



PROJECT STAGES

"STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION
TO ACHIEVE GENDER
EQUALITY IN SCIENCE"

GA N° 289051

NEWSLETTER 3



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ARE THEY “STRUCTURAL”? REPORTING ON THE FIRST ACHIEVEMENTS OF STAGES

It is 18 months now that the STAGES project is running. The Department for Equal Opportunities (DPO), as the project coordinator, is taking the occasion of the first periodic report to the European Commission, which is currently being drafted, to present in this newsletter the first results achieved in the different organisations. In the first year and a half, in fact, many successful initiatives have been undertaken under the five Action Plans launched by the project. Such initiatives have in some cases readily created virtuous mechanisms and durable arrangements, while in other cases solutions are still to be crafted for their sustainability in the long term.

In this issue of the newsletter we will therefore present some of these results, as well as the first observations of the partners on the structural change process that they are experiencing within their own institutions.

ASDO, as the partner in charge of technical assistance and other cross-cutting tasks in the project, will provide a brief account of its activities and, in particular, of the on-site visits which were accomplished in the last months. The visits, this year, were aimed at both supporting the partners in steering the structural change process and at helping them to start designing their sustainability strategies to continue key actions after the project lifespan.

As already mentioned, the DPO is currently coordinating all activities for the drafting of the first periodic report, from both the content and the administrative points of views. The DPO is also involved in dissemination and institutional

communication of the STAGES activities and outcomes through many initiatives undertaken at both national and European level.

The partners are involved in this effort as well. Over the last few months, in fact, most of the National Committees of the 5 project partners have been meeting for the second time with the aim of sustaining the structural change effort at the national level in each of the countries of the participating institutions, namely Italy, Germany, Denmark, Romania and the Netherlands.

In particular, the Committees' task is to follow the implementation of the Action Plans, support the achievement of their objectives and disseminate the results at the national level, while suggesting forms of exploitation of the acquired experience and synergies with other initiatives.

The partners have selected experts in different fields to be part of their Committees, namely equal opportunity experts, academics and representatives of scientific institutions, journalists and new media experts. This will facilitate the implementation of new actions for the dissemination of the Action Plans' results which will complement the institutional communication carried out by the DPO.

(STAGES Twitter Account :
[@ProjectStages](https://twitter.com/ProjectStages))



To this end, the DPO is also organising the participation of the STAGES Consortium in two very important events which will certainly attract the attention of the main European and international stakeholders next autumn, with a view to presenting the project. The events are respectively the Third Gender Equality Summit, which will take place from 11 to 13 November 2013 in Washington, and the European Conference on Structural Change to Improve Gender Equality in Science, which is being convened by the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and will take place late in November in Vilnius.

The STAGES project is one of the pioneer projects envisaging actions to implement structural change in universities and research institutions. Therefore, the participation in the above mentioned events, which will gather the main international experts in the field of gender equality in science, will not only represent an added value for the project itself, but will also boost debate on the new European structural change policies.

As for internal activities, on April 12, 2013 the Fourth Steering Committee Meeting envisaged by the STAGES project took place at the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

The meeting was opened by the representative of the project coordinator, who briefly commented on the results of the last European Commission survey "She Figures 2012" showing that there is still a long way to go, considering that we are sadly far from reaching acceptable rates of women in STEM. Such data must serve as a stimulus for the project. Reversing this negative trend in Europe is not only possible, but also necessary, especially during the current deep

economic crisis, which makes a waste of female talent no longer tolerable for the European Union and its member states. After that, the Consortium partners briefly summarised the most recent actions implemented within the framework of their Action Plans, as well as problems met and the measures taken to manage them.

As for WP6 (Technical assistance), the staff of ASDO provided a general overview of the current challenges the Action Plans are facing, by in particular stressing the issue of sustainability. A short document for launching the reflection on sustainability planning was also presented. Actions and progress as concerns WP7 (Evaluation) and WP8 (Accompanying research) were presented as well by the researchers of ASDO.

Finally, a mutual learning session was organised at the ASDO premises, during which all partners shared their opinions on the change process they are experiencing within their respective organisations, particularly dwelling upon the issue of how to better involve female staff.

