

WIA-Europe

Corporate membership spotlight in Q4 newsletter

At the European Space Agency we believe that focusing on, and strongly committing to, the involvement of women in space and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) careers is more important today than ever in order to continue and expand our enduring values. Indeed, the Agency is aware that global challenges cannot be faced without the contribution of a diverse and creative pool of talent.

In 2019, ESA's efforts and commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness (D&I) have been increasingly recognised at the international level. In fact, the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society nominated for the second time ESA Director General Jan Wörner among the 50 CEO Champions committed to promoting diversity, thus boosting ESA's visibility as a global player engaged in accelerating and leveraging women's advancement and diversity in the workplace, and in showing how space can contribute to cultivate an inclusive culture. In addition, ESA has been included in the shortlist for the European Diversity Awards 2019 in the category "Head of Diversity of the Year", confirming the growing visibility of ESA's actions in promoting the values of D&I, as well as the interest in the Agency's initiatives for other organisations pursuing those efforts.

Particular attention has been put to set measurable goals in terms of female recruitment and representation. With the end of year approaching, it is worth recalling some of the very positive results achieved in attracting and retaining a diverse workforce.

In 2018, the share of female recruits reached 40%, showing a significant increase from the 2017 level (+39%), thus contributing to bring the total share of women in post at ESA to 28%. Similarly, the percentage of women in top management positions improved compared to 2017, passing from 10% to 12%. Female colleagues recruited in 2018 come from 16 different ESA's countries, including many new Member States. The share of applications to ESA from women also increased significantly, by about 20% with respect to the 2017 level, and reached an historical height of 28%. Overall, these notable results appear to suggest the start of an upward trend, which we hope will be confirmed in 2019 and beyond.

As part of ESA's engagement in reaching out to young generations, and girls in particular, a partnership has been established with Mattel in support of Barbie's Dream Gap Project, a role model programme aiming at encouraging girls to pursue careers in STEM fields. In addition, many other initiatives a national level have been launched, with the involvement of female colleagues in technical and scientific job, including a cooperation with the STEM Talent Girl Programme at ESAC which encourages women developing their professional careers to inspire female students to pursue university studies in STEM areas. ESA also participated in a number of reflections and talks on Women and Space/STEM matters in ESA Member States.

With respect to external activities, ESA has initiated cooperation and alliances with several other international institutions. Gender, in particular, represents one of the main focuses of the work of the EIROforum *ad hoc* Working Group on Diversity and Inclusion, which brings together eight of Europe's largest research organisations, including CERN and ESO. In this framework, on 11th February 2019 the first EIROforum Director Generals' joint statement for the International Day of Women and Girls in

Science was released, reiterating the commitments of those organisations to the promotion of women's and girls' involvement in STEM fields.

Fruitful exchanges and participation to dedicated reflections took place with OECD, where particular attention was given to gender matters within an overall understanding of the intrinsic intersectionality of diversity, aiming also at identifying innovative approaches to create equitable, adaptable and inclusive work environments, thus reinforcing ESA's cooperation with the OECD and with other prominent organisations on this thematic.

Moreover, ESA has been official partner of the first IAU Symposium on "Astronomy for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion" which took place on 12-15 November 2019. Organised by the International Astronomical Union in the occasion of its 100th anniversary, the Symposium aimed to be a roadmap to action, highlighting, *inter alia*, the role that gender diversity and inclusion play in producing better science, to contribute for competitiveness and innovation and to focus on specific steps leading to change on the field. As the first IAU Symposium of its kind, the event laid the ground for future IAU Resolutions on Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies in Astronomy in order to seek official endorsement by the Executive Committee and in the IAU General Assembly in 2021. ESA Chief Diversity Officer contributed as observer to the draft of the resolutions and an intermediate meeting will be organised jointly by IAU, ESA and other organisations at ESAC in November 2020.

Finally, for the second year in a row, ESA brought "space" as a prominent topic at the Women's Forum Global Meeting which was held in Paris on 20-22 November 2019. The event gathered together more than 2500 high-level delegates, coming from 90 countries – including business, institutional, and political leaders – to engage in high-level discussions and action-oriented working groups, and enhanced ESA's visibility as a global player committed to recognising women's perspectives on humanity challenges and to showing how space can contribute to bridging divides and fostering inclusive progress.

It should be mentioned that a number of initiatives supporting women staff at ESA are also undertaken by the Human Resources department, and not reported here, as for instance specific training including for Women in Leadership.