations Supporting and Individual Supporting Membership are OPEN.

The formal application forms are available online and must be accompanied by several documents according to the type of membership requested.

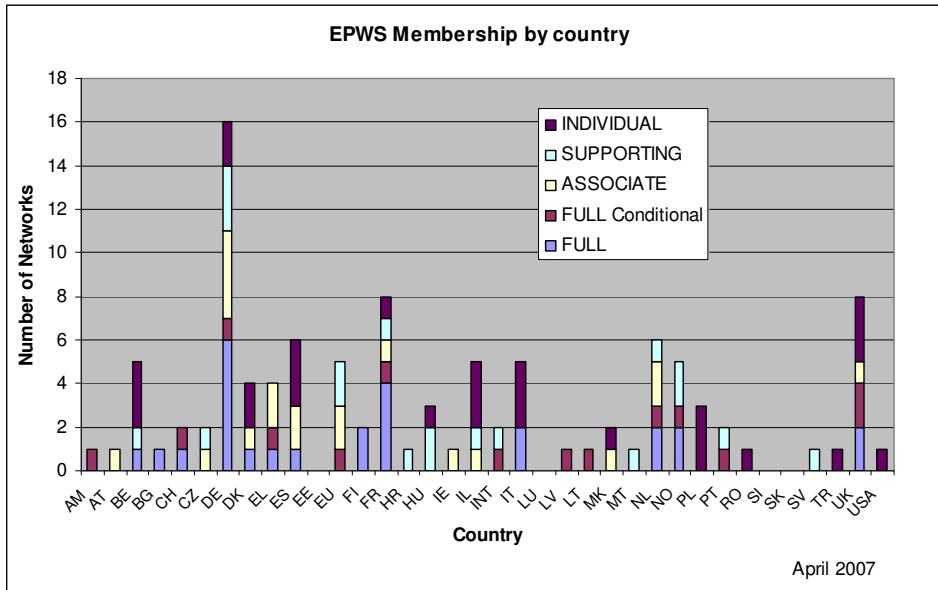
For further information, please contact Marianne Schwarz da Silva:
e-mail: Marianne.dasilva@epws.org
tel.: +32 2 234 37 51

A Membership Application Form is included at the end of this newsletter.

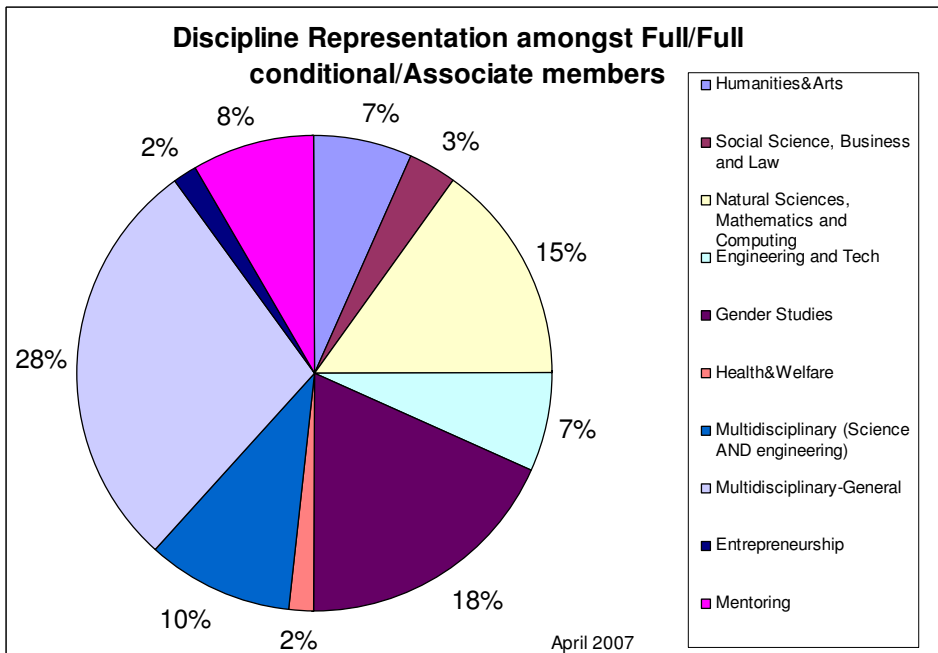
NB. There will be no membership fees during the year 2007.

