

YOUNG SCIENTISTS: BALANCING CAREER AND FAMILY | conference report

We would like to thank all participants in the “**Young Scientists: Balancing Career and Family**” conference that took place on 27 November in Brno as a part of the Work-Life Balance Project. Outputs of the conference and more information on each of the presentations will be available in the **conference report**, which is currently being prepared (expected publishing date: 15 December 2014).

- The press release on the conference and the round table discussion is available [HERE](#)
- Presentations by each of the lecturers are available on the conference website [HERE](#)
- All materials are also published on the website of the “Work-Life Balance” project [HERE](#)
- Your feedback relating to the conference will be highly appreciated [HERE](#) (filling in the form will not take more than 3 minutes)

The project investigator and concept promoter for balancing family and career life within CEITEC research centre, Eliška Pudová, opened the conference. She stated that three years had already passed since the CEITEC and RECETOX research centres, together with other project partners, started implementing activities aimed at supporting their R&D employees. “*The most appreciated activities of the project include re-integration grants for scientists on parental leave that are used for financing part-time jobs, thus making it possible to maintain contacts with the profession and the research team. As a result, young scientists are able to participate in the life of their research group, to carry out any necessary measurements in the laboratory and, in particular, without losing the necessary contact with the latest developments in their fields of specializations*”, Ms. Pudová said in her opening speech.



prof. Petr Dvořák (left)

key note speaker prof. Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger (right)

Vice-chancellor of Masaryk University, Petr Dvořák, emphasised the important role of young scientists, both male and female, in producing scientific outputs and in their engagement in the research teams. He also pointed out that it is necessary to create a suitable environment, especially at the level of individual sites that have tools available for the implementation of various activities supporting career development as well as the work-life balance of the scientists. Marta Vohlídalová and Hana Víznerová of the Institute of Sociology at the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic presented the results of their research conducted within the National Contact Centre Women and Science that emphasise the key role of universities. “*It is necessary to look for solutions at the level of individual institutions. The*

problem of an equal approach and support in the field of work-life balance in science is not a problem of individuals, we must look for its causes at the system and institutional level,” said Hana Víznerová. The keynote speaker of the conference, Professor Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger of Vienna University of Economics and Business and the head of the Institute of Equality and Diversity in Organisations, emphasised the key principles and specifics of the concept of balancing family and professional life in the field of science: *“Balancing between work and family in the field of science is not just an issue of gender. The important question is what it means to be excellent in science and how universities, as employers, can enable all individuals, regardless of their sex or family status, to achieve such excellence.”* Professor Hanappi-Egger also emphasised the importance of the quality of scientific work rather than attempting to provide the largest possible quantity of outputs. As one of the real-life examples of good practice, for example, she mentioned the new rules for selecting scientists at Vienna University where candidates are asked in the tender not to provide the complete list of their publications, but only the most significant ten publications. At the same time, the tender committee members are obliged to read all these publications, instead of relying on a perusal of their abstracts.

In the panel discussion, five young scientists working in different fields of specialization, both in the Czech Republic and in other countries, shared their personal experiences. Doctor Pavel Macek stated that he had chosen the country where he wanted to take his doctoral study based on how the country supported the balancing of career and family life. For him, the choice was France, which is renowned for its excellent level of available infrastructure and highly sophisticated system of family care. Another participant in the panel discussion, Doctor Anna Pospěch Durnová, who works at the Institute of Political Science at Vienna University, identified a very important correlation of various aspects including family background, employer's support and national legislation and a system supporting work-life balance in her own experience. These three elements must be mutually blended and only their synergy enabled her to develop both her career as a young scientist and her family life successfully.

The closing round table discussion, where four female representatives of selected institutions presented their contributions, focused mainly on the institutional level and the possibilities for employers to implement various policies and projects in the area work-life balance. Professor Jana Klánová, the director of RECETOX centre at Masaryk University, emphasised the necessity of the existence of demand on the side of independent young scientists, without which it makes no sense to implement any activities. Professor Jitka Moravcová, who works at the Institute of Chemical Technology in Prague (VŠCHT), introduced the TRIGGER project being implemented at VŠCHT and which is being financed from the European funds. A high added value of this project lies in highlighting the issues of equal opportunities, women in science and work-life balance at the level of the top management of the university, and without the support of which it would be impossible to implement any conceptual policies in this area. Thanks to European funding, it was also possible to establish a kindergarten called “Zkumavka” (“Test Tube”) at VŠCHT, which currently provides day care for pre-school children of university employees.



Panel discussion



Round table

An imaginary red line going through the entire conference and the round table discussion was the need for mutual synergy and co-operation at the personal initiative level, at the university level as the employer and also at the overall cultural level.

If you are interested in the area of career development and work-life balance, please feel free to contact us. The CEITEC research centre wants to continue its work in this area together with its partners and follow the conference with further activities and events. Contact e-mail: eliska.pudova@ceitec.cz

Mentoring for starting scientists as doctoral and post-doc students

The National Contact Centre Women and Science offers a **mentoring programme for starting scientists** who seek assistance to start up their own science careers and to clarify the direction of their career. The programme will take place between February and December 2015 and it is open for registration until 31 December 2014.

What are the principles of the mentoring programme: Each starting scientist (the so-called mentee) chooses one or more experienced scientist to act as a partner or part of a committee to whom the mentee presents his/her own science career; the mentors will then advise the mentee as to specific steps to be taken in order to start up the science career and the specific individual issues that the mentee faces; they will introduce the mentee into the professional networks and the scientific community, etc. The specific agenda and time framework are based on individual agreements between the mentors and the mentees.

The mentoring programme represents a unique opportunity to obtain useful advice for the career development of young scientists and to establish important contacts, mainly in other institutions.

For more information, refer to the web sites of the NCC Women and Science [HERE](#).

The contact person is Ms. Kateřina Cidlinská (katerina.cidlinska@soc.cas.cz, 728 026 891).