

International Conference

Women – Science – SEE

Promotion of Women in Science in Southeastern Europe in the Context of European Integration

21 - 22 October 2004

Venue

Sofia, Bulgaria
Business-Centre Sofia
Washington Street 17, Electroimpex-Building

Minutes of the panel *European and national framework to promote women in science* (October 21, 2004), presented by the rapporteur Veronika Asarova (New Bulgarian University, Gender Studies)

I. Common Contextual Problems.

All the represented countries are suffering some types of transitions – political, economic. The processes such as globalization and the development of informational society are affecting the everyday life of the people in these countries as well.

There is a big gap between official policies and practical implementations in the social sphere.

II. Common Challenges

1.)

- The women, and particularly the women in science are facing the “classical” problem – to combine the everyday duties with the academic career. However, their husbands and children are also subject of the difficulties of transitions, which makes finally the burden on women double;

-The disruption of career continuity – the career of the women is usually disrupted by period of pregnancy or maternity leave. They can hardly or never compensate this interruptions. Still, of course, the same academic excellency is expected from them;

2.)

- The professions of the academic people are usually State guaranteed professions. Every cut of State budget or economic recess immediately reflects on these professions;

3.)

- The “patriarchal” way of thinking is still alive;
- Men dominate the higher academic positions (Report from Romania);
- “The bees and the honey” phenomenon (BEWISE)
- The everyday duties of women are sometimes considered as just an excuse for lower academic productivity;

4.)

- Lack of information and reliable indicators. Lack of statistics what is the share of women researchers and what are the trends in development of these phenomena (except. Reports from Macedonia and Serbia);

To these are added the problems common to academic people of both genders:

- 5.)
 - Lack of adequate material conditions in the sphere of science (basic facilities, adequate rewards);
- 6.)
 - Low prestige of science and low prestige of women in science;
- 7.)
 - Limited access to information, to international forums, to world achievements;
- 8.)
 - Lack of adequate academic, epistemological environment;

Basic question: At what costs women are doing science?

III. Recommendation:

- 1.) To raise awareness of the needed gender equality in scientific research;
 - 2.) To go towards more stable societal and cultural structures, including legislative basis (for ex. The parental leave, the shared parenthood);
- 3.) Investment in women from a very early age; access to higher education (Report of Bosnia and Herzegovina);
- 4.) To accept as normal the different career models, including all the breaks, shifts and changes. To accept as normal the marketization of science;
 - 5.) The Regional Cooperation should be welcomed in order to achieve the Goal – Power and Recognition.