

## NICOLE DEWANDRE \*

Firstly I must congratulate Francesca Cantù on having succeeded in putting together this Conference. I am looking forward to listening to all the presentations and the debates. I would briefly like to address three of the themes on the agenda from a cautionary perspective.

Measuring gender inequalities in European Science is undoubtedly of immense value since the resulting information provides the basis for policy. Integrating the sex breakdown into the principal surveys and developing gender - sensitive indicators is a long process. However, we have come some distance already since 2000 and we can be proud of what has been achieved. Marge Fauvelle from the Women and Science Unit will speak about this in more detail later.

A strategy for the visibility of women and science as a policy concern is important but it is not a key entry point into the debate and should not therefore be over-emphasised. Visibility will come when the fundamental issues will be set right. Mainstreaming really is the main element of the way forward.

So what is gender mainstreaming ? The word itself is Community jargon that is difficult to translate into other languages. I have often thought that it would be better described as «up-streaming» since it is less about going with the flow and more about going against the flow. This means that it requires a high-energy in-put for a low impact, during a long and often frustrating process. There are different interpretations as to what gender

mainstreaming can involve, from changing structures to integrating gender horizontally into all policies. This ambiguity can be useful at different levels. However we have to be careful not to get bogged down into «either ... or ....» decisions, when it is a case of « both ... and ...» .

The Women and Science Unit is a child of mainstreaming, but it is just part of a much wider movement which operates rather like a cascade. It is a catalyst, for example, for the activities of the Helsinki Group, and the members are in turn instrumental at national level and in their own institutions. The same dynamic applies within all the services of the Commission.

Appropriation of stakeholders, both outside experts and insiders, is also essential for successful mainstreaming. In the policy process, it is not sufficient for things to be « right» for them to happen. In fact, if something is not as it should be, policy is the means for correcting it.

I am also strongly compelled to warn against denial of the problem which is often vested in a kind of false neutrality or over-objectivity. Along side this, we need to be both stubborn and patient at once: we have to understand that things take time, but not let them trail either. And it is important to keep focussed on the ultimate objective and learn to live with minor short-comings. This requires strategic networking and avoiding a simplistic «step-by-step» approach but rather «capillarity» or plurality whereby many connecting actions are nudged forward in parallel.

Today we know that gender mainstreaming in European science can be regarded as active, although it is still far from perfect. It adds value to science, thanks to its reformative dimension, and brings more sustainable science and harmony between science and society.

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