The next meeting of the Consortium representatives will be held in October. Also the 2nd Meeting of the International Board of Advisors will take place in the same month.



ASDO: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE - THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABILITY

The ASDO team for STAGES, in the first part of the year 2013, has continued its constant activity related to the five Action Plans, i.e., technical assistance, research and evaluation, including, among other, bilateral monitoring, on-site visits, collective sessions of mutual learning, devising of working documents, and tailored consultancy. In this framework, some time has been devoted: to finalise the detailed planning for the current year; to visit four out of five organisations implementing Action Plans; to revise tools for the annual evaluation of the Action Plans; to prepare and steer two mutual learning sessions (one in presence on April 12th and one at a distance on May 31st) and to devise the feasibility study on sustainability, which will be used as a tool in the following period to plan and consolidate actions after the conclusion of STAGES in each of the five organisations involved.

A special mention should be made of the on-site visits, which also allowed to gather information to be used for the accompanying research and the feasibility study on sustainability. In this framework, Marina Cacace and Giovanna Declich met in Nijmegen on April 22nd the team of Radboud University, plus some representatives of the different departments and offices involved in the project actions. A monitoring in presence took place and first ideas about the future sustainability of the plan have been discussed. While Cacace stayed in Nijmegen to participate in the meeting of the network of young women researchers of the University on April 23rd (see after), Declich attended the day after the seminar on gender medicine in Milan (see after).

A further visit of ASDO in Milan took place on May 6th on the occasion of the opening session of the crash courses for managers at the University of Milan and of the meeting of the Italian National Committee organised still in Milan the day after. Meanwhile, on May 7th, Marina Cacace reached the Danish team at Aarhus, where a working session has been convened to examine all the project activities, their current advancement and results and to begin to tackle their potential durability beyond the STAGES duration. Finally, on June 4th, on the occasion of the second session of the crash courses, Cacace had the occasion to

discuss again with some representatives of the team of the University of Milan about sustainability issues.

On May 15, a working meeting was organised in Stuttgart by the team of Fraunhofer Gesellschaft, to analyse the current activities and plan the future steps. Due to the peculiarity of this organisation and of its Action Plan, which mainly addresses the officers for equal opportunities, both as intermediate beneficiaries and active players of change, a special attention has been devoted to the issue of how to gather the point of view of the final beneficiaries (i.e. the women researchers and staff of FRAU) in the self evaluation of the project activities.

Based on literary and documentary reviews, information collected during the visits, bilateral monitoring sessions and the further contacts with the organisations implementing the Action Plans, including the mutual learning sessions, the Feasibility study on sustainability has been drafted and sent to both project partners and members of the international board of scientific advisors. The partners integrated the information from their Action Plans and the international advisors provided general comments and suggestions.

Giovanna Declich

AARHUS UNIVERSITY: TAKING ADVANTAGE OF RESTRUCTURATION TO BUILD A FULLY GENDER EQUAL INSTITUTION



As part of the increased efforts to make more visible the gender issue at Aarhus University the STAGES-team carried out an analysis on the developments as regards gender equality. The study focuses on the gender distribution as to management and decision-making bodies, the share of women in appointment committees, the horizontal gender distribution among research staff as well as on developments in the vertical gender distribution at Aarhus University. During the last 16 months, the team has been formulating and implementing an intensive communication strategy, involving several activities in order to promote the visibility of women in science and raise awareness of issues related to gender equality at Aarhus University. A new STAGES website on Gender Equality in Research has been launched and is operational. One of the main objectives of the new website (ger.au.dk) is to promote the visibility of women researchers, communicate information on women's scientific excellence, on available positions, workshop activities, courses and mentoring programmes, career advice, maternity leave rules, rules for the evaluation of productivity, access to decision making-bodies, disseminate news, initiate discussions, etc.

A dissemination campaign was launched in relation to external media, arrangements and fora. For instance, the largest Danish public radio station (Danish Radio P3) broadcasted a news-feature about the launch of the website. In addition to this, an article regarding ger.au.dk was available on the front page of the largest Danish public website media DR.dk.

