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European Initiatives, Policies and Statistics

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Summary of talk

The European Union has a major central R&D framework programme, which is running today and will be entering its 7th period in 2007. On top of the 25 member states, several other countries fully participate e.g. Israel, Norway, Switzerland. The budget for the current programme is 17.5 Billions Euro, over four years. Smaller national programmes are also funded as well as the EUREKA industry led clusters. The biggest part of the framework programme is the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and media (28%). It is used as example in this talk. There are several EU policies and organisations addressing and promoting gender issues. The research policy for instance, monitors and supports the participation of women in R&D projects, evaluations and the modern society.

Europe has 52% women population (EU25). On average 58% of students were women in 2003, with about 41% of PhDs, 20% of professors and 27% of total researchers. There are country and discipline differences, for example, the women students in the UK were in 2003 65% in biology and only 17% in engineering.

Control has not been a visible priority per se in the EU framework programme until now, but there are several areas which address and fund research projects in control theory, control engineering, applications and mobility of researchers. These include (in ICT): embedded systems, complexity, dependability, robotics, manufacturing as well as more sectoral applications in other parts of the framework programme. The typical model is not that of single investigators, but project consortia with several organisations, including universities and/or industry and/or small-medium enterprises from different countries. International cooperation is encouraged in the consortia. There are on-going joint events, initiatives and projects between e.g. EU and US (NSF) in particular in the field of embedded systems and control.

The number of funded projects with women is obviously a function of the number of proposals submitted by women in an area, which is on average small. However examples of projects in Systems and Controls with women coordinators or partners is growing in ICT. See HYCON, CC, COLUMBUS, HYBRIDGE projects in the embedded systems area, [cordis.lu database]. In the ICT programme, women invited as external evaluators in 2005 represent 19%, while in the programme management itself they are 12%.

The EU 7th framework programme (2007-2013) which is currently being designed, is expected to offer new research opportunities in the field of next generation systems and

controls for competent women and men inviting all to address the societal and technological challenges of the 21st century .

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