

# Overview of the situation of women scientists in Eastern Europe

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# **WS DEBATE**

## **Stimulating Policy Debate on Women and Science Issues in Central Europe**

**Specific Support Action in FP6**

**Duration: October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2009**

**Partners:**

- **Hungarian Science and Technology Foundation,  
Hungary**
- **Institute of Sociology AS CR - National Contact Centre -  
Women and Science, Czech Republic**
- **University of Lodz – Women’s Studies Centre, Poland**
- **Slovak University of Technology, Slovakia**
- **Jozef Stefan Institute, Slovenia**

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## Diapositiva 2

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Dora, can you please change National Contact Centre - Women and Science to National Contact Centre for Women and Science, thanks  
marcela.linkova; 09/04/2009



# Summary report

# Common background

- o In the second half of the 19th century and until World War I, a large portion of the geographical area covered by the WS DEBATE project was part of the Habsburg Monarchy and so the educational systems of the countries concerned have borne in many aspects a common historical legacy.
- o **The woman question emerged in all 5 countries in the second half of the 19th century.**
- o The first academically educated women graduated at the beginning of the 20th century.
- o **Before World War II most academically educated women were engaged in medicine, education, pharmacy and law.**

# The socialist era

- o Because of the **disbanding of civil society organisations during the state socialist period**, women's grassroots professional organisations were discontinued.
- o The lack of these civil grassroots activities represented a significant factor in **limiting the possibilities of women to assert themselves in public life**.
- o The actions of the state socialist regimes aimed merely at **getting women in high numbers onto the labour market** (especially low paying, menial jobs)
- o By supporting the establishment of childcare facilities and other services for families, the socialist regime **seemingly solved the situation of women's equality**. m9
- o In reality the socialist governments **did nothing to change the unequal distribution of labour** between women and men in household and childcare.
- o At the end of the socialist era women had **usually lower wages and supplements** than their male colleagues and **limited access to technical equipment**, as well as the **possibility of using the services of laboratory staff** m10

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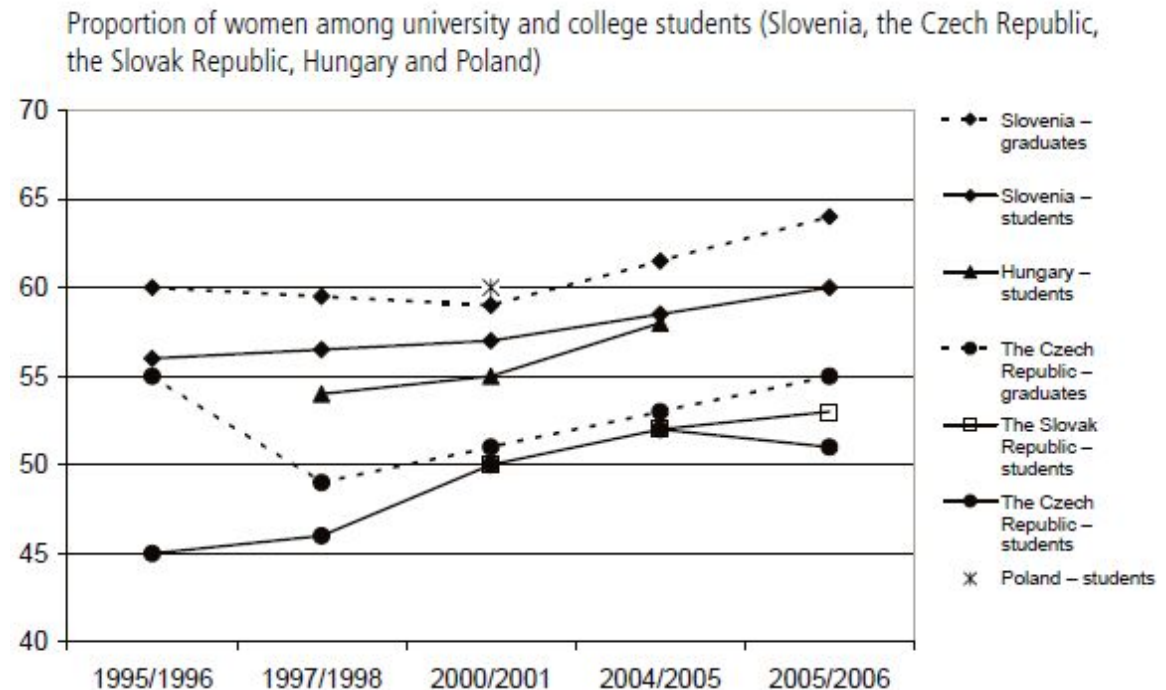
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# Women at universities

After World War II the percentage of women in higher education gradually increased.



