

## **Workshop DIVERSITY: “Women and men in science, towards parity?”**

**Grenoble, France, 25 September 2009**

The workshop “Women and Men in science, towards parity?” was organized in Grenoble on September 25, 2009 in the framework of the DIVERSITY project funded by the European Commission: « Improving the gender diversity management in materials research institutions ». This project of the 7th Framework Programme for research and technological development, belongs to the section Science and Society, in the thematic area “Strengthening the role of women in scientific research”, with the central goal “Getting more women to the top in research”. The consortium includes 14 partners and is coordinated by the Leibniz Institute for Solid State and Materials Research in Dresden. Institut Neel, CNRS Grenoble, was the organizer of the workshop, with the help of APMST (Association for parity in scientific and technological jobs, Grenoble). More than sixty persons were present during the morning sessions. During the afternoon sessions, the attendance was reduced to about half this figure.

The workshop started with introductory lectures on the situation of women in science in France and in Europe. In France, the percentage of girls obtaining the final secondary school degree (baccalauréat) amounts to 70% of the total in the general sections and 60 % in the technical sections. However, after having obtained their baccalauréat, only 6 % of the girls, to be compared to 12 % of the boys, enter into the highly selective "preparatory classes" towards admission in engineering schools. In French universities, women professors are 36 % of the total number of professors. Their number is less in scientific disciplines. In all disciplines, it diminishes as progress into the career is considered. Women represent 11 % of the number of professors in physics, 4.5% of the University presidents, 3.6 % of the French Academy of Science members. Amongst the reasons to explain these unbalanced figures, most important is the fact that women still assume much higher a load than men in domestic tasks. In CNRS, the situation of women is similar to the one which exists at the University. Women are less successful than men at the CNRS entrance. This is most likely the result of an unbalanced evaluation by the committees, composed of a majority of men. It is also striking that the fraction of women scientists has not significantly evolved during the last 40 years. The CNRS has established a "Mission pour la place des femmes" which has launched a number of important actions. In brief, this consisted -in taking part in networks in France, at the European and at international levels, -in emphasizing the need to raise awareness among the scientific community, -in collecting data to establish unambiguously the situation of women with respect to men and -in developing concrete actions to favor professional equity. Since 2004, University Claude Bernard in Lyon has developed an ambitious policy, at least compared to other French universities, to favor equity between women and men. The first action was an exhibition, more specifically intended to convince girls and boys that a scientific career is possible and may be exciting. A charter was signed, early 2008, in which the University officially declared that it will make all effort within its competence to favor equity. Among indicators of the success of this policy, official documents are now written using both the masculine and the feminine forms, furthermore at least one woman is present in all selection committees and the condition for a colloquium to receive support from the university is the presence of women in the organizing committee.

The European Charter for Researchers and the code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers, which is at the centre of the Diversity project were also presented during the

workshop. It was noted that the charter insists on the fact that the lack of women in scientific disciplines has a global negative effect on the economic development of society.

The Directors and Presidents of Grenoble's main research institutions, including the Large European Facilities located in Grenoble, ESRF and Institut Laue-Langevin (ILL), and the two scientific Universities, Université Joseph Fourier and Institut Polytechnique de Grenoble, then described the situation of women in their institution and their policy towards parity. It emerged from these presentations that the percentage of hired women is of about 25 % in all these institutions, with however large variations depending on the concerned topics (more women in chemistry-oriented activities, less in engineering-oriented ones). In all cases, the number of women decreases as one goes towards more senior higher-responsibility positions. The ILL Director insisted on the fact that it is important to obtain a better balance between men and women to improve equity, diversity in science and links to the external scientific world. At the ESRF, the percentage of success at recruitment is higher for women than for men. Some actions developed there to favour equity include - regular follow-up of recruitment statistics, - a study on gender diversity made by a psychologist, -increased flexibility in working hours. A specific training course for management is also proposed to women.

A conclusion of this part of the workshop was that simple concrete actions are often needed, on which everybody may easily agree. The disparity between women and men develops progressively from the beginning of the career to its end.

A panel discussion with seven women scientists belonging to these institutions, organized by a senior one, took place. The main points of the discussion were the importance of the role of models for young women students and scientists, the difficulty in reconciling private and professional life, the attractiveness (or non attractiveness) of power positions for women and the small percentage of women in materials science. This panel discussion is summarised in another document.

Globally, the participants in the colloquium expressed their interest for the presentations and the discussions. It was however noted that the number of "independent" participants was relatively small and these were mostly women already aware of the situation. It was also questioned whether the various responsible persons who had made presentations had not presented a situation better than in reality. In conclusion, the possibility to organise another shorter meeting of the same kind at the end of Diversity project was raised.