



## Press release

Embargo: 14.03.2016, 9:15

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### 4 National Economy

No. 0353-1600-90

Women and Science 2015

## Under-representation of women in science greater in Switzerland than in Europe

Neuchâtel, 14.03.2016 (FSO) – **In Switzerland, women are outnumbered by men in the field of science and research, especially in academic careers. Only 18% of directors of higher education institutions are women. Furthermore, their participation in public and private research (for all economic sectors) is often below the European average. The situation of women is, however, slowly improving according to figures from the Federal Statistical Office presented in the report "She Figures 2015" published by the European Commission concerned with the place of women in science.**

An academic career starts with obtaining one's PhD. In Switzerland in 2012, 43% of new PhD holders were women, placing the country at the rear of the pack among European countries (EU28 average: 47%). However, progress is being made towards equality between men and women at this level, as in 2004, the percentage of women PhD holders in Switzerland was 37%. The percentages vary, however, greatly depending on the field concerned. Men and women are concentrated in very specific fields of study: in 2012, women represented 24% of engineering PhD holders, compared with 57% of education PhDs.

### **Weak presence of women in academic careers**

In Switzerland, as throughout Europe, the presence of women diminishes the higher one climbs the academic ladder. In 2013, the percentage of women in Switzerland found among junior and intermediate staff (research associates) was 38% (EU28: 45%). For senior researchers, the highest level, this figure was 19% (EU28: 21%).

### **Majority of scientific institution heads are men**

Following a PhD, a scientific career can continue with obtaining the title of rector or president of a higher education institution and by becoming a member of executive or academic boards. In 2014, 18% of higher education institutions were headed by women (EU28: 20%). Women represent 23% of governing or academic boards (EU28: 41%).

### **Encouraging growth rates**

Compared with data from previous "She Figures" publications, the percentages published in the 2015 report show some growth in the number of women in science. For example, in Switzerland between 2002-2012, the annual average growth rate in the number of new PhDs was 5% for women and 1% for men (4% and 2% respectively for the EU). However, despite these very encouraging figures, gender equality in this field is still some way off.

FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE  
Media Office

### ***She Figures***

In Europe, the majority of students enrolled at higher education institutions are women. The latter are thus an important source of talent for science, research and innovation. And yet they are under-represented in research and development personnel and at different levels of the scientific career. This phenomenon is described in detail in the report "She Figures 2015", which also shows statistics on human resources in science and technology, on the working conditions for women in science, and this year for the first time, output indicators on research and innovation (scientific articles and patents) by sex.

This European Commission report has been published every three years since 2003. It is the main source of comparable statistics among European countries on the state of gender equality in research. This report presents the latest data available for the 28 countries of the European Union, as well as Iceland, Israel, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

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**New publications:**

She Figures 2015:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/index.cfm?pg=library&lib=gender\\_equality](http://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/index.cfm?pg=library&lib=gender_equality)

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### The leaky pipeline in Switzerland and in the European Union

For several years, *She Figures* has summarised the under-representation of women in the European research world by means of a graph known as "leaky pipeline". This term highlights the decreasing participation of women the higher one climbs up the academic career ladder from admission to a higher education institution to the highest research function in one of these institutions. The different steps of this ladder are:

- Admission to a higher education institution
- Obtaining a tertiary-level degree
- Obtaining a doctorate
- Junior to intermediate staff or research associates (grade C)
- Intermediate to senior staff or other teaching staff (grade B)
- Named professors or senior researcher (grade A)

This phenomenon can also be observed in Switzerland.

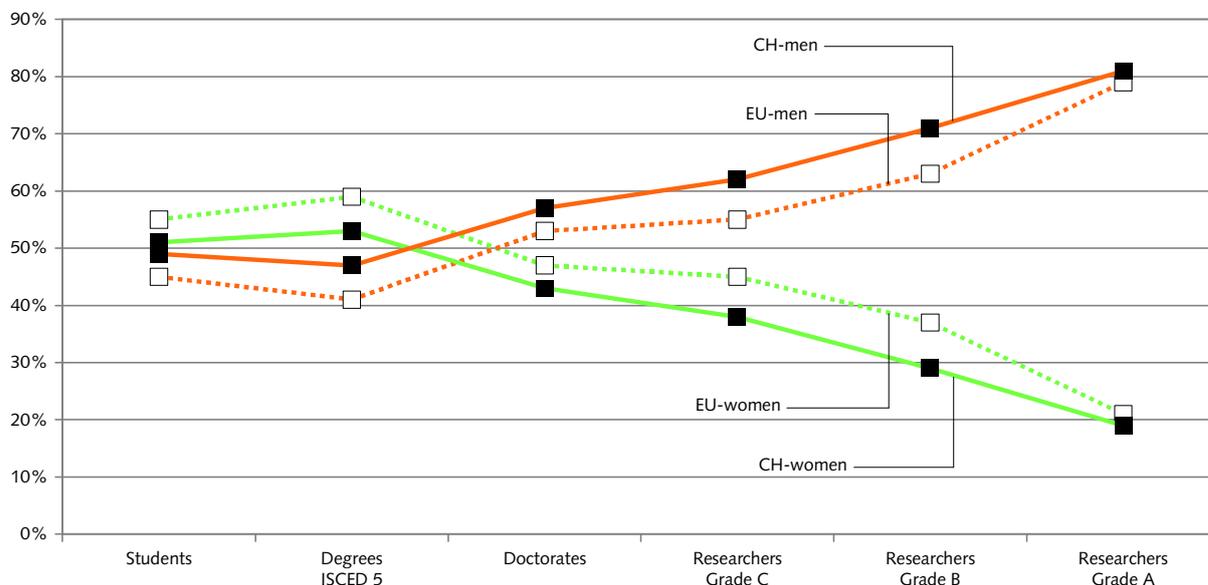
The graph shows that at the tertiary education level, the gender gap has largely closed in Switzerland. Like almost everywhere in Europe, in Swiss higher education institutions there are actually more women than men who graduate with a tertiary level diploma (ISCED 5). At the doctoral level, however, women are a minority.

*The grades correspond to a hierarchy of posts that a person active in research can reach in a higher educational institution.*

### Women and men in academic careers in Switzerland and Europe (EU28), students, 2012 and researchers, 2013

In % total of each stage

Men/women researchers (headcount), for A, B, and C grades



Source: FSO – SHIS (Swiss Higher Education Information system; European Commission – She Figures 2015

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