Despite the dynamic expansion, the **gender gap continues unabated** – majority of women can be found in social sciences, humanities and health, while in science, math and computer science the ratio of men is high.

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Moreover, the growth in the proportion of women is not reflected in the distribution of university positions and scientific degrees.

## Diapositiva 6

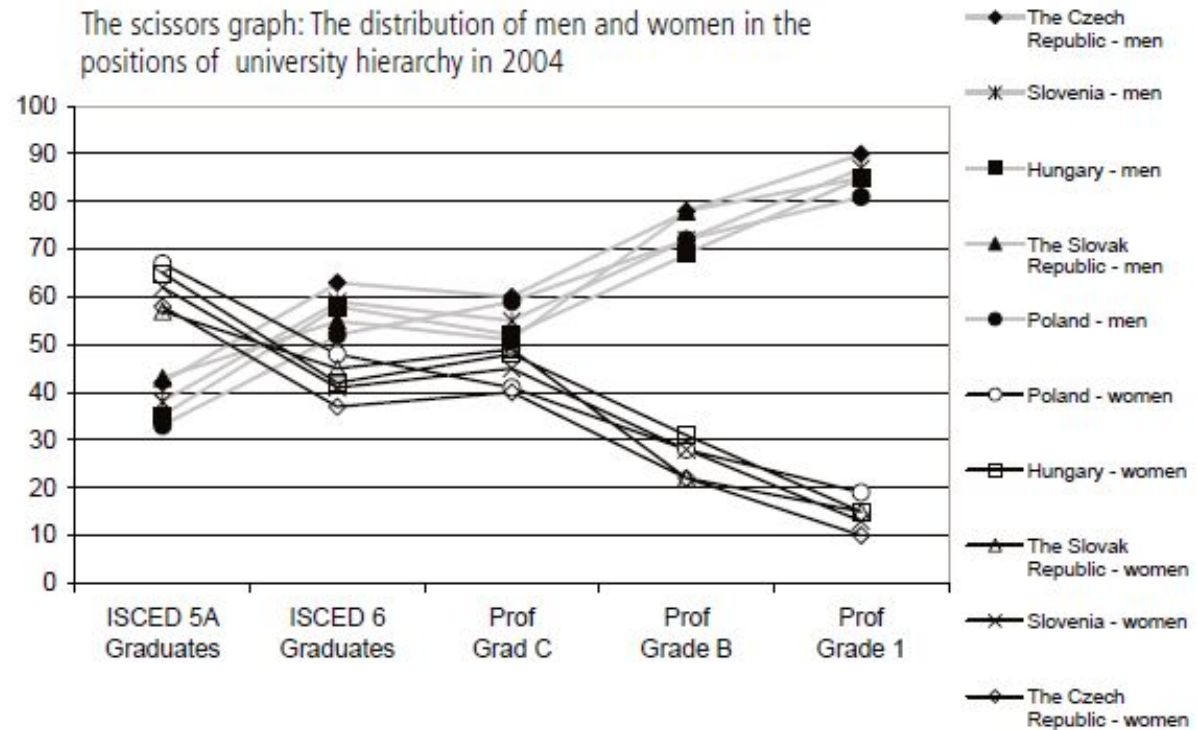
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# Academic career of researchers

The paths of women and men begin to diverge after graduation – as illustrated by the scissors diagram.

