



Project no. **518040**

Project acronym: **NEWS**

Project title: **NETWORK ON ETHNICITY AND WOMEN SCIENTISTS**

Instrument: **Specific Support Action**

Thematic Priority: **Science and Society**

Executive Summary

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Project coordinator organisation name

Université Libre de Bruxelles

Genre & Migration

Executive Summary

1. The **main project objectives** were to make the state of the art on the position of three targeted group of women scientists (migrant women, refugee women and women from ethnic minorities); to build and develop a network on ethnicity and women scientists in connection with national, European and international networks of women scientists and to promote a public debate at the national and European levels on the issue of gender and ethnic diversity in science.
2. In 2007, the NEWS project **achieved all its objectives**: producing the state of the art on gender and ethnic diversity in science careers in 7 European countries and a European synthesis report, organising the final European workshop, creating the NEWS network, disseminating the project outcomes and writing a policy paper.
3. The seven partners have written a **national report**: Belgium (Université Libre de Bruxelles, the coordinator), Bulgaria (New Bulgarian University), Germany (University of Aachen), Italy (University of Bari), the Netherlands (University of Utrecht), Portugal (University of Minho) and the UK (University of Westminster).
4. On the basis of the national reports, the **European synthesis report** compares the situation of minority women scientists in the seven countries. The report provides a new analysis of the six OECD countries under investigation (Belgium, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, UK) about level of education and the position of immigrants and their descendants on the labour market. It is showed that level of education is increasing both in the foreign and native -born populations aged 25 to 64. Tertiary educated people have the highest employment rate but it remains higher for natives than for foreign born in all countries.
5. The reports raised several **important questions** for ERA: To what extent do foreign women scientists and those from ethnic minorities participate in existing European research workforce and what potential do they represent for the full realisation of the European Research Area? Is gender and ethnic diversity considered to have a crucial role in an expansion of the European research workforce and for the improvement of the quality of European science?
6. The research **hypothesis** of the NEWS project is that the invisibility of women scientists from ethnic minorities and/or the possible existence of gender and ethnic discrimination in science has negative effects on science development because of a loss of talents, of competence and of knowledge.
7. First of all, the reports highlight first **a serious lack of statistics**. At the national level, information on nationality is available in all seven countries but ethnic minorities are only clearly identified in the censuses of three countries: Bulgaria, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. As a rule, access to this information is not very easy especially in the sector of high education and research.
8. In general, the **accessibility** of black and ethnic minority individuals to higher

- education has somewhat improved but **students and academics** from these groups still remain disproportionately under-represented in higher education in comparison to majority population.
9. About the **staff**, the national reports give an overview of the **under-representation** of “non Western” foreign, black and ethnic minority women scientists in research and academia in seven European Union countries. For example, in the UK, about three per cent of minority staff are professors and nearly three times as many White British staff work at this grade. In the Netherlands, in 2007, only nineteen women with BME backgrounds were employed as either lecturers, PhDs, Associate, Assistant or Full Professors by the Dutch academy. BME women account for less than 1% (0.027%) of the entire female Dutch academic staff.
 10. As a rule, BME researchers and academics hold a more **unstable position** in all the countries investigated. Minorities are less likely to be on **fixed term** contracts and more often in **part-time** working arrangements.
 11. The Netherlands developed *Mozaiek project* for attracting BME **graduate students** who demonstrate academic potential into research but it has been pointed the lack of academic role models for BME students and the insufficient and incorrect scholastic guidance and advice to talented BME students. Bulgaria adopted the *Framework Program for Equal Integration of Roma* to integrate it into Bulgarian Society. Belgium implemented *Diversity plans* in Dutch-speaking universities (VUB and KUL) to attract more ethnic minority students and to improve achievement in university studies.
 12. **The recruitment practices** observed in the seven countries showed more or less transparent rules and there is significant scope for informal decisions in recruitment and appointment. The sense of public accountability in this area is relatively weak.
 13. There are **no concrete policies** relating to migrant and minority **staff recruitment** in employment in Italy, Portugal, Bulgaria, Belgium and Germany, although there are some moves to develop such policies and procedures. The UK, issued a Guidelines on Equal Opportunities in Employment in Universities in 1991 encouraging universities to take positive action to increase the representation of members of ethnic minority groups among staff. The Commission on University Career Opportunity expressed concern about the lack of active pursuit of these policies and asked their implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
 14. In the seven countries several **networks of women scientists** are well established, fewer scientist networks grounded on ethnicity have been founded and no ethnic minority women scientist network exists today. The most significant case is in the **UK** where significant developments have taken place in women scientists and ethnic minority scientists networking organisations and activities.
 15. The European synthesis report provides **recommendations**. Regarding the results highlighted in the seven national reports there is a serious need for a better integration of the gender and ethnic dimension in higher education policies. The

measures proposed concern the field of statistics, research, educational and employment policies, and networking. The report suggests also the adoption and the effective implementation by the Ministry of Higher Education, universities and institutions of research of the *European Charter for Researchers* and the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* and the Code of Conduct in each country, accompanied with a raising awareness campaign, a monitoring and an evaluation process.

