

**Statement by BR50 IG Gender Equality
on
International Women's Day**



To mark International Women's Day on the 8th of March, 2026, the BR50 Interest Group (IG) Gender Equality draws attention to existing gender inequalities, discrimination, sexual harassment, and abuse of power - in society as a whole and in scientific and research communities in particular.

Despite decades of debate, gender equality seems to be far from achieved. For example, Germany ranks only 23rd in the EU Gender Equality Index with a score of 62.8. Although *She Figures 2024* shows that women* make up almost half of doctoral candidates (46 percent), this is not reflected in academic careers: only 29 percent of researchers in Germany are women.¹ In non-university research institutions, their share is 35 percent (2022) and in industrial research only 15.6 percent (2024). The higher the career level, the lower the proportion of women in all areas. In particular the glass ceiling is evident in leadership positions. In comparison to 2.0 percent in 1992, 23.2 percent of management positions in non-university research institutions are now held by women, but true parity is still a long way off.²

In addition, there are unfair career prospects due to gender-specific unequal distribution of tasks. Women take on a disproportionate share of so-called *academic housekeeping*³ (additional tasks in academia that are necessary for the functioning of the team, the institution and the academic sector, but do little to advance individual careers). The persistent gender pay gap and a greater load of family responsibilities contribute to discrimination. During the coronavirus pandemic, women took on even more family responsibilities than before, which has a lasting impact on their careers.⁴ These inequalities affect not only the academic but also the non-academic areas of universities and research institutions.

In the field of Research and Development, women contributed to only 27 percent (2018-2022) of scientific publications and filed only 7.1 percent of patent applications (2018-2021) (see footnote 1). The underrepresentation of women in the field of new technologies is also particularly alarming: The UN Secretary-General rightly warns that men dominate the development of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, resulting in existing inequalities being perpetuated in algorithms and systems.⁵

¹ Data: *She Figures Report 2024* of the European Commission (<https://ec.europa.eu/assets/rtd/shefigures/2024/files/shefigures2024fiche-de.pdf>)

² Data: Center für Geschlechterverhältnisse in der Wissenschaft (<https://www.gesis.org/cews/daten-und-informationen/statistiken/thematische-suche/detailanzeige/article/frauenanteile-an-den-fuehrungspositionen-der-ausserhochschulischen-forschungseinrichtungen-von-1992>)

³ For more information on academic housekeeping see: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/14749041231191888?icid=int.sj-abstract.citing-articles.6>

⁴ See: <https://www.wzb.eu/de/forschung/dynamiken-sozialer-ungleichheiten/arbeit-familie-und-soziale-ungleichheit/projekte/die-auswirkungen-von-covid-19-auf-die-wirtschaftliche-und-soziale-situation-von-frauen-in-berlin>

⁵ <https://unis.unvienna.org/unis/de/pressrels/2025/unissgsm1474.html>

* For reasons of data availability, we use the term “women” in this statement. The underlying statistics and studies are predominantly based on a binary understanding of gender. Trans, inter*, and non-binary persons (TIN) are also affected by these issues and are explicitly considered and included in our scientific and political endeavors.



This example shows that women are essential as experts in science. Excellent and innovative research needs diverse perspectives and questions, including those that are not male-centric. Considering current social and political developments, we emphatically point out that women in science must be supported to address inequality, to enable them to reach their full potential.

Equality is relevant for all professional groups beyond the scientific field. The German constitution requires counteracting gender discrimination. We therefore want to take a stand against setbacks in equality and for sustainable improvements in all areas.

We are calling for effective change and gender equality in science!