The web-site has also been promoted via the weekly main domain newsletters reaching all employees at Aarhus University. The team has also been circulating the link to different external stakeholders such as the Danish universities, the Ministry of Science,

<http://videnskab.dk/kort-nyt/fem-millioner-euro-skal-hjaelpe-kvinder-i-kitler>,

women's organisations Kvininfo and Danskvindesamfund, giving interviews to the nation-wide radio DR.dk, as well as publishing articles on the most prominent newspapers information.

The STAGES project and the GER website are also presented through the upgraded web-site of the Diversity Committee of Aarhus University focusing among others on gender issues

<http://www.au.dk/om/uni/strategiopolitik/ligestilling/udvalget-for-mangfoldighed/>

At the same time the team has been advertising and distributing material about STAGES and the new website through the University newspaper:

(http://omnibus.au.dk/fileadmin/omnibus/OMNIBUS_1_april_2013_FINAL_www_spreads.pdf)

The STAGES-team arranged a workshop April 30th 2013 aimed at discussing how to overcome structural barriers in order to achieving gender equality and improving the research capacity during periods of re-organisation and institutional change.

Project- and career planning have been incorporated into the workshop (aiming to provide tools for career advancement), which also offered opportunities to discuss other activities of interest to focus on in the nearest future within the STAGES framework. At the same time the team initiated a revitalisation of the women's network with an interesting discussion about the need for, the aim and activities of such a network as well as how to engage more women in an environment that is extremely demanding both in time and resources. The team continues to work for the consolidation of the network.

The Human Resources Department at Aarhus University in cooperation with the STAGES-team has planned and will implement this autumn a mentoring programme, called "Empower talent", for early stage academic staff (assistant professor/researcher/post doc level). The main aim with the programme is to provide important new support structures for researchers in their early career stage in order to retain them at the university. The programme aims hence to promote diversity, increasing the share of female researchers at the senior academic level by strengthening the competencies of young academic staff. Thematic workshops are planned in the frame of the mentoring programme in order to inspire and develop mentor/mentee relationships.

Evanthia Kalpazidou Schmidt

FRAUNHOFER: BUILDING AN INTERNAL MARKET FOR GENDER DIVERSITY IN SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

In cooperation with the central equal opportunities officer („GB“), Dr. Bärbel Thielicke, the STAGES project team decided to realise an annual report for the equal opportunities officers („BfC“). At the last BfC meeting in November 2012, it had emerged that a comparable and consistently structured report would be helpful for the BfCs. The aim of the report is to document the situation of women and the equality work to make visible the activities and success at the institutes. Together with Bärbel Thielicke, the STAGES team developed an online questionnaire which covers all relevant topics for the report:

- Details of the institute (e.g. location, number of employees);
- Participation of women at the institute (e.g. number of male and female employees at different levels);
- Information of the role of the BfC at the institute;
- Highlights at the institute in the field of equal opportunity;
- Information about support programs/career development programs;
- Measures for the compatibility of work and private life at the institute;
- Other measures for supporting female employees;
- Evaluation of the BfC considering the equal opportunities at the institute;
- Further support for the BfC.

On June 13 the link to the questionnaire and information about the aims and the origin of the online report were sent to all BfCs at Fraunhofer. They now have the possibility to fill in the questionnaire until August 15. As they will need much information and data for the report, they need help from the administration to collect all the data. Therefore a member of the Executive Board asked via e-mail the heads of administration in the institutes to support the BfCs.

The cooperation with Bärbel Thielicke is very positive. With the BfC report we could identify an activity which will help the BfCs to improve their work and to learn from each other. The cooperation with the Executive Board and the administrations is an important support for this activity.

