

sis), unpublished (secret) government papers, and descriptions of different activities, relations and strategies by actors. Gathering these fragments into material for analysis was a continuous process of confrontation with newly emerging facts and information from even unexpected sources. The stages of the project overlapped and intertwined and provided new impulses for new research questions and for interpreting the research findings.

*Alena Křížková*

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Joanna Regulska is originally from Poland, where she was a prominent figure in the Polish women's movement. Although she now resides in the United States, she continues to follow and actively support the women's movement in Poland. She works in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies and Geography and the Centre for Comparative European Studies at Rutgers University.

<sup>2</sup> The results of the analysis of documents were published in D. Lorenz-Meyer 2003: 'Policy Initiatives and Tools to Promote Women's Participation and Gender Equality in the Process of the Czech Republic's Accession to the European Union', pp. 59–83 in *Women's Civic and Political Participation in the Czech Republic and the Role of European Union Gender Equality and Accession Policies*, edited by H. Hašková and A. Křížková. Sociological Papers 03/9, Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences

<sup>3</sup> The results of the media analyses are published in H. Víznerová 2006: 'The Reflection of Events Connected with the Czech Republic's EU Accession, Equal Opportunities Policy, and Women's Issues in the Print Media between 1996 and 2004', in *Gender Equality Policies and Discourses in the Czech Republic*, edited by H. Hašková and A. Křížková. Sociological Studies. Sociologický ústav AV ČR – forthcoming.

<sup>4</sup> Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer: 'Gender Equality and Its Discontents. Inconsistencies in EU and Czech Policy Initiatives to Promote Gender Equality in Accession'; Joanna Regulska, Joanna Mizielinska and Magda Grabowska: 'Gender Gaps. On Some Paradoxes of Eastern Enlargement'; Hana Hašková: 'Women's Civic Participation and EU Enlargement Impacts on the Promotion of Gender Equality in the Czech Republic'.

<sup>5</sup> Keynote speech by Hana Hašková and Alena Křížková: 'Building Leadership in Non-Traditional Ways: The Case of the Czech Republic', a work-

shop for the Women's Research Centre, McGill University, Montreal, Canada.

<sup>6</sup> Alena Křížková: 'Constructing a Supranational Space for a Women's Agenda: The Process of Czech Accession to the EU', a lecture presented on invitation to the Political Science Department at McGill University in Montreal.

<sup>7</sup> By Hana Hašková, Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer, Alena Křížková and Lenka Simerská.

#### **Women Scientists Discuss How They Navigate through the Science Labyrinth – Parliament of the Czech Republic, Prague, 10 October 2005**

On the sunny Monday morning of 10 October, 2005, a group of prominent Czech women scientists met at the Parliament of the Czech Republic to discuss issues related to gender equality in research and development and the position of women in Czech science. 'Paths through the Labyrinth: Why There Are Still So Few Women in the Sciences' was the title of the conference, which was organised by the National Contact Centre – Women and Science (NKC) of the Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, and it was the first event of its kind in the Czech Republic. It was held under the aegis of Anna Čurdová, an MP and President of the Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, and Martin Jahn, Deputy Prime Minister for Economics. In addition to offering a forum for discussion, sharing experiences and building alliances, the organisers intended the conference to be an opportunity to mobilise women scientists to suggest measures that could be implemented in research and development (R&D) in order to improve the working conditions of women scientists. There was strong interest in the conference, with 180 registered attendees. In fact, the organisers had to refuse further registrations owing to a lack of space. Journalists, scientists and high-ranking officials in R&D were invited.

Anna Čurdová opened the conference just after nine o'clock with a welcome speech

stressing the need to address the issue of equal opportunities in R&D because of the crucial role it plays in economic development and the well-being of society. This was followed by two keynote speeches, one by Professor Gerlinda Šmausová from the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in Brno, and the second by Dr. Hana Havelková from the Department of Gender Studies at Charles University. Gerlinda Šmausová, in her paper, 'Who's Afraid of Marie Curie?', examined the omnipresence of the abstract construct of 'gender'. She used Sandra Harding's term 'gendered universe' to discuss the relationship between science and gender in three perspectives: 1) the gendered aspects of science, as an institution specialising in knowledge production, 2) science as an institution of a gendered labour market, and 3) the group and individual characteristics of researchers as gendered beings. She closed with a look at the impact of gender on constructions of objectivity. In the second keynote speech, 'Czech Women Researchers between East and West', Hana Havelková, explored whether there are any specifically local gender features of knowledge production. She examined cultural (gender) and institutional (the organisation and funding of science) aspects of knowledge production. She also presented statistical information concerning the representation of women in Czech science and in comparison with other Central and Eastern European countries, and pointed out that numerous statistical indicators show that the Czech Republic fares worst among the CEE countries in terms of the position of women in science.

The keynote speeches were followed by a section titled 'Views from the Inside', where Professor Eva Syková, director of the Institute of Experimental Medicine of the Academy of Sciences, Professor Věra Majerová, head of the Department of Humanities at the Czech Agricultural University, and Ing. Jana Žlábková from the Agricultural Faculty of South Bohemian University in České Budějovice, all shared their own experiences. In 'How to

Have More Successful Women in Science', Eva Syková followed up on Gerlinda Šmausová's examination of gendered binaries and explored the obstacles that women, owing to a different gender socialisation, have to overcome in the masculine environment of science. She concluded by presenting her 'ten commandments' for a successful career for women in the sciences, which attracted considerable attention and even provoked laughter among the audience for their poignant relevance; the need to 'find a suitable partner who will agree with women's work involvement (or find another partner)' and the need for women to support other women were among the most memorable.

