

ECREA WOMEN'S NETWORK REPORT 2011 – 2012

In 2011, the *Women's Network III International Workshop: Sharing Experiences* took place at the University of Tampere, Finland, from 16 to 18 November. Participants addressed issues of gender in communication-related academia, under an interdisciplinary and intercultural perspective. This exchange of ideas constituted an effective debate and comparison of case studies, methodologies and empirical materials, which provided innovative reality-based conclusions, inferred from the “shared experiences”, while discussing theories and practices of gender discrimination, that stereotypically operate in the academic world. From the Workshop program we highlight the keynote lecture by Pirkko Mäkinen, the Finnish Ombudsman for Equality, on gender equality and sexual discrimination in the universities. Other reflection topics included: “A perspective on gender research in education: identifying gaps, blind spots and common sense”, “Tabloidization in Estonian media: the gender aspect”, “Blond Angels”, ‘Exuberant, Single Women’ and ‘Olive-skinned Men’: How to Cover Violence against Women (Create Moral Panics and Win Elections) in 365 Days of TV Evening News”, “Sharing Experiences of Vocal Emotional Communication”, and “Journalism doing gender”.

During this two year period, the ECREA Women's Network continued to update its website (<http://www.iscap.ipp.pt/~cei/ECREA%20-%20website/index.htm>), where interested members find information on conferences, job offers, grants, a bibliography, call for papers and contributions, research, links, and a forum. From the onset, this website has gathered and circulated information that might contribute to improving the current situation of women in higher education and academic research in Europe. Its main purpose is to identify differences, strengths, and areas of good practice, in order to stimulate the exchange of ideas, opportunities, contacts and cooperation among network members.

On 25 October 2012, at the 4th European Communication Conference, in Istanbul, the ECREA Women's Network hosted the Panel “The situation of Women in Higher Education and Academic Research in Europe after the Implementation of the Bologna Process”. This Panel reflected on the ‘state of the art’ of Gender Studies and the current situation of women in higher education and academic research in Europe, with regard to the field of Communication and Media Studies. In particular, we were able to verify that recent transformations occurred in the education sector as a result of the implementation of the so-called ‘Bologna Process’ – or, more in general, the current structure of university and higher education sector – have paved the way to different management approaches from a gender perspective. Once again, this Panel represented a concrete attempt to meet the goals of the ECREA Women's Network, as the sharing of reflections and useful empirical evidences stood at the basis of a clear assessment of the situation of female scholarship in

Europe, by identifying gender-fair evaluation criteria and devising further actions to be undertaken in order to promote the carrier of female scholars. Reflection topics included “The new rules of the game: is the Bologna system fairer to women academics?”, “Pipeline leaks in Bologna: gender, academy and ‘inferior’ sciences”, “The situation of female scholarship and academic research in Italian universities after the implementation of the so-called ‘Bologna Process’”, “Gender differences in the educational environment of Russia” and “Women in Higher Education and Research in Estonia”.

In the course of the “2012 ECREA Women’s Network business meeting”, during this 4th European Communication Conference, a new ECREA Women’s Network management team was elected for 2 years. This new team is composed by: Chair, Teija Waaramaa (Department of Speech Communication and Voice Research, University of Tampere, Finland); Vice Chair, Barbi Pilvre (Tallinn University, Institute for International and Social Studies, Tallinn, Estonia), and Vice Chair, Inês Gil (Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, Lisbon, Portugal).

In the future – and based upon the concrete problems and questions raised during national and international conferences, real and virtual meetings, and political discussions in general – the ECREA Women’s Network will continue to advocate the need for larger institutional studies, comprehensive political actions, and thorough social and cultural reflections on the actual situation of gender in communication research, within universities, polytechnics, colleges, and research centres all over Europe.