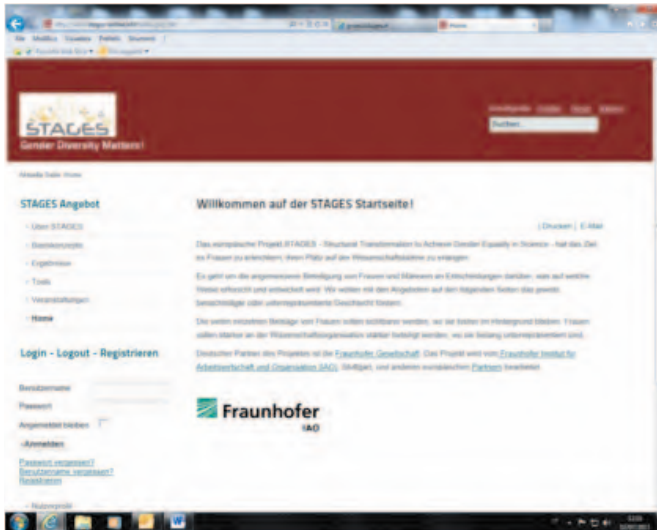
Gender Diversity Toolbox

As part of the work package related to the “Initial and final surveys at all Fraunhofer-Institutes” we are going to establish a toolbox providing many examples of gender diversity activities realised at Fraunhofer-Institutes which could serve as blueprints and help to improve equal opportunities at various other research institutes. This toolbox will be an offer on the intranet of the entire Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft in Germany and will be open to every of its about 17,000 employees. Thus it may become a source of mere information about what could be done at scientific institutes to improve equal opportunities – as a prerequisite for actions - or it may give impulses to those already prepared to initiate real improvements.

Many of the examples collected at Fraunhofer-Institutes will be open to the public and accessible via the Fraunhofer-STAGES internet site.

www.stages-online.info

Thus everyone registered on that site can benefit from the ideas realised at research institutes of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft.



We started to collect examples of gender diversity activities with the help of a simple form in March 2013. This two page form asks for the name of a certain gender diversity activity realised, what it was implemented for, what the benefits are, how it is accepted at the institute, how it was implemented there and what have been facilitating conditions to realise it and what obstacles one could face if trying to create something similar. The form also asks for a categorisation of the examples to sort them into fields of action to easily find a solution for a problem to be solved. These categories were derived from the EU co-funded PRA.G.E.S project (see: Practising Gender Equality in Science, at:

<http://www.retepariopportunita.it/prages/index.htm#>

Now, by June 2013, we have collected 36 examples of gender diversity activities from 15 institutes. We have edited all of the examples and have sent the edited documents back to their authors to get the permission to publish the examples in that shape on the Fraunhofer intranet and on the Fraunhofer-STAGES internet site. Eleven of the examples are published by now. We will proceed and are quite optimistic that we can report about many more published tools in one of the subsequent newsletters!

*Jurgen Wilke
Michaela Klemish
Anne Spitzley*

IOAN CUZA UNIVERSITY (UAIC): BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP THROUGH AN ACTIVE KNOWLEDGE BROKERAGE

In the second year of the STAGES project at the UAIC, the project's team had to accomplish a large number of actions. We could mention the two important public events: "Women Researchers Day. Awards for the Excellence in Science" (29 March 2013) and the International Colloquium with the theme "Women in Scientific Research. Achievements and Challenges for Gender Equality Management" (15-16 May 2013), that have been attended by more than 230 participants.

The first event definitely represented a novelty: for the first time in a Romanian University, a public event for celebrating, in a special day ceremony, women in science and academics with prestigious careers and international scientific visibility was organised at the UAIC. Similar public events are planned to be annually organised for the next years, in order to establish a tradition of celebrating women in academics and research at UAIC. The Program of the first edition included:

- Opening speech by Prof. dr. Vasile Isan, Rector of the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Iasi;
- Women and Scientific excellence: a brief overview by Prof.dr. Doina Balahur;
- The official ceremony "Women's Annual Science and Technology Excellence Award 2010" and "Women's Annual Science and Technology Distinction for Young Researchers 2012";
- "The UAIC Profiles of Women in Science"- documentary and promotional film presentation.

Within the frame of this ceremony there were also nominated the winners of the annual Awards for excellence in science.

The scientific personality who received Women's Annual Science and Technology Excellence Award 2012 was prof. dr. Liliana Mitoseriu, from Faculty of Physics. Three young researchers from the group headed by professor Mitoseriu were awarded with Women's Annual Science and Technology Distinction for Young Researchers 2012: dr. Lavinia Curecheriu, dr. Cristina Ciomaga and dr. Felicia Gheorghiu.



