



National Contact Centre for Women in Science: between the rock of ivory tower and the hard place of new public management

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Context

- 1900s Association for Female University Students and Graduates
- 1999 establishment of the Helsinki Group on Women and Science as an advisory body of the European Commission
- 2001 establishment of the Centre (funding provided by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports under its EUPRO programme for international cooperation in R&D)
- 2004 ministry grant renewed for period 2005-2008
- 2004 FP 6 project Central European Centre for Women and Youth in Science
- 2006 FP6 project Knowledge, Institutions and Gender: an East-West Comparative Study
- 2008 ministry grant renewed for period 2008-2012
- 2008 project Barriers funded through the National R&D Programme II

Vision

- committed to feminist struggle for women's rights and equality
- critical of the dominance of neoliberal values in the area of women's rights, research and higher education policies – development not only in terms of economic profit and efficiency but also environmental and social well-being, solidarity etc.
- committed to science responsible to and in communication with wider society, science that acknowledges potential unintended consequences, responsible for the future and not oriented only on immediate profit

Cooperation with bodies of state administration responsible for R&D

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
 - Advisory body on gender equality
 - The Milada Paulova Award for life-long scientific achievement
 - 2009 awarded to Prof. Milena Rychnovska in ecology and sustainable development
 - Annual document *Priorities and Procedures of the Ministry of Education for the Implementation of Equal Opportunities*
 - collection of statistics: sex-disaggregated R&D staff in HE by grade
 - Czech presidency
 - Consultation of policy documents to properly address gender issues in HE and R&D

Cooperation with bodies of state administration responsible for R&D

- Grant agencies

- Following up on a resolution adopted at 2005 conference *Why are women still so few and between in science?* the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic and Grant Agency of the Academy of Sciences **abolished age limits for grants awarded to early stage researchers and PhD students**

Cooperation with bodies of state administration responsible for R&D

- Following the 2008 research and development reform
 - we have established contact with all ministries with budget for R&D to continue working on improving gender equality within their remit
 - Future cooperation sought on:
 - ministerial priorities for equal opportunities
 - ministerial working groups for equal opportunities
 - Governmental Council for Equal Opportunities
 - To institutionalize area of R&D as one of the governmental priorities
 - Public research institutions
 - To develop a '**career advancement system**' for public research institutions that will be non-discriminatory in the event of career breaks and childcare

Support activities

- Monitoring report on gender and science in the CR

- First published in 2008
- To be published annually



- Role models

- Woman of the Month
- Talents
- Academic Couples
- The Milada Paulova Award



Support activities

- newsLetter
 - Major awareness raising tool
 - Over 6,000 subscribers
- Debate on reconciliation of private and professional lives
 - Seminars, publications
- Mentoring programme
 - Launched in 2009
 - With Czech Technical University
 - Links female secondary school and university students

Focus on early stage researchers

- INFOMAT portal
 - Mobility
 - Study Room (information on the open access initiative; scientific databases)
 - Science and Research
 - Science, a Public Matter
 - Gender
- Doctoral seminars
 - Responsible research, gender equality, mobility
- With Ministry of Education, seeking to establish a mobility support scheme (for outgoing and income early stage researchers)

Events for the public and the media

- **Researcher's Night**
 - since 2005
- **Science and Technology Week of the Academy of Sciences CR**
 - 2008: Poster exhibit "Heyrovsky's sister: women in Czech science"
 - 2009: Poster exhibit Milada Paulova Award
- **Discussion events for the public**
- **Appearances in the TV, radio, newspapers**

Theoretical research: feminist science studies and gender sociology

- Changing academia and higher education
- Gendering research institutions
- Careers in a gender perspective
- Mobility and the position of early stage researchers
- Sexual harassment

Obstacles

- Fragmentation of R&D system in the Czech Republic
 - Governmental Council for Research, Development and Innovations – absolute neglect of gender equality
 - Ministries – no or poor cooperation between gender focal points and R&D units
- ‘gender fatigue’
- Gender stereotypes deeply embedded in social structures and institutions

Obstacles

- Gender equality cloaked in the New Public Management rhetoric of efficiency, performance, human resources serving economic development
- Vision of social life that counts only in monetary terms, not in terms of satisfaction, environmental well-being etc.

Change is needed:

- To reclaim the feminist ethos of women's rights, equality and democracy
- Gender equality in science not only for the benefit of economic growth but also for dignified life of women and men of science, non-discriminatory operation of social institutions and policies and service of science to our societies

Thank you for your attention!

contact

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