



Resolution 1207 (1999)¹

Role of women in the field of science and technology

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly considers that an overview of the current science and technology scene reveals a number of inequalities concerning the participation of men and women in scientific and technological development.
2. These inequalities should not be interpreted as being derived from deliberate action by male scientists towards women, but as the consequence of historical development.
3. The fact is that a whole range of prejudices has prevented the full participation of women in science and technology and relegated a pool of talent to the sidelines. Girls and women face considerable obstacles to pursuing scientific and technological studies and careers. There are relatively few women in the decision-making and consultative bodies in the field of science and technology.
4. Interest and ability in the field of science and technology are not created in schools and universities.
5. Seeking to achieve a balanced participation of men and women in science and technology is a valid enterprise not only on moral and social grounds but also, and especially, because of the benefits which would accrue to the scientific and technical world. The introduction of diverse points of view and different priorities and styles of working as well as the input of women's skills would contribute a great deal to science. Moreover, in this way the science and technology sectors would be better adapted to social needs and would more closely reflect the interests of all members of society.
6. The Assembly emphasises the perennial validity of the principles established by the declaration on equality of women and men of the Committee of Ministers (16 November 1988) and notes that the Final Declaration of the 2nd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (10-11 October 1997) stressed "the importance of a more balanced representation of men and women in all sectors of society" and called for "continued progress with a view to achieving effective equality of opportunities between men and women".
7. The Assembly supports the declaration on equality between women and men as a fundamental criterion of democracy, adopted by the 4th European Conference of Ministers on Equality between Women and Men (Istanbul, 13-14 November 1997) and backs the measures advocated.
8. Accordingly, the Assembly invites the governments of the Council of Europe member states and the European Union to:
 - 8.1. work to improve the collection and publication of statistics by gender and field of study, in national and standardised European surveys (school statistics and surveys on subsequent career paths of science and technology students);
 - 8.2. encourage the establishment -and support the activities -of non-governmental organisations seeking to promote the interests of women working in the field of science and technology, including their rights to professional and personal development;

1. See [Doc. 8332](#), report of the Committee on Science and Technology, rapporteur: Mrs Guirado, and [Doc. 8360](#), opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, rapporteur: Mrs Aguiar. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 4 November 1999.



- 8.3. provide financial backing for the organisation of meetings, colloquies and networks of women graduates and scientists which could make possible fruitful comparison of women's experiences in different countries;
- 8.4. take appropriate steps to remedy the situation in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) whereby, following the reduction in funding for the scientific and technological fields, the number of scientists has decreased, affecting more women than men;
- 8.5. take steps to provide financial incentives for girls wishing to take science subjects, by ensuring that the allocation of available grants between boys and girls is as fair as possible;
- 8.6. institute measures -from primary school onwards, particularly at the crucial period when pupils choose their subject orientation (during adolescence, between the ages of 12 and 18) -designed to make both boys and girls aware of the gender differences in study, employment and family roles. This might include group discussions on their aspirations and assessment of their aptitude for science and technology, introductory sessions to explain how technology works and can be used (using computers, audiovisual equipment, taking apart equipment used in daily life, and so on). The latter kind of activity would be particularly useful for reassuring girls about their aptitude for science and technology;
- 8.7. ensure that girls are not left out of the new information technology revolution and that programmes are devised specifically to familiarise girls with computers;
- 8.8. popularise female role models in the sciences, drawing on women with different backgrounds: academics, engineers and managers, young and not-so-young, occupying high-ranking or more ordinary positions, mothers, single women, and so on, so that girls can identify with them;
- 8.9. encourage teachers to invite parents to information meetings aimed at overcoming the prejudices often found in families which tend to discourage girls from choosing a career in science and technology;
- 8.10. promote the introduction into university curricula for teachers of special training on equal opportunities between men and women, including historical and social data on education, vocational training and the work of men and women, emphasising gender-specific features as well as positive developments, with a view to adapting teachers' approaches to girls and boys in class to the new realities;
- 8.11. promote teacher training for a mixed audience, bearing in mind the different behaviour of girls and boys with regard to different disciplines, particularly the sciences, and career opportunities;
- 8.12. encourage analysis of sexist representations in school textbooks and the media and eliminate all such stereotypes, in parallel with consideration of a less sexist and more attractive reflection of sciences that highlights their impact on developments in society, the environment and health;
- 8.13. ensure a greater male/female balance on examination boards, recruitment panels for teachers and university researchers and, where applicants are of equal merit, ensure preferential treatment for the under-represented sex;
- 8.14. ensure favourable conditions for career development and equal promotion opportunities for women in science and technology (vocational training courses, participation in high priority projects, fair assessment of professional competence, and so on);
- 8.15. seek to heighten male scientists' awareness and provide training for them on issues of equality between women and men;
- 8.16. take measures to encourage industry to clarify and publicise their recruitment and mobility procedures for each sex.