



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Presidency Video Conference
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Panel "Enabling inclusiveness and participation"

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Challenges to inclusiveness & participation

- Parenthood (motherhood) penalty
 - Detrimental for gender balance
- Non-heterosexuality penalty
 - Detrimental for geographical spread of excellence
- Positionality
- MSCA-IF funded research (TOFNITW/TransNorm, 2017-2019)

Gender Balance Among Researchers

- **48%** female doctoral graduates (2016)
 - **42%** female researchers in Higher Education Sector (2015)

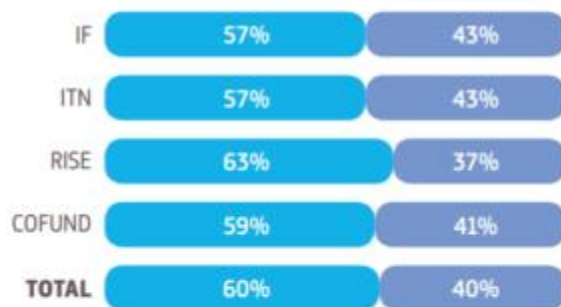
Majority of FR (age): under 35, 35-44

Majority of MR (age): 45-54, over 55

[mean age of women at birth of first child (2018): 30.8 years]

- **3.6 point difference** in favour of men in international mobility rates of higher education researchers in post-PhD career stages (2016)

Gender Dimension in MSCA



Gender share by action

Fewer female applicants

- though more successful
- CAR – most female-favouring score

IN THE PROCESS OF AWARDING GRANTS



- All MSCA evaluators receive training on unconscious gender bias
- Research teams must commit to gender equality

AND AT WORK



- Family allowance
- Maternity/parental leave with possibility to extend fellowship
- Part-time work for family and professional reasons
- Career restart after a break

Parenthood (Motherhood) Penalty (I)

- Needs beyond family allowance: no provisions nor requirements for childcare support

Basically no support in finding childcare, had to find it on my own before entering the country which means that I have to travel few months earlier to UK at my own cost to arrange that. I barely got a childcare place! (FR in UK)

Moving with kid was difficult, and I received no help from my institution for the daycare/school (but I moved to France, where the system is not so bad. However, not knowing the system makes things difficult). (FR in France)

(M)y wife takes care of my daughter and she's not coming back to work because childcare in the UK is that expensive for children under 3 that it wouldn't pay off. This resulted in her being a bit isolated, unable to go back to work (now that our daughter is 2 years)... The university offers no help for ESRs who have young children when it comes to childcare. (MR in UK)

Parenthood (Motherhood) Penalty (II)

- Fixed amount of family allowance doesn't reflect extra cost of (#) children

I have been paying for expensive childcare...Not to mention that both housing allowance and family allowance are taxable. Housing is also very expensive here. So, basically out of salary+allowances I have received as part of the program - 75% was spent on childcare and housing (including utilities). And I have only one child! (FR in UK)