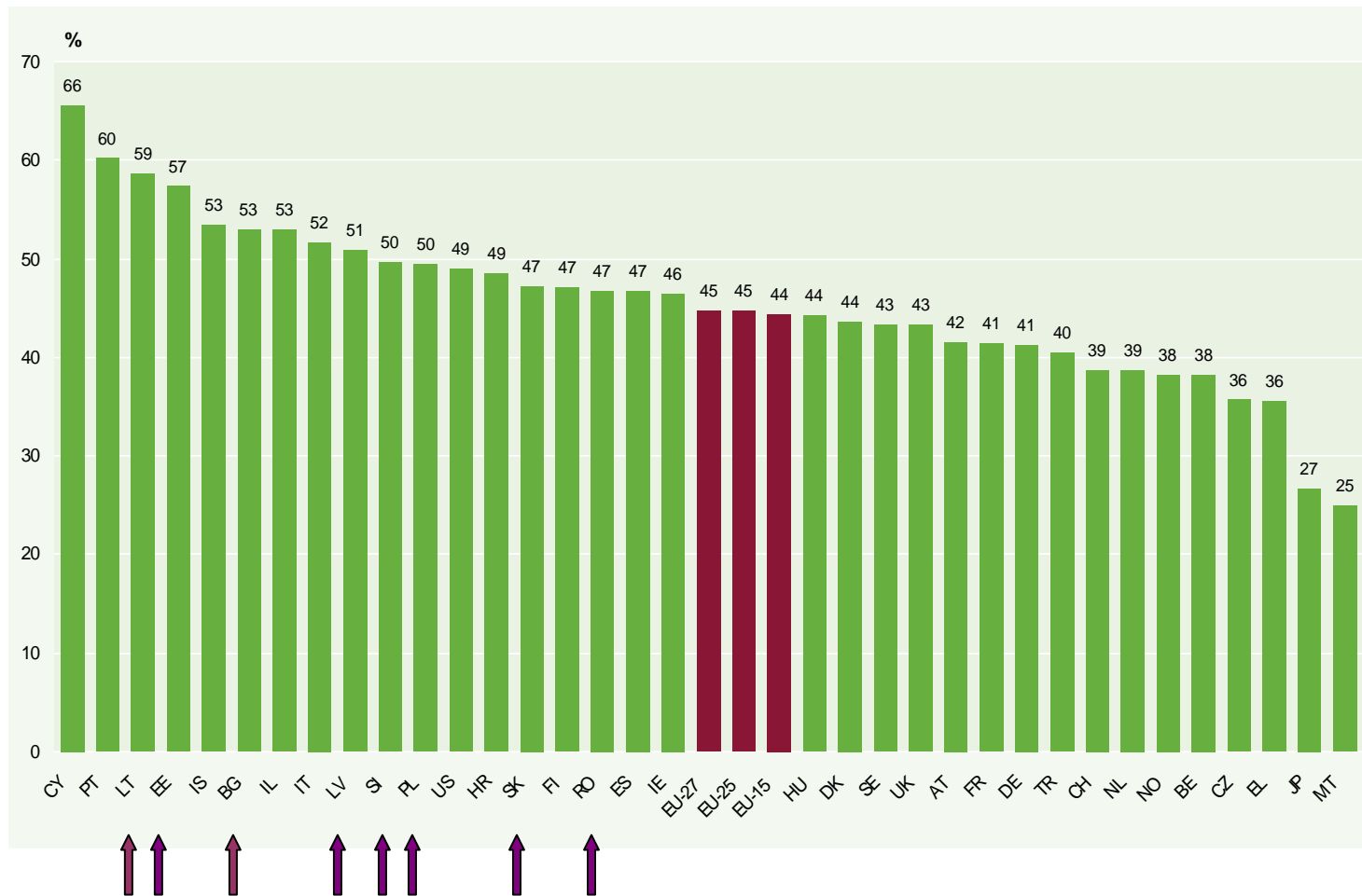


Women are forced to **give up their ambitions** and do not start their scientific careers at the most productive age if they want to have families – a huge **waste of talent and investment**.

Women constitute approximately only a third of university teachers and 10–18 % of full professors.

