

Foreword

I very much welcome this report on women in industrial research.

Previous work undertaken at European level to promote the participation of women in science has clearly shown that information concerning the situation of women in industrial research is scarce, to say the least.

Business is a pivotal player in transforming the results of scientific research into benefits for society as a whole. It is a crucial partner for achieving the competitive, knowledge-based society that was called for at the Lisbon Summit in 2000 by the Heads of State and Government. The target of 3% investment of GDP in R&D, by 2010, will mainly come from the private sector.

Against this background, we cannot afford to ignore the situation of women in industrial research, which is why I have taken the initiative of inviting this group of experts to review and investigate the situation and provide strategic advice.

This report succeeds in bringing together information about women researchers in industry from a variety of sources and presents a first analysis of the context. It constitutes a starting point in terms of outlining actions to be taken and identifying areas for further investigation. Indeed, we will not succeed in making the most of scientific research if women scientists continue to leave scientific careers in disproportionate numbers.

Leading R&D companies, as well as innovative SMEs, are aware that fundamental changes in working culture are required to stay ahead in a competitive environment. This report reveals how they are implementing new structures and instruments to promote gender equality and diversity.

As Commissioner for Research, I will pay close attention to the conclusions of the report and will ensure a proper follow-up. Furthermore I invite all stakeholders (among them companies, national governments, higher education institutions and professional associations) to take heed of the advice, examples and recommendations put forward here.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the high-level expert group for their work and especially Professor Helga RübSamen-Waigmann and Dr. Ragnhild Sohlberg, who co-chaired the expert group, and the rapporteur, Professor Teresa Rees. I am impressed by the involvement and commitment of all those who have contributed.

The Commission intends to play its part in the promotion of gender equality in industrial research and in the European Research Area as a whole.



Philippe Busquin
Commissioner for Research