EPWS Membership

April 2007, the European Platform of Women Scientists counts 107 members from more than 30 countries: 40 Full and Conditional Full Members, 20 Associate Members, 19 Supporting Organisations and 28 Supporting Individuals.



The disciplines represented by the members are Social Sciences & Humanities (28%), Natural Sciences & Engineering (34%), Multidisciplinary (28%), Mentoring, Support & Funding Schemes (8%) and Entrepreneurship (2%).



Mission and main goals of the European Platform of Women Scientists

The mission of the Platform is to:

- ✓ Represent the concerns, needs, ideas, aspirations and interests of European women scientists in all disciplines and all stages of their career paths
- ✓ Coordinate support activities for women scientists to facilitate their active role in the European Research Area both as researchers and participants in the research policy debate in Europe

in order to achieve the following main goals:

- ✓ Enhanced participation of women scientists in European research policy and the shaping of the European research agenda
- ✓ Enlarged women's participation in science and its decision-making bodies
- ✓ Increased participation of women scientists in national and European research programmes, especially in the Seventh EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7)
- ✓ Better understanding and integration of the gender dimension in science

Encouragement to participation in FP7

The first of 16 seminars organised within the framework of the EU project "Encouragement to Advance – Training Seminars for Women Scientists", administered by the Center of Excellence Women in Science CEWS, took place in Brussels end of April with EPWS contributing its expertise on networking and EU research policy.

The training seminars equip women scientists from all over Europe for application procedures for university professorships in six different European countries. Since networking in science and international research cooperation are important factors for successfully entering senior positions in science, the seminars also inform about the EU research policy process, how to participate in FP7 and find calls and research partners.

Places are still available and applications welcome.

For more information on this project please visit: www.cews.org

Contact person:

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EC Green Paper "The European Research Area: New Perspectives" – Your Comments

The European Commission released the Green Paper "The European Research Area: New Perspectives" on 4 April 2007.

In the Commission's vision, the European Research Area should be based on the freedom for people, infrastructures, organisations, funding, knowledge circulation and global co-operation to operate effectively. There is an on-line public consultation on the issues in the Green Paper open until August 2007. Contributions will be used in the design of concrete actions for the development of the European Research Area, to be put forward from 2008.

In this context, on 11 April 2007, the European Platform of Women Scientists invited the science and research community to share their views on the most pressing obstacles in European research.

Following the numerous replies received, EPWS would like to thank all correspondents for their inputs on the European Research Area. The Platform will now draft a general position paper based on the questions the European Commission seeks in the Green Paper on the European Research Area. Then, EPWS will prepare a synthesis of the remarks received from scientists as well as a longer document referring to the individual comments in more detail.

The Green Paper can be downloaded in English at the following URL:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/era_gp_final_en.pdf

For further details on the Consultation:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/consultation-era_en.html#greenpaper

Communication on improving knowledge transfers in Europe

On 4 April 2007, the European Commission adopted the Communication on "Improving knowledge transfer between research institutions and industry across Europe: embracing open innovation - Implementing the Lisbon agenda".

The Communication is accompanied by the Commission's staff working document "Voluntary guidelines for universities and other research institutions to improve their links with industry across Europe"

The Communication can be downloaded here:

http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/com2007182_en.pdf

The Commission's staff working document:

http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/sec2007449_en.pdf.

Communication on the mid-term review of the strategy on life sciences and biotechnology 2002-2010

On 11 April 2007, the Commission adopted a Communication on the mid-term review of the strategy on life sciences and biotechnology 2002-2010. The conclusion of this review is that the strategy is still relevant and, therefore, its implementation will be continued.