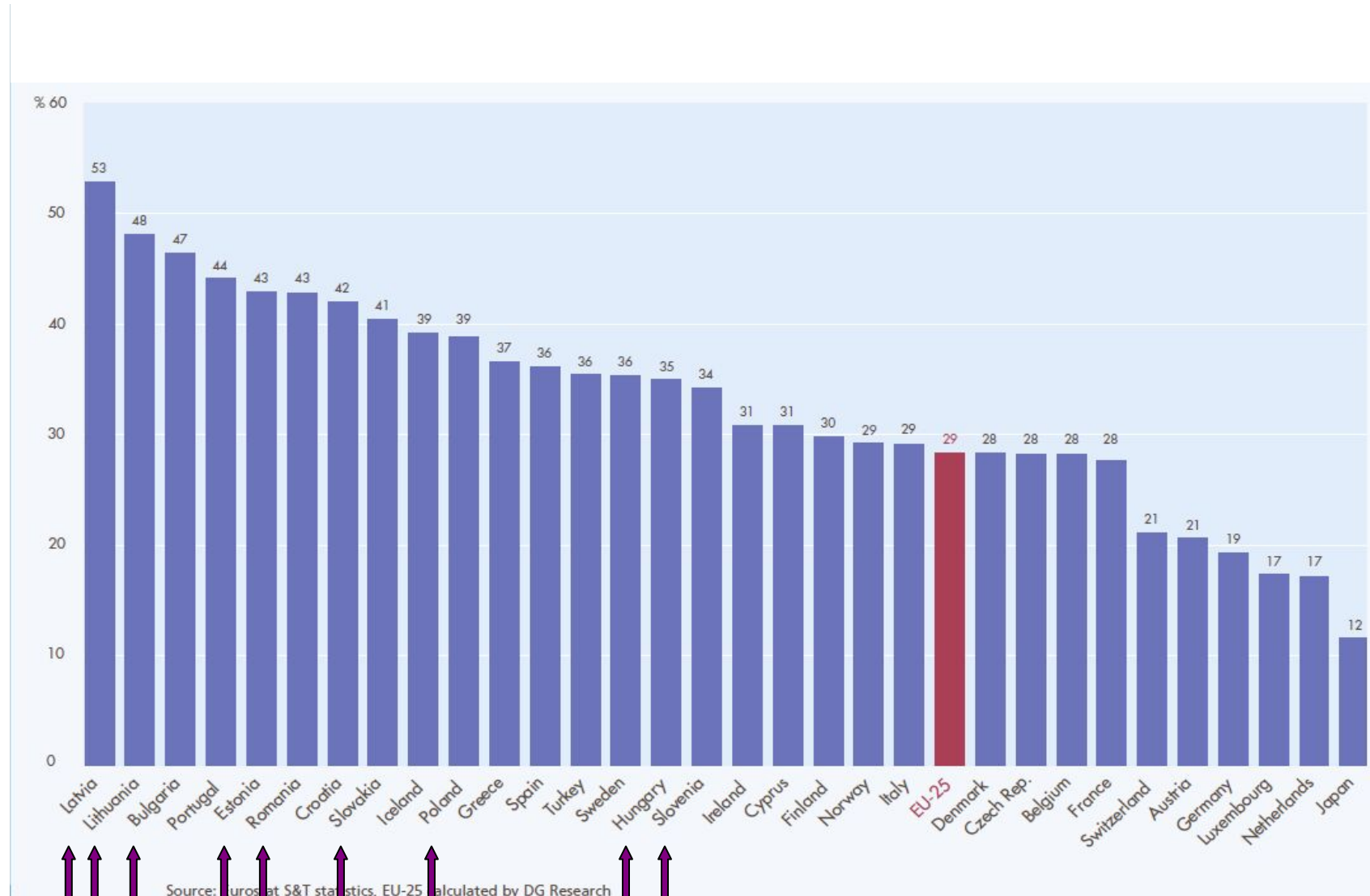
# Proportion of female PhD (ISCED 6) graduates, 2006