(Women in Scientific Research. Achievements and Challenges for Gender Equality Management)

The second public event was also held in the Senate Hall and was organised in a plenary session (on the 15 May), two Q&A sessions and a training-seminar (on the 16 May). In the programme of the plenary session, after an Introductory speech by Prof. univ. dr. Vasile Isan, Rector of the University, were presented the following scientific communications: Prof. univ. dr. Doina Balahur (UAIC, STAGES project coordinator): Is science a women thing? Where is Romania standing? Prof. univ. dr. Teresa Maria Lago (University of Porto, Founding member of the European Research Council, Former Chair of the ERC Scientific council Gender Balance working Group): Integrating Gender Equality Recommendations into Practices at the European Research Council; Dr. Brigitte Ratzler (Technical University of Vienna, Director of the Center for Promotion of Women and Gender Studies): How to fix the Leaky Pipeline? Prof. univ. dr. Ovidiu Gabriel Iancu (Vice-rector of the UAIC): Encouraging and supporting early career researchers at the UAIC in the framework of the doctoral programme POSDRU funded by European Social Fund, Romanian Government and Al. I. Cuza University of Iasi; Conf. univ. dr. Adrian Iftene (Dean of the Computer Science Faculty): Women and computer science at the UAIC.

Presentations were followed by discussions on the specific topics. The themes of the two Q&A sessions were "Profiling for young researchers excellence in science. Competitions and applications for the ERC grants" and, respectively, "Strategies for stimulating young female and male researchers' excellence in scientific research", and have been realised with the participation of invited experts Prof. dr. Teresa Maria Lago (Portugal) and Dr. Brigitte Ratzer (Austria). More than 170 participants - professors and researchers, administrative staff members, post-doctoral researchers, PhD students, MA students and undergraduate students from the UAIC - attended the event.

Both public events have been prepared and supported through PR and communication campaigns carried out by the UAIC STAGES Communication team and had numerous mentions in press (TV talk-shows, reports, interviews, press releases, media communications news etc.), increasing this way both the visibility of the actions and the awareness of the importance of Gender Equality issues at the UAIC.

Among the other relevant activities we could mention:

- The building of the website for the STAGES project at the UAIC (www.stages.csmc.ro), which is conceived as an informative medium for a better communication as well as for an extensive dissemination made both internally - for the members of the UAIC Network of Women in Academics and Research - and externally - for our project partners and any other interested readers, from Romania and abroad.
- Setting up two open source databases titled, the first: UAIC Profiles of Women in Science - as a form of documentary compendium that offers

public information about the women scientists who are internationally recognised through their outstanding achievements in academics and research and are role models for young researchers – and, respectively, the second: Young Women Researchers on the road of career development - aimed at bringing to the public attention the young women researchers who have remarkable results in their scientific communities and to encourage them in career development by increasing their visibility.

- Organising new editions of the actions Early Career Researchers Day (15 May), Info-day on career perspectives for young researchers (2 June), Training module on Gender Equality Management for Human Resources Department and other administrative staff (16 May), Network's Annual Evaluative Meeting (4 February).
- Negotiations with the University's Top Management (the Rector and the Senate) for the institutionalisation of the UAIC Network of Women in Academics and Research, the setting up of a new Center for Gender Equality, the elaborating and assuming of an institutional programme and the introduction of the practice of annual reporting on Gender Equality programmes and actions in the UAIC, all of these constituting structural changes aimed to promote the gender equal opportunities in science and academia at the UAIC.

Doina Balahur

RADBOUD UNIVERSITY OF NIJMEGEN: TAKING CHANGE ONE STEP FURTHER

Stakeholder discussions on the image of women in internal communication:

The STAGES project team discussed the study on the Image of Women in Internal Communication of the Donders Institute and the Nijmegen School of Management with stakeholders at both institutes. The vice dean on Research and the Internal Communication officer at the Nijmegen School of Management were happy with the result that the newsletter reflected the need for a good work life balance. They took interest in the lack of representation of senior women academics in the newsletter and announced efforts to improve this. And the managing directors at the Donders Institute were happy that women were equally represented, but took note of the importance of also emphasising the care responsibilities of men academics in their internal communication.

