

## Eurodoc Endorses the Mothers-in-Science Action Plan

As the voice of Early-Career Researchers in Europe, Eurodoc recognises the persistence of systemic inequities and gender-based biases across Europe. This is very well visible in the low retention of women specifically in STEMM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medical science) fields, but also in the statistics on family planning of academics,<sup>1</sup> which was shown to disproportionately affect women.<sup>2</sup> Despite improvements that have been implemented with social policies in many countries in recent years, **academia is still a comparatively family-unfriendly environment.**<sup>3</sup>

To draw attention to such issues in academia, an initiative called [Mothers in Science](#) was founded with the aims of uniting individuals and organisations and improving policies in this regard as well as incentivize adopting them in academia. In particular, they have created an action plan outlining a set of specific and actionable strategies to promote inclusion of caregivers and close the gender gap in research funding. Eurodoc recognizes the existing barriers, shortcomings, and inequities that require a clear need for action. For this reason, we endorse the Global call to action for Mothers in Science:

*Torres, I. L., Collins, N., Ugwu, D., & Hertz, A., (2023) Global Call to Action for Mothers in Science: Action Plan for Funding Agencies 2023. Mothers in Science.*  
<https://www.mothersinscience.com/action-plan-funding-agencies>

Eurodoc advocates for the following core action points:

1. Provide financial support to ensure research continuity,
2. Provide flexibility to parents and caregivers, especially during early childhood
3. Create opportunities and provide support for maternity leave or career break and returning to work afterwards
4. Eliminate biases and discrimination,
5. Simplify grant applications and reform the evaluation process,
6. Measure and monitor diversity and inclusion.
7. Implement support for COVID-19 [and other diseases'] impact
8. Increase accessibility to child care institutions, including child care units in RPOs
9. Introduce child care grants and support in mobility programs for women with children
10. Introduce support schemes for mothers scientists in exile

We call upon research funders worldwide to use this action plan as guidance to improve their practices. We further invite higher-education institutions and other research-performing organisations to take this action plan as a guideline, to review their internal regulations and offer support services to increase the family-friendliness of their institution as we believe advocating such initiatives can help research organisations/institutions to create a more friendly, fair, and respectful environment for mothers

<sup>1</sup> Ecklund & Lincoln (2011) [10.1371/journal.pone.0022590](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0022590)

<sup>2</sup> Ackers (2007) [10.1111/j.1468-0386.2007.00362.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0386.2007.00362.x)

<sup>3</sup> Ahmad et al. (2016) [10.3102/0034654316631626](https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316631626)



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Eurodoc, the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, is a grassroots federation of 26 national associations of early-career researchers (ECRs) from 24 countries across Europe. Eurodoc was established in 2002 and is based in Brussels. As representatives of doctoral candidates and junior researchers at the European level, we engage with all major stakeholders in research and innovation in Europe.

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