She Figures 2009



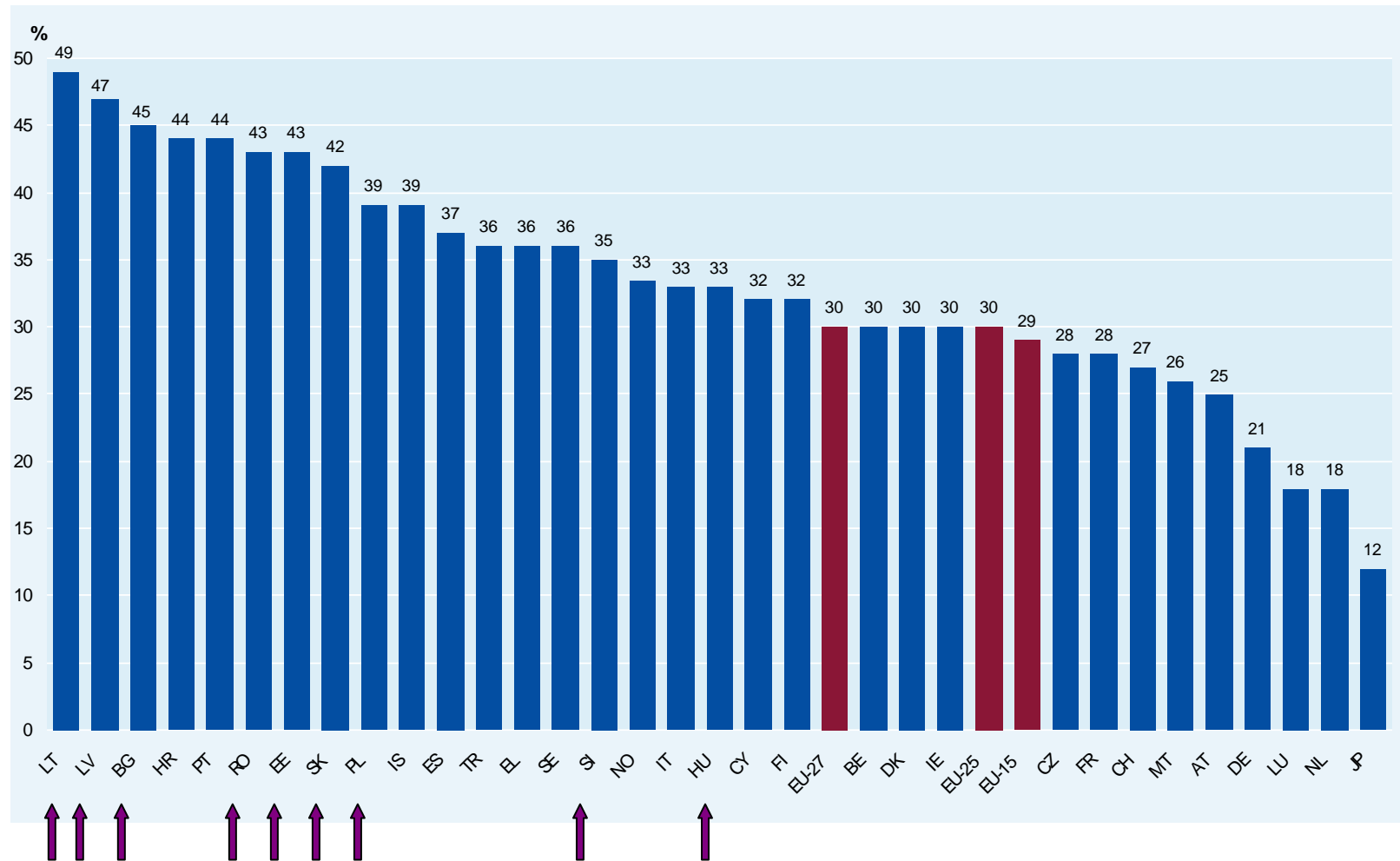
# Proportion of female researchers, 2003