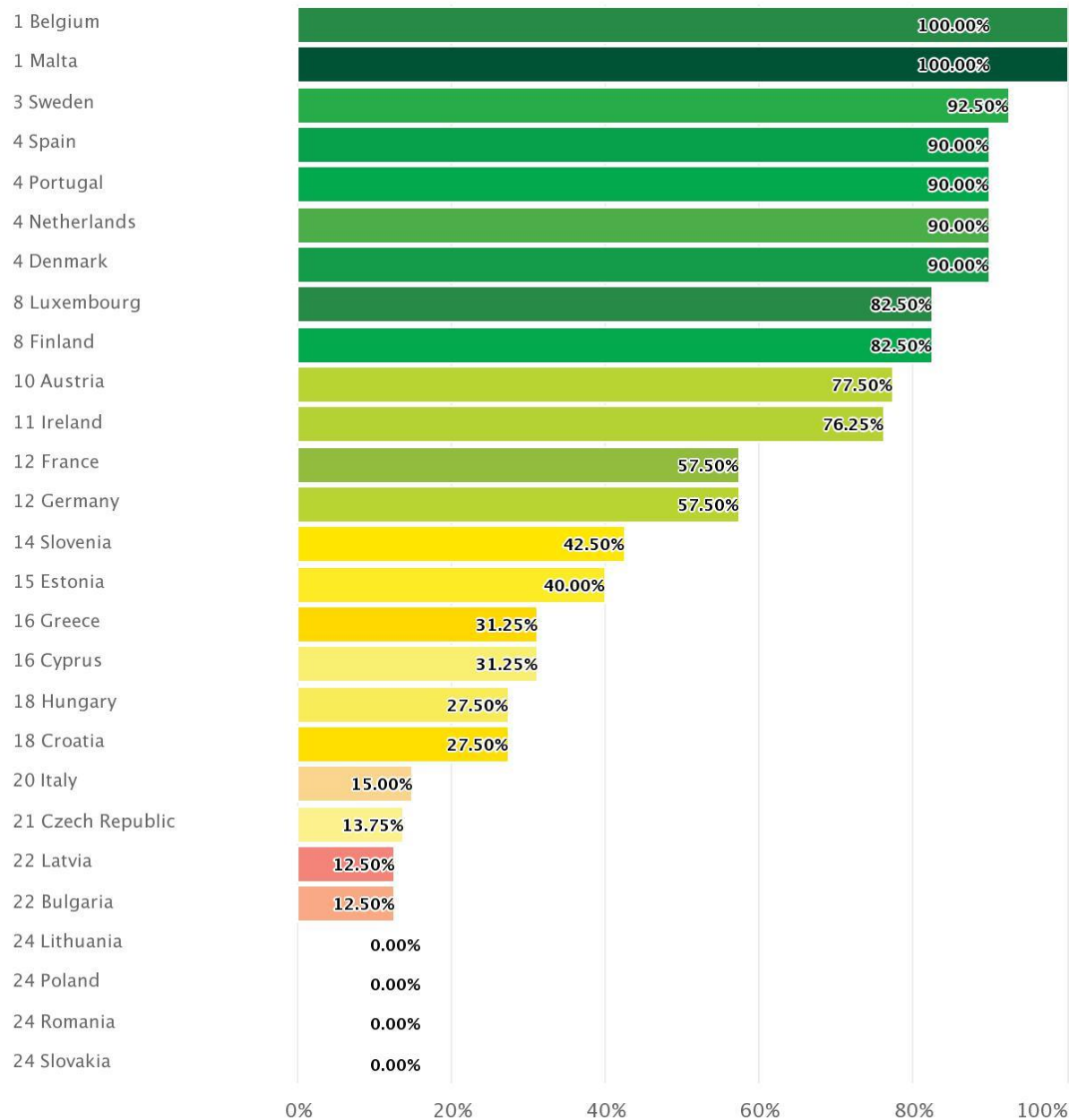
... family allowances are not enough. I have not a stipend of a husband at home, I am a precarious researcher and I moved abroad with a child for a period of 2 years in a no English speaking country where it makes no sense that he learns the official language (Flemish). So, I enrolled him in a private international English school. It is very expensive... Then, I have to travel for fieldwork in four countries with my son and travelling has a double cost but costs that I sustain for him are not refundable as travel expenses. (FR in Belgium)

Parenthood (Motherhood) Penalty (III)

- **PAID** maternity leave is the responsibility of the host & eligibility requirements work against mobile researchers

I had issues regarding the maternity leave because according to the laws of the country where I was moving (Switzerland), I did not qualify to get the maternity leave (I had been working and paying the health insurance for not enough time). In the end I managed to "import" the time that I contributed in my previous country, but only because there is a bilateral agreement and after having to argue with a dozen people and a very long administrative process. No solution was offered from the EC. (FR in Switzerland)

My main problem was in how the pregnancy was dealt with. The MSCA-IF system makes it all about the host: the fellowship is stopped, no money is provided, but the host institution is supposed to deal with the usual policies in place for the pregnancies. However, in France at least, a lot of the policies depends on how long you've been in the country... Also, in my institution, the maternity leave is definitely not something they are used to for MSCA-IF, which ended up with weird decisions: my host pushed for me to keep my research money unused, so that it will end up paying my maternity leave... However, the maternity leave will end up costing 15,000 euros to the lab, while my host institution will not be paying it directly, so that my colleagues will have to decrease some projects to pay this. (FR in France)



Same-sex families in EU

- Obstacles & restrictions to freedom-of-movement due to different levels of recognition and protection of same-sex families in different EU countries (despite member-states already having obligation to recognize families established in another EU countries)

FAMILY dimension (marriage, partnership, parenthood) only:

0% (gross violations of human rights, discrimination)

100% (respect of human rights, full equality)

Non-heterosexuality penalty for researchers with family

- All previous issues + ADDITIONAL EXPENSES & NO LEGAL PROTECTION / NO EQUAL BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS OF SAME-SEX FAMILIES

1. Married same sex couple. In my home country same sex marriage was approved but in my host country it was not approved at that moment. I got the family allowance from MSCA but taxes in the host country counted me as a single person and had to apply for a tax payer help to get my taxes back as same sex couple in the host country.

2. Lesbian couple trying to have a baby. We started artificial insemination process in a EU country where it is publicly funded, we have moved to a country where artificial insemination is illegal for single women or same sex couples. We have to travel to another country and pay for artificial insemination. (FR in Germany)

Conclusion

Practical & financial obstacles faced by parents detrimental for gender balance:

- 1) Discourage pursuing career-enhancing international mobility → May lead to “opting” out
- 2) Parents (mothers) disproportionately burdened → May negatively affect successful implementation of the fellowship

Additional practical & financial obstacles faced by researchers with non-traditional families detrimental for geographical spread of excellence:

- 1) Discourage from applying to MSCA hosts in certain countries → Further exacerbate centre-periphery imbalance

In light of MSCA commitment to gender balance & geographical spread of excellence, these structural issues cannot be solely the ‘responsibility’ of individual researchers or of the ‘good will’ of the host institution!