The main results of the implementation for the period 2002-2006 are: integration of regional clusters, inspiration of national action plans and adoption of a new legal framework on genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

According to this document, not much has changed with developing and facilitating innovation in the EU's biotech sector, which is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The review proposes to refocus the EU's 30-point action plan on five interdependent priority actions:

- ✓ Promote research and market development for life sciences and biotech applications;

- ✓ Foster competitiveness by facilitating knowledge transfer and innovation from the science base to industry;
- ✓ Encourage informed societal debates on the benefits and risk of life sciences and biotechnology;
- ✓ Ensure a sustainable contribution of modern biotechnology to agriculture;
- ✓ Improve the implementation of the legislation and its impact on competitiveness.

The Communication can be downloaded here:

http://ec.europa.eu/biotechnology/docs/com_2007_175_en.pdf

Positioning Humanities Research in the 7th Framework Programme

The Expert Group on the Humanities (EGH) released its final report "Positioning Humanities Research in the 7th Framework Programme" on 24 April 2007.

According to this report, the European Commission has done a lot to encourage the participation of humanities researchers in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). The documents also highlight the challenges remained.

With FP7 a European research framework programme has, for the first time, an entire theme – Theme 8, Socio-Economic Sciences and the Humanities (SSH) – dedicated to the socio-economic sciences and humanities.

In a bid to ensure a high level of participation from the humanities community under FP7, in early 2006 the Commission set up the EGH to help it draw up the FP7 work programme on SSH. This group advised the Commission on how framework programme instruments could be adapted to humanities disciplines and how key concepts of EU collaborative research could be used by humanities researchers in their proposals. The group also helped the Commission to adopt a more "humanities friendly" terminology in the work programme. The final report of EGH can be downloaded here:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/egh_final_report_2007_en.pdf

Over 9 000 proposals for first ERC grants

The first call for the Starting Independent Investigator Grants of the European Research Council (ERC) closed on 25 April 2007.

In total, 9 167 proposals have been submitted by young researchers for this call. The grants provide support for researchers who have recently (2-9 years ago) completed their doctoral studies to make the transition to independent research leaders. The budget for the call, which covers all areas of research is approximately €290 million, which should result in around 200-250 substantial grants.

The breakdown of proposals according to their main scientific focus is approximately as follows:

- ✓ Physical sciences and engineering: 46%
- ✓ Life science including medicine: 37%
- ✓ Social sciences and humanities: 17%

Scientific quality will be the sole basis for selecting proposals for funding, regardless of nationality. The peer review panels, assisted by additional panel evaluators and referees, will evaluate proposals in two stages. Successful applicants at the first stage, which will be completed by July 2007, will be invited to submit more detailed proposals for the second stage evaluation that will take place in autumn 2007, allowing the first grants to be made before the end of the year.

For more information: <http://erc.europa.eu/>

European Charter for the management of intellectual property

On the occasion of the informal Competitiveness Council on 26-28 April 2007, the German EU Presidency presented an initiative for establishing a European Charter for the management of intellectual property (IP) from public research institutions and universities. This IP-Charter would be designed as a voluntary code of conduct for collaboration between research institutions and industry.

The Charter aims to raise general awareness on the importance of deliberate and professional management of intellectual

property. The aim is to encourage member states to support the establishment of principles for the proper management of IP and to push public research institutions and universities to professionalise their management of IP in accordance with the standards proposed by the Charter.

The German Presidency will try to ensure that the Charter is supported by the European leaders at their summit meeting in June 2007.

[http://www.bmbf.de/pub/Eckpunkte_IP_eng\(1\).pdf](http://www.bmbf.de/pub/Eckpunkte_IP_eng(1).pdf)

Gradual progress towards the European Institute of Technology

The informal Competitiveness Council on 26-28 April 2007 also backed the initiative of the EU German Presidency on gradual progress towards a European Institute of Technology, also urging the Commission to quickly submit a convincing and concrete funding proposal for the Institute.

The EU-27 ministers agreed that the future European Institute of Technology (EIT) should be composed of networks of universities, research institutions and companies. These networks are, in the long run, expected to develop into partnerships.

In this framework, it has also been decided to establish only two Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) at first and others later once the projects have proven efficient.

The German Presidency is determined to have the Council's political orientations on EIT ready by July 2007 and a regulation adopted by end of the year 2007, so that the decision on the first KIC could be taken by mid-2008 and the first KIC operational by early 2009.

