

Dr Elizabeth Pollitzer discusses the new mission for Gender Summit 9 Europe: the globalisation of the effort to address gender issues in science

A globalised effort

The 'Gender Summit 9 Europe' event will take place on 8-9 November 2016 in Brussels, Belgium. It promises an excellent programme involving 70 speakers organised into 15 sessions (see: <http://www.gender-summit.com/g9-about>). Earlier this year, there has been an important development that has far-reaching significance for the mission of the Gender Summit: in May, the heads of 50 research councils attending the annual meeting of the Global Research Council (GRC) in New Delhi, India, agreed to take action on two fronts:

- 1 'To improve participation and promotion of women in the research workforce, including addressing the longstanding dominance of certain demographics in academic culture and historical obstacles to women's participation within particular disciplines and fields of research'; and
- 2 'To improve the quality of science by promoting the integration of the gender dimension in research design and in the analysis of research outcomes.'

These two goals have been at the core of the recommendations made in 2010 by the Science Leaders Consensus Panel as part of the FP7-funded genSET project, and from the start they also defined the mission of the Gender Summit, which was created in 2011 following the genSET project. In 2014, these goals became part of Horizon 2020, and their subsequent adoption in 2016 by the GRC shows growing consensus amongst science leaders that the underlying and well-documented scientific evidence on gender issues in research and innovation cannot be ignored.

Opportunities

This creates new opportunities for inter-institutional and international collaborations to shape research agendas, programmes and policy initiatives. Such collaborations have been recommended by Gender Summit Europe, North America, Africa, and Asia Pacific and fit in well with the European Commission's expectations for the new European Research Area (ERA), and the policy of 'Open Science, Open Innovation, Open to the World'.

There is much to be gained from making the improvements identified by the GRC, not only for the institutions involved but also for science, and for advancing research that can tackle societal challenges, as expressed in the Europe 2020 vision and, at the global level, in the UN Sustainable Development Goals agenda. The latter can be exemplified by the report 'The Role of Gender-based Innovation for the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Toward 2030: Better Science and Technology for All', which was an output from Gender Summit 6 Asia Pacific (GS6AP), which took place in Seoul, South Korea, in August 2015. This report was produced through the collaboration of 27 international experts who

identified 170 studies that can already be used to implement the targets of all 17 goals as well as 150 new research topics (the report can be downloaded here: <http://www.gender-summit.com/g6-about>).

GS9

The theme of GS9 is 'Gender-based Research, Innovation and Development for Sustainable Economies and Societal Wellbeing'. The programme brings together heads of research councils, both from Europe and beyond, as well as top-level policy makers seeking to make the world better for all through science and technology. They will be reporting on new research results and policy initiatives, as well as on best practices that many institutions and projects are currently developing and testing. There will be plenty of opportunities to share experiences and identify common interests, and the programme will start with three sessions at the European Parliament as part of an event designed to advance the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality's political agenda.

In 2012, when the proposal for Horizon 2020 was being still debated, the parliament hosted the Gender Summit 2 Europe. Much progress has been made since then, but a great deal of work still lies ahead. The leadership taken by the European Union to mainstream gender into both internally and externally oriented policies and programmes, and in particular in Horizon 2020 and the new EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) for 2016-2020, has been widely admired worldwide and set a tough benchmark for other regions.

By participating in GS9 and contributing to the discussions there, or in future events, you will be strengthening the momentum and capacity to achieve change. To encourage the readers of this and other Pan European Networks titles to come and see that the Gender Summit is not just a conference, we are offering you a 10% discount on GS9 registrations. Please use the code Gs9Pen10 when registering. If you are not based in Brussels, you may also like to claim a 10% discount off your flights and accommodation, details of which you will find on the GS9 Practical Information webpage.

HORIZON 2020

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