16. The **final workshop** took place in Brussels, the 11th and 12th October 2007 at Université Libre de Bruxelles . The workshop gathered around thirty -five women academics and researchers from the seven countries, as well as members of women and ethnic minority NGO's and networks. The main national scientist organisations (Engineers, Mathematicians, etc.) and representatives of ENWISE, the Helsinki Group and the European Platform of Women Scientists (EPWS) have been invited to the final workshop. The coordinator benefited from the European Platform of Women Scientists' team support and close collaboration for the organisation of the workshop.
17. The **first day** of the final workshop was devoted to the discussion of the European synthesis report and the final policy paper. In different workshops, the participants addressed the questions of dissemination, institutional strategy and the needs of minority women scientists and proposed some recommendations on these issues.
18. The second day of the final workshop was dedicated to the **founding meeting of the NEWS network**. The *founding members* from the seven countries attended the meeting and decided to create the network and to affiliate the NEWS to the EPWS as a full member (http://newscientist.ulb.ac.be/Membres/en_membres.htm). The coordinator has been in charge of representing the NEWS network toward the EPWS. During the meeting, the founding members had the opportunity to exchange experiences about their academic and research position.
19. The NEWS members still have to **clarify** their objectives, to define the criteria of the membership and the future activities. Four members from UK and Portugal had in charge of defining the objectives and the criteria of the membership. Germany and Belgium had responsible of defining the future meeting of the NEWS network and the international conference scheduled at the end of 2008.
20. The **final policy paper** includes recommendations on how to integrate the issue of gender and ethnicity in further EU R&D policy development. The set of recommendations is build on the existing recommendations related to the improvement of the position of women scientists in EU, and it "mainstreams" those recommendations with minority status of women scientists, which is the result of their ethnicity, race, or citizenship status. The recommendations are clustered around the various partners, without whom no progress can be made in improving the situation facing minority women scientists: Council of Ministers and European Parliament, European Commission, national policy makers, Universities and scientific institutions, Business enterprises, Media, Women scientists themselves, and women's scientists associations and networks.

21. Two **steering group** meetings took place one in Budapest and one in Brussels. The steering group tasks consisted in insuring the scientific quality of the reports and preparing the final workshop. Dr. Marina Blagojevic, the project's expert - observer, assisted the coordinator in all aspects of the project.
22. Dr. Marina Blagojevic provided a revisited version of her **paper on "returnees" Hungarian women scientists** in universities and research in Hungary. It describes the situation of the women who had migrated outside Hungary (to Europe or North America) and returned home after several years, and their experiences in trying to re-integrate into Hungarian universities and research institutions.
23. The **dissemination** tasks during the second year consisted of *informing* academic, researcher and networks of women scientists about the existence of the NEWS website, *disseminating* the NEWS reports and the NEWS website towards academics, researchers, women and ethnic NGO's and *publishing* an article (in French) on the research results .
24. Academics and researchers have been informed about the NEWS reports and the final workshop at the individual, national and European levels (universities, institutions of higher education and research, networks of women scientists).
25. The coordinator insured the **NEWS website** maintenance. The bilingual website published in August 2006 received a new Internet server more explicit about its subject: (http://newscientist.ulb.ac.be/index_en.htm) in *English* and (<http://newscientist.ulb.ac.be/index.htm>) in *French*. The NEWS website presents the project, the researchers and university partners and contains a list of network members. It also provides a central resource of national and international links, documents, statistics, events and European Commission links. In addition the website contains portraits of famous women scientists, including the one of **Marie Curie**, the most famous migrant woman scientists. The national and the European reports on gender and ethnic diversity in science and the presentations of the final workshop have been put on the website.
26. The **intentions** of the project results are: to improve knowledge and understanding of women scientists and researchers and the position of foreign women scientists and women scientists from ethnic minorities in the EU; to ensure that the voices of these women scientists are being listened to and heard at EU policy level; to promote a public debate at the national and European levels on the issue of gender and ethnic diversity in science through the synthesis report and the policy paper; and to provide more support for women scientists from ethnic minorities through networking and to foster greater opportunities for developing their academic and research careers.

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