

Advancing gender mainstreaming in Academia, Research and Innovation: a glance from Italy



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The role and influence of EU research and policies toward gender issues brought relevant impacts on universities and research organizations. Notable outcomes have been the commitment of many universities and some R&D structures on setting up or **improving a gender balanced participation** that was practically unknown twenty years ago, and the growing interest in **engendering science**, stemming from health and medicine to embrace technology and environment, coping with sex/gender analyses of data and processes. Progresses have been made, but there is still **huge room for improvement**, according to awareness and policies which are different in different countries.

In this scenario, the **Associazione Donne e Scienza DeS**

(Women in Science
www.donnescienza.it)

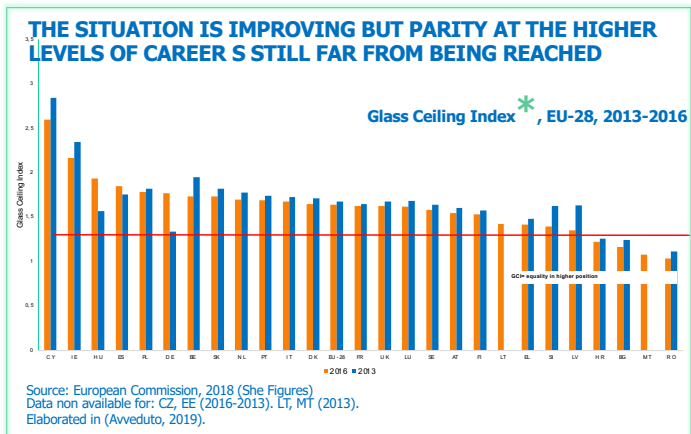
is a non-profit cultural organisation whose members are women scientists working mostly at Higher Education Institutions and Research Organisations in Italy. DeS has been one of the founding associations and is still member of the **European Platform of Women Scientists - EPWS** (epws.org).

In Italy, women scientists' needs and aspirations relate to structural change and gender dimension in science and technology in a European perspective. Particularly on the possibility still too low to reach the higher levels of career, The situation is improving but parity is still far from being reached in many EU Countries as well.



DeS and its members have been and are active in

the definition of **Gender Equality Plans (GEP)**, as a direct result of their involvement in **EU Projects** to promote structural changes such as **GENERA** (<https://genera-project.com/>), **GenderTIME** (<https://gendertime.org>), **PLOTINA** (<http://www.plotina.eu/>), **R&I-PEERS** (<http://ripeers.eu/>) or **MINDtheGEPs** (<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101006543>). Some of them are active in the GENERA Network, as well as in other EU Projects, such as **GRECO** (www.greco-project.eu), to implement open science and responsible research and innovation (Rubbia, 2019). The role of DeS members vary from **participation in advisory boards to active involvement as beneficiary**. DeS initiatives included the organization of **annual conferences and events, both at national and international level**, on crucial themes that gathered issues from different perspectives and audiences, including education, sexual harassment (Avveduto et al. eds, 2019), environment and climate changes, shaping the scientific and societal debate with a gender perspective.



*The Glass Ceiling Index (GCI) is a relative index comparing the proportion of women in academia (grades A, B, and C) with the proportion of women in top academic positions (grade A positions; equivalent to full professors in most countries) in a given year. The GCI can range from 0 to infinity. A GCI of 1 indicates that there is no difference between women and men in terms of their chances of being promoted.

COVID-19 has exacerbated an already difficult situation pushing women out of the labour market also in scientific organization hitting more the weakest positions of young women at the entry level of career. We carried out a survey to catch the opinions and perceptions of women scientists during such a difficult time. The two figures give a **glimpse of their emotions during pandemic and hopes for the future**.



Visions for next future

• What will change next? What would you like to take with you and what to forget?

the will (volere):
to forget (dimenticare) this period
to bring (portare) this experience (esperienza)

the virus brought a lesson (lezione)

There is not a previous situation to return to, but a future to invent, together*

a unique opportunity to give social importance to scientific research

Emotion analysis – what has changed in your daily habits?

| | |
|--------------|------|
| Optimism | 37,5 |
| Acceptance | 75,0 |
| Positivity | 33,3 |
| Fear | 27,1 |
| Sadness | 52,1 |
| Restlessness | 58,3 |

- hope and willingness of a future improvement
- acceptance of the logistic and social constraints
- understanding the seriousness of the situation, rediscovering home as a place of leisure, serenity and tranquility
- intolerance and irritation of living confined at home
- conflicts managing space and time
- anger for drastic changes and deprivations

References
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