Eva Syková's witty presentation was followed by the arrival of Martin Jahn to open – for the second time that day – the conference, a mistake that arose from a mix-up about the conference's starting time. He approached the issue of women in science purely from the perspective of economic development. 'Mobilised' by Eva Syková's speech, the audience was animated and eager to ask questions, and Martin Jahn was forced to explain why the Government Council for Research and Development had not addressed the question of women in science at all. The Government Council apparently imagines that establishing kindergartens and nurseries is the only solution to the issue, which reveals just how unaware the Council is about the real depth of women's issues. Jahn's presentation could have been seen as funny, were this not such a serious problem. For state administration, however, it is clearly not a pressing issue. Jahn's argument was that any measures implemented must be systemic and not haphazard. He promised to deal with and address any suggestions for measures proposed at the conference, and on 19 December 2005 the organisers presented such proposals to the responsible bodies in R&D.

In 'Generational Co-operation in Research: Hopes and Disappointments', Professor Věra Majerová attended to the issue of

young scientists and the importance of inter-generational co-operation. She discussed the establishment of the Sociological Laboratory, which she heads, and the opportunities that the laboratory grants young researchers.

These presentations were followed by animated discussions in the plenary session. Most surprising was the debate concerning the introduction of affirmative action measures for filling decision-making positions. Although the opinion was voiced that quotas are dangerous because they only allow a person to be judged by sex and not on merit, the majority of those who expressed an opinion supported the idea of percentage targets for women's representation in top and decision-making positions.

Two foreign guests accepted the invitation to the conference and spoke in a section titled 'Support Activities'. Karine Henrotte Forsberg, the President of the International Federation of University Women and the head of the Equality/Parity Grouping at the Council of Europe, introduced the activities of the University Women of Europe association. She was followed by Johannes Klumbers, the Acting Head of Unit C-5 Women and Science from the European Commission, whose presentation titled 'Women and Science Activities in the European Commission' introduced the activities of the Unit and the Commission in support of gender equality. His very comprehensive introduction to the Women and Science Unit activities conveyed the distinct impression that the issue is important at the EU level, at least to some people. The block of Support Activity presentations was closed by Marcela Linková, who, in her presentation 'Engaged Science: Knowledge Production as a Political Act', discussed the activities of the National Contact Centre – Women and Science, which she co-ordinates, in terms of its links to epistemological issues in the sciences. She argued that support action for gender equality in R&D must be correlated with feminist epistemological concerns in order to ensure the efficiency of such measures.

The afternoon session was dedicated to the issue of work-life balance. Invitations to the round table were accepted by many prominent Czech women scientists, including Prof. RNDr. Helena Illnerová, DrSc., Prof. PhDr. Ing. Věra Majerová, CSc., Prof. RNDr. Blanka Říhová, DrSc., RNDr. Hana Sychrová, DrSc., Prof. MUDr. Syka, DrSc., and Prof. Dr. phil. Gerlinda Šmausová, Priv.-Doz. The introductory presentation was given by PhDr. Marie Čermáková, director of the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences. All the speakers stressed that the issue of work-life balance is one of the crucial obstacles to the full participation of women in the sciences and equal opportunities for them. Professor Říhová stressed the need to create conditions for young women researchers to be able to have a family while continuing to build their careers, and warned that if no measures are adopted, we could be faced with a situation where young women researchers opt not to have children. Professor Illnerová mentioned the different expectations that are placed on women and men with regard to parenthood and the importance of parenthood for women especially. She also advocated the need to attend to this issue so that women can contribute to knowledge production.

In the ensuing debate women researchers voiced their concerns about the negative impact of parenthood on their opportunities to build a career, the different expectations put on them, the double standards rampant in research institutions, and the neglect of these issues. The debates resulted in the adoption of six recommendations for action:

Recommendations for grant agencies in the Czech Republic:

1. Raise the age limit for grants targeting young researchers by two years for each child an applicant has;
2. Develop a plan to address the issue of how to continue research grants in the case of parenthood – by offering an adequate range of options corresponding to the con-

ditions of each scientific discipline, which would be part of the terms of use for grant money (for example, allowing an extension of or a short-term break in a grant project, say, for a six-period, in the case of parenthood), and by striving to increase the awareness of these possibilities within the research community;

For universities:

3. Exempt years spent on maternity or parental leave from inclusion in the time limit for the completion of a PhD (e.g. Masaryk University in Brno has already adopted this measure);

For the Government Council of the Czech Republic for Research and Development, universities, and the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic:

4. Analyse the possibility of a systemic solution to the issue of harmonising an academic career with family obligations, for example, in the form of a tax deduction for the costs of services related to childcare and housework;
5. In compliance with the European science policy promote the higher representation

of women in decision making in universities and in research and development with the aim of achieving a higher representation of women in decision making in R&D, for example, by setting percentage targets;

6. Develop measures and projects with the aim of increasing the number of women studying and working in the technological sciences and engineering and the natural sciences.

The proposed measures are currently being elaborated in documentation that will be presented by the National Contact Centre – Women and Science to these stakeholders with the aim of negotiating the possibility of implementing them.

The conference was highly appreciated by the women researchers present for specific reasons: one was the opportunity to meet other women researchers, share experiences and become acquainted with their research; another was the chance to express appreciation for the NKC's activities in working for change in the area of gender equality in R&D.

*Marcela Linková*

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