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SPACE AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR EQUALITY AND INCLUSION: ACHIEVING
"SPACE2030" AGENDA

Abstract

Gender equality has always been a core issue for society. Throughout the years at all levels of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines a significant gender gap has persisted, and it is present in both, developed and developing countries. According to the UNESCO Science Report: towards 2030 (2021) women represent 33,3 % of researchers globally. Less than 4 % of Nobel Prizes for science have ever been awarded to women, and 11 % of senior research roles are held by women in Europe. From the present statistics, even though women have made tremendous progress towards increasing their participation, we can see that the STEM occupations, including the space sector, are still male-dominated. Looking at the different sources of statistics found through open access research, it is notable that in some, usually less advanced countries, inequality is more present and obvious. This trend is present in the Balkan region and Eastern European countries. As a result of such knowledge and participation in the UNOOSA's "Space4Women" Expert Meeting in 2021, this author is working towards collecting accurate data using surveys and questionnaires and providing potential solutions to remedy the inequality and encourage inclusion.

Considering that the space sector and space institutions are not established in the Balkan region, and Serbia, international cooperation and support would be crucial. International cooperation between both, governmental and non-governmental institutions, would help in finding the best practices and promoting solutions for the gender gap reduction.

In this paper and presentation, three points will be addressed. Firstly, comparative statistics of women's presence in the space sector and STEM between the countries, with a focus on Serbia, the Balkan region, and Europe. Secondly, the challenges in reaching SDG5, Gender equality in mentioned regions. Lastly, potential solutions and mechanisms to reduce inequality will be suggested. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to achieving the targets and goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and Space2030 Agenda, as well.