For further information please read: http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/April/0427Schavan.html

Call for Proposals: Descartes Prize

A call for proposals for the Descartes Prize for excellence in research and science was launched on 13 April 2007, having as deadline

17 July 2007. The Descartes Prize contains two categories:

The Descartes Prizes for Transnational Collaborative Research (€1.48 million) is awarded to teams having achieved outstanding scientific or technological results from European collaborative research in any field of science, including the economic, social and human sciences. This prize aims to attract experienced scientists who have made an outstanding contribution to research.

For the Prizes for Science Communication (€195,000) the proposers must be organisations awarding prizes in the field of science communication, meaning that the presented candidature shall have received a scientific communication prize and the proposal shall be submitted to the Commission by the organisation which has awarded the prize to this candidate.

For more information on the prizes: http://ec.europa.eu/research/descartes/submit_en.htm

Interview with Prof. Tatiana Birshtein, 2007 L'OREAL-UNESCO European Laureate



A Physicist, Prof. Tatiana Birshtein received the L'OREAL-UNESCO Award for Women in Science for Europe, in Paris on 22 February 2007. Prof. Birshtein undertakes her activity at the Institute of Macromolecular Compounds, at the Russian

Academy of Sciences, in St. Petersburg (Russia).

This month, Prof. Birshtein kindly agreed to address a few thoughts to EPWS and the readers of its newsletter.

EPWS: How did you get interested in science?

TB: I had a good teacher of mathematics in school.

EPWS: What is the key to your success in science?

TB: Good teachers and hard work with interest.

EPWS: What should be done to have more women in science, in your view?

TB: The L'ORÉAL National Fellowships for young women is one of example.

EPWS: Could you say a word of encouragement to young women scientists?

TB: Try to overcome the difficulties.

For more information on Prof. Birshtein:

<http://www.macro.ru/Birshtein/>

The L'ORÉAL-UNESCO Awards aim to recognize the contributions of outstanding women researchers to scientific progress and encourage the participation of women in scientific research.

For more information on the L'ORÉAL-UNESCO Awards:

<http://www.loreal.fr/fr/fr/for-women-in-science.aspx>

Vacancy: Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality, now in the process of becoming operational, is recruiting a director. Her/his main tasks will be the preparation and the implementation of the Institute's annual and medium-term programmes of activities and the preparation of the meetings of the management Board.

The Institute will ensure the collection and analysis of objective, reliable and comparable information and data at community level, the development of appropriate methodological tools in particular for the integration of the gender dimension in all policy areas; it will facilitate the exchange of best practices, the dialogue among stakeholders and will raise awareness among EU citizens.

The vacancy notice can be downloaded here:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/personnel_administrati on/documents/com2007_10049_en.pdf

Upcoming events

1. *BioPerspectives 2007*, Cologne (Germany), 31 May-1 June 2007

<http://www.bioperspectives.org/>

2. *Second International Congress of Gender Medicine*, Vienna (Austria), 2-3 June 2007

<http://www.gendercongress.com/>

3. *Women Engineers: Creating an Energy Efficient Future*, Paris (France), 7-27 July 2007 (summer seminar)

<http://services.eng.uts.edu.au/iive/>

4. *Fourth Meeting of European Women Pharmacists, Hamburg (Germany)*, 21-23 September 2007

www.pharmazeutinnen.de

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References

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

Membership Application Form

Please fill in this form in CAPITAL LETTERS and READ all necessary documents on <http://www.epws.org>

Name of Association:
Name(s) and position(s) of the person(s) authorised to represent:
1.
2.
Address:
Telephone Number/ Fax Number:
E-mail:
Website:
Research Area(s) Covered:
Membership Type Requested
Full Member
Associate Member
Individual Supporting Member
Professor
Researcher (please specify)
Other (please specify)
Supporting Organisation
Choice of Standing Committee
Monitoring the Policy Debate
Gender Dimension in Science
Promotion of Women Scientists
Information and Public Relations
Structural Reinforcement
Is your organisation/are you a member of any other network(s)?
I accept EPWS' Terms and Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> (online at www.epws.org)
Date, Place, Signature :

Your personal data are for EPWS internal use only and will not be transmitted to third parties.