



Mentoring programmes – Career support for female scientists

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Women's academic careers are still characterised by a significant vertical segregation according to the European Commission's She Figures 2009¹): Although female students (55%) and graduates (59%) outnumber their male counterparts, their proportion decreases to 45% among PhD graduates and down to 18% among grade A academic staff (e.g. full professors). And even though there has been an increase in recent years, there is still need for pro-active measures in order to achieve genuine gender equality. The Max Planck Society aims to increase the proportion of women in science and management and therefore institutionalised the mentoring programme Minerva-FemmeNet in 2009. The idea behind this project that was initiated by a single employee in 2001 is to use the experience of highly qualified female scientists to the benefit of younger female scientists to help them recognize and overcome gender-related obstacles.

1) She figures, Statistics and Indicators on Gender Equality in Science, European Commission, 2009: (http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/she_figures_2009_en.pdf)