



ENRF Briefing Note

Gender balance in Research: only 33% of researchers are women!

Gender balance and equality between women and men is a key topic in the EU, actively promoted by the European Commission. But what is the situation in Research and Innovation? Are women participating and contributing to it to the same extent as men?

According to the recent [EU SHE figures 2018](#), published by the European Commission [DG Research, Science and Innovation](#), the number of women with a career in research is slowly growing in Europe. Still, they remain significantly underrepresented, and their potential not fully recognised and valued.

“We need to do more and we need to do it faster if we are to achieve a good gender balance in the near future”, expressed Carlos Moedas, EU Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation.

Today in the EU, women are a majority among PhD graduates, and the proportion of women in the senior academic ranks has also increased, with 47.9% of women doctoral graduates. But, the gender imbalance amongst researchers remains with only one third of the EU’s researchers being women. In the EU-28, women represent very slightly over 33.4% of the total population of researchers, and in the majority of the countries, women researchers are concentrated in the higher education sector.

Latvia and Lithuania are the countries with the highest proportions of women researchers (51% and 50.7% respectively). Likewise, outside the EU, the highest proportion of women researchers is observed in Tunisia (54.6%) and Armenia (52.5 %). The Netherlands has the lowest proportion of women researchers with 25.4%, followed by France (26.1%) and Czech Republic (26.9%). Interestingly, at EU level, the average growth rate of women researchers was higher than that of men researchers. The number of women researchers increased on average by 3.8% each year, while the number of men researchers increased by 3.4%.

As regards nursing research, we cannot ignore the need for change and the urgent need for a strategic vision for reform and more gender balanced policy. At all levels, women can play an influential role for positive change! In EU Member States these reforms are ongoing and multilevel, but fragmented: small elements of the system are changing, but a clear, innovative research plan and both medium- and long-term visions on how nursing research should become is missing. This is a real concern, as nursing in Europe is undergoing a profound change, both academically and professionally, to adapt itself and meet the new health needs arising. It is, therefore, time to take concrete actions to make gender balance happen!

Published every three years, the *She Figures* is the main source of pan-European, comparable statistics on gender balance in science.

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