She Figures 2006



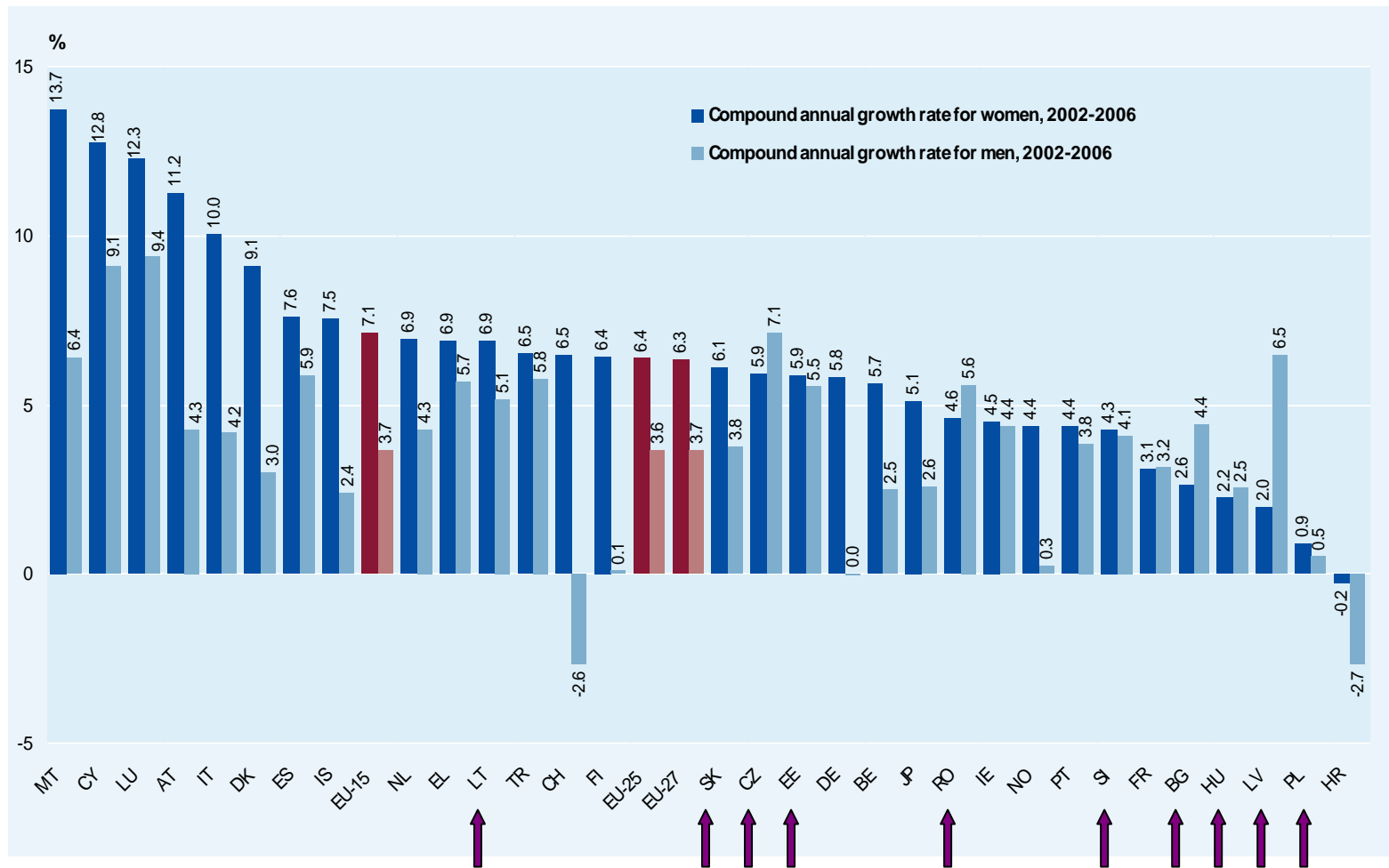
# Proportion of female researchers, 2006