Women's Network Meetings:

Two meetings of the Halkes Women Faculty Network took place in the first half of 2013. We alternated formats by organising a round table at February 26th and a Lecture at April 23rd. The round table in February was prepared by Laura Berger and Inge Bleijenbergh. Six groups of eight women (about 45 participants) discussed their personal experiences with publishing, finding a work life balance and networking practices. Discussions were supported with a lunch and the informal setting invited the exchange of personal experiences. Joke Leenders prepared the meeting in April. At the lecture in April the life courses of women full professors in different life stages were central. Dr. Marjet Derks talked about the struggles of the first women full professor at the University, prof. Christine Mohrmann. Prof. dr. Toine Lagro-Jansen reflected upon her own career in medical science, looking back just before retirement and prof. dr. Janneke Gerards represented the youngest generation with explaining how she has become full professor in her early thirties. At the end of the meeting, participants had the opportunity to ask questions. The meeting was concluded with drinks.



(Women's network Lunch meeting February 26)

PhD course Research Methods from a gender perspective:

In June (7 and 21) the first course Research Methods from a Gender Perspective took place, with participation of fourteen PhD students from three different universities. The course was prepared by the STAGES project team in cooperation with the Institute for Gender Studies at the Radboud University. Six lecturers participated by giving introductions in the gender aspects of qualitative research methods (prof. dr. Willy Jansen, dr. Stefan Dudink, dr. Marleen van der Haar) and quantitative research methods (dr. Niels Spierings, dr. Els Rommes and dr. Inge Bleijenbergh). All participants had prepared assignments about the gender aspects of the research methods in their own PhD thesis. We discussed each assignment elaborately, on the basis of feedback from fellow PhD students and feedback from the lecturers. The different backgrounds from participants, varying between cultural sciences, historical science, business administration, health and economics, supported a lively debate.

Inge Bleijenbergh

UNIVERSITY OF MILAN

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY: HOW TO ENHANCE CHANGE IN SCIENTIFIC CAREERS

The beginning of the **STAGES Project's second year** at the University of Milan has been marked by the implementation, under the coordination of the **Interdepartmental Centre “Women and Gender Differences”**, of several actions having different aims and targeting different types of actors.

The STAGES action plan at UMIL, indeed, was conceived with the twofold aim of intervening on career paths and of fostering the **genderisation** of disciplines within the two Faculties targeted by the Project: the **Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences**. The plan, moreover, includes actions addressing students and young researchers as well as professors and the top management of the two Faculties, and in some cases, of the entire university.

With regard to ‘**genderisation**’, the activities organised this year represented a significant step in the process of diffusion of gender medicine. On the **24th of April 2013, the workshop titled “Sex or Gender Differences in Medicine?”** addressing practitioners and specialists in the health sector took place.

The workshop, whose scientific coordinator was **Prof. Patrizia Presbitero**, aimed at providing participants with growingly complex tools for the diagnosis and treatment of pathologies marked by specific clinical expressions in the male and female populations and granted them the recognition of ECM credits. Over the day, the 65 participants listened with interest to the speeches grouped in two sections - **“Cardiovascular Diseases”** and **“Cancer and Immunity”** – held by experts from different Italian universities such as **Prof. Adriana Maggi** and **Prof. Alberto Mantovani**.



(Prof. Patrizia Presbitero is one of Europe's foremost authorities on heart disease)

In June, the first 10-hour **optional course on gender medicine for students** from the Faculty of Medicine was also organised. In the introductory part of the course participants were provided with the conceptual and analytical tenets of gender medicine. The most significant studies on medical careers were also presented. The remaining lessons were devoted to the analysis from a gender perspective of researchers and clinical studies in the fields of **cardiology, immunology and gynecology**.

Also this year, moreover, the optional course **“Equal Opportunities and Scientific Careers”** took place. The 24-hour course was organised at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences but was open also to students from other Faculties.



(Workshop on “Sex or Gender Differences in Medicine?”)