She Figures 2009



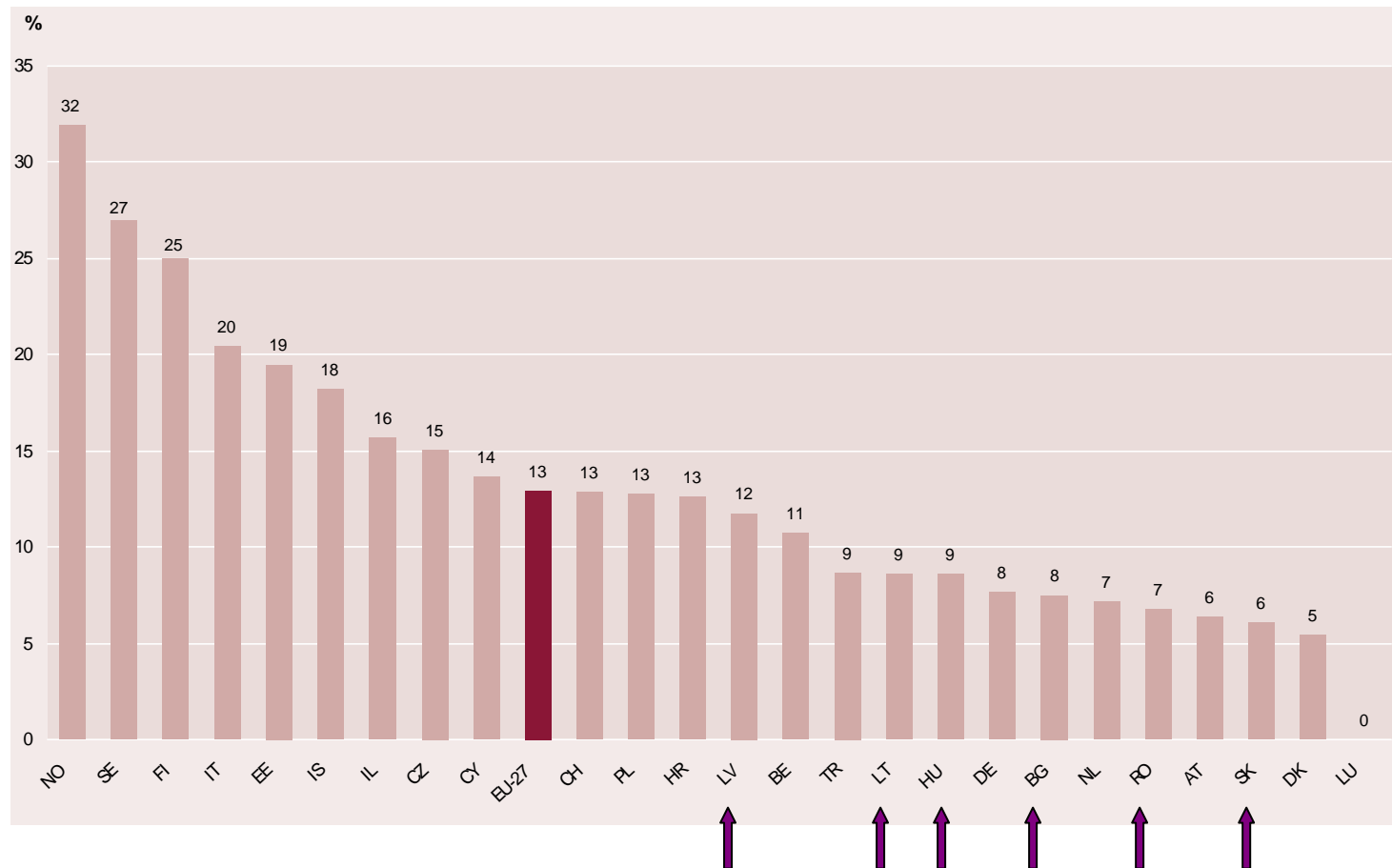
# Compound annual growth rate for researchers by sex, 2002-2006

She Figures 2009



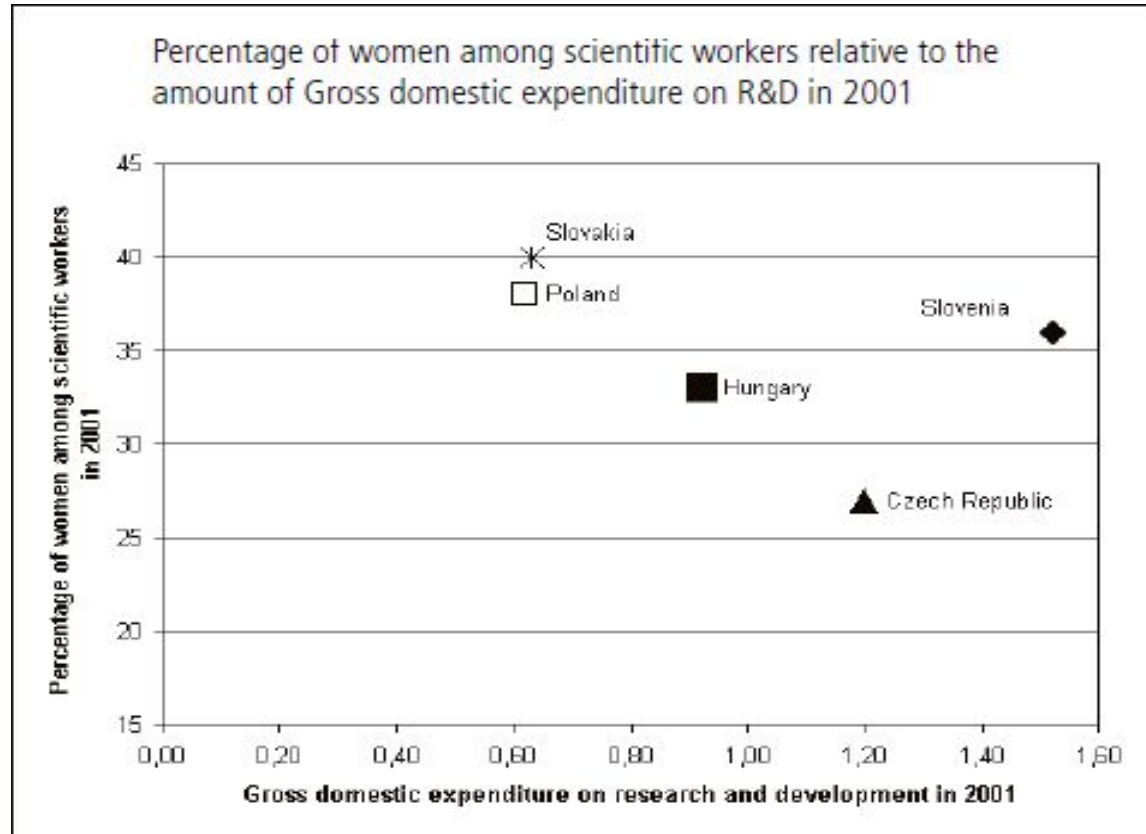
# Proportion of female heads of institutions in the Higher Education Sector (HES), 2007

She Figures 2009



# Women in science and GDP

Where the expenditure on research and development is the lowest, the percentage of women is relatively high.



A similar difference is evident among lower paid and higher paid areas of research - women are usually successful in areas of science where the investments are low. m13

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# Main findings per CEE country

**CZ** - over the last two years things have improved in terms of the attitude of institutions toward equal opportunities for researchers; institutions now pay greater attention to maternity/parental leave of students and researchers and there is progress in areas that have been neglected thus far m4

**HU** - the scissors of the famous diagram seem to have been closing for the past five years, but it is uncertain whether this tendency shall continue, stop or reverse

**PL** - the less prestigious and less profitable public research and development sector is open for women, while the private institutes are dominated by men m6

**SK** - in spite of the development in the gender issues that has been achieved during the last years, a problem of the non-satisfactory structure of coordination mechanisms on these agenda persists m7

**SI** - women are the ones who are more sensitive to the presence of discrimination and are therefore stronger proponents of changes; special attention is devoted to equal distribution of family obligations

## Diapositiva 14

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despite recent developments in terms of gender issues, the structure of coordination mechanisms related to this agenda is still dissatisfactory

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# Conclusions

The comparison of the five Central-European countries and EU 15 shows significant differences:

- o in general there are more women in science than in EU15,
- o women occupy lower positions in lower paid sectors,
- o there is a considerable vertical and horizontal segregation between women and men,
- o the percentage of women is lower in the technical sciences which have the highest proportion of investments.

Despite the insufficient and slow reaction by national policy makers, the situation is slowly improving:

- o women outnumber men at undergraduate and graduate levels of higher education,
- o the ratio of women is increasing in scientific fields where men predominate,
- o the knowledge about gender issues is increasing in R&D institutions and preliminary measures are taken to respect gender equality in recruitment and career development of researchers,
- o women's awareness of their situation is increasing,
- o civil grassroots activities have been launched in the area.

**Thank you for your attention!**

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