In the past months, finally, an important STAGES action regarding careers was started. On the **6th of May 2013**, the **first course on gender stereotypes** to the top managers of the entire university was implemented. The course, titled “Research, Innovation and Careers: How to Value Talent”, aimed at sensitising decision-makers on the impact of gender stereotypes on careers and was held by international experts in the field: **Alice Hogan**, inventor of the American projects ADVANCE, **Simone Buitendijk**, Vice Rector of the University of Leiden and member of the LERU Gender Working Group and **Curt Rice**, Pro-Rector for Research at University of Tromsø, author of the text “6 Steps to Gender Equality”.

A further course, tailored on the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, was organised on the 4th of June 2013. The course was held by **Alice Hogan and Rossella Palomba** (IRPPS-CNR) and was actively attended by the top managers of the Faculty and of the two Departments forming it.

The numerous and articulated activities organised this year contributed to consolidate and broaden the **networks** of actors active within the project thereby granting **growing visibility** to it. Starting from September the courses on gender stereotypes to the top managers will be replicated, the courses to students will be organised again and new actions will be activated. Stay tuned!

Daniela Falcinelli

Elena Del Giorgio

INTERVIEW WITH MR MICHELE PALMA

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OF THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (DPO)

Michele Palma has been working at the DPO since October 2008. He is responsible for the coordination of regional affairs for the objectives financed by the European Regional Development Fund as well as for Community projects implemented under many EC Programmes such as 7FP and PROGRESS. He is also member of the Experts' Forum of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and of the European Commission High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming. He is full member of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men based in Strasbourg and member of the Bureau of the Committee.

What is the situation of women in science in Italy?

If we look at the two EC "She figures" 2009 and 2012 reports, we can see that the situation of women in science in Italy is quite in line with the European trend: a positive evolution has been recorded in the number of female students and graduates, but gender gap still exists in career development and is particularly striking at the top level. In Italy the leaky pipeline phenomenon is quite visible: women represent only 34% of European researchers, 20% of full professors and 15.5% of heads of institutions in higher education. It is time to change this attitude! I think that in this time of global economic crisis, eliminating inequalities between women and men in access to S&T should become a fundamental priority for all countries, since only through the full participation of women in this strategic sector, it will be possible to support the economic growth and create a society based on knowledge and excellence.

When did the promotion of equal opportunities in science and research become a key issue in your organisation?

The Department for Equal Opportunities has been carrying out several actions to improve the role of women in science and combat discrimination that women face in this strategic sector since 2007.

In particular, two are the projects which have been coordinated by the DPO and financed by the Italian Government and the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme for research:

The PRA.G.E.S. – "PRActising Gender Equality in Science" project, a coordination action aimed at comparing the various strategies implemented to promote an increase in the number of women in decision-making positions relating to scientific research in public institutions, which ended in 2009; and the WHIST "Women Careers Hitting the Target" project, a project developed with the aim of better understanding the problem of the under-representation of women in science through the implementation of experimental activities concerning gender diversity management policies in the organisations involved in the project.

And we are currently coordinating the STAGES project...

What are the main lessons learned from these projects?

Implementing such transnational actions has been fundamental for us, since it allowed us to analyse and study more than 100 Gender equality programmes implemented by Universities and research institutions all over the world, while capitalising the existing knowledge on the topic, and then to directly test these actions in Universities and Research centres. And the important lesson we learned is that "change can happen" ! Successful strategies and concrete actions to promote gender equality in science and technology exist and making differences between male and female researchers the main strength of the European Research area is not a "mission impossible".

NEWS

Two important events next autumn:



**NOVEMBER 13-15.
WASHINGTON DC
THE 3RD GENDER SUMMIT .**



The aim of the 3rd Gender Summit, which is focused on North America, is to interconnect all relevant stakeholders in a Call to Action to achieve positive change towards greater diversity in the Science, Engineering, Technology and Mathematics (STEM) workforce and leadership, and greater inclusion of sex and

gender considerations (the "gender dimension") in research content and process.

For more info go to:

<http://www.gender-summit.com/>



**NOVEMBER 21-22
VILNIUS CONFERENCE ON STRUCTURAL
CHANGES ENCOURAGING GENDER
EQUALITY IN SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS**



For more info : <http://www.eu2013.lt/en/>



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