



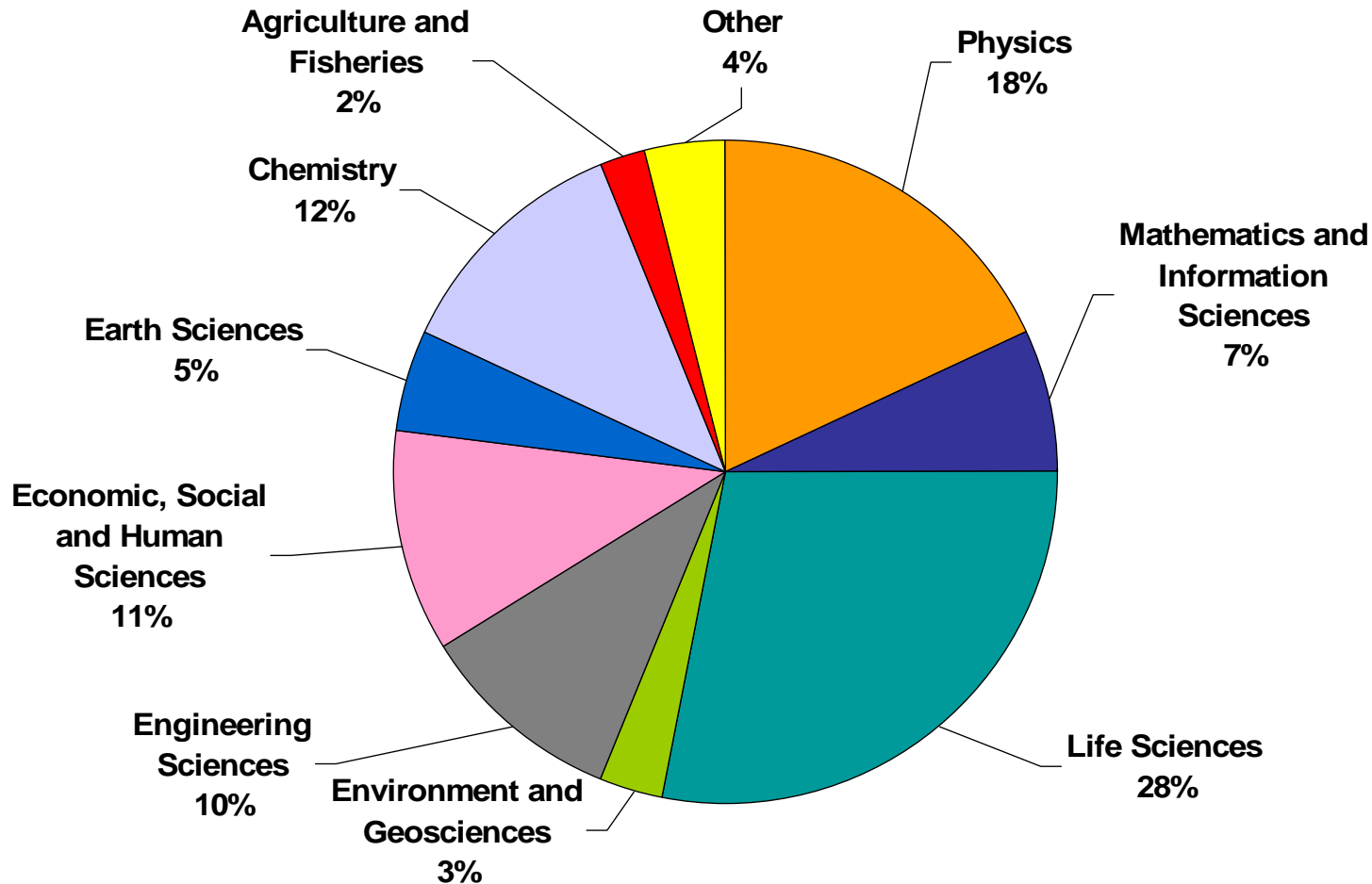
# **Doctoral Programmes in the light of world-wide competition**

*Magda Lola*  
*MCFA & University of Patras*

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for the European Knowledge Society”  
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<http://www.mariecurie.org>

# ***Observations of an Interdisciplinary Network of Mobile Researchers (~3000 registered scientists)***



# Focus on some of the many concerns

- Are European Doctoral Programmes responding to
  - the **current research requirements**?
  - the **need for a European employment market**?
- **Scientific & soft skill training**: what is missing?
- What is the role and added value of **Mobility**?
- What are the **obstacles during and after a PhD**?
- Need for a **clear professional identity** of researchers including those pursuing a PhD: how to implement this?
- Gender issues

# Is the scientific training adequate?

Many positive aspects, but also:

- Often *no connection of studies with employment market*
- *Insufficient balance and interaction* between fundamental, applicable and applied research
- *No long term planning* (too many doctoral researchers in areas that are saturated, and *VOIDS* in others)
- *Overproduction* of research results that *duplicate* each other
- *Narrow training*, mainly around project objectives

**Funding:** difficult to have a strategic and long-term vision for research when funding is too low and irregular...

- Institutions/professors sometimes take more ESR than those they can appropriately train/supervise/mentor  
*Good for career development of academic staff to produce PhDs*
- Projects too dependent on profiles of currently available supervisors  
*(dangerous in closed, local systems where professors not always up to date with most recent developments)*
- Even cases where PhD researchers used as cheap labour/missing staff, for tasks not related to their projects

**Should insist on concrete evaluation mechanisms for academic staff & doctoral programs (*not just for ESR!*)**

# Importance of Mobility

The knowledge base rapidly expands.

There should be no barriers of any type in accessing it.

Bridge gaps between:

- different countries
- disciplines
- sectors
- fundamental, applicable & applied research
- developed & less favored regions
- ...

However:

- Added value of mobility not always recognised  
(*difficult to be reintegrated after studying abroad*)
- Too many administrative obstacles
- Lack of a Common Framework/Understanding of what should be the Role and Status of a Researcher (*PhD and after*)

# Problems commonly encountered

- unawareness of available career and funding opportunities
- LACK OF LONG-TERM CAREER PERSPECTIVES!  
How to encourage new graduates to enter research,  
when there is such a tremendous dropout?  
(after years of mobility in top-institutes, many researchers find that they cannot  
enter academia, while the private sector considers them over-qualified...)
- recognition of - *diplomas, qualifications, added value of mobility*
- insufficient training in transferable skills
- administrative and legal problems
- social & cultural obstacles
- lack of communication between mobile researchers &
- funding bodies, potential employers, policy makers, society itself

# A professional identity for PhD researchers

- PhD candidates DO produce a large part of the research performed in universities
- They often participate in teaching activities, tutoring, but also outreach activities
- They do so, AFTER completing a level of studies that allows everybody else to be considered as a professional.  
**Why should they be different?**



## ...moreover

Many problems because of lack of a professional identity:

- *lack of independence*
- *limited access to funding*
- *administrative problems*
- *lack of appropriate social security*
- *no framework for transferability of rights*
- *reduced attractiveness of their role and of the profession of researchers in general*

**It is not possible to produce high quality research  
when one is subjected to constant stress and insecurity**

## **Indicative answers to the 2000 MCFA Member Survey on the implementation of MC Fellowships**

*"I am about 40 years old by now and between the various moves (PhD and post-doc in the States, HCM in Italy, Return grant in Greece) I never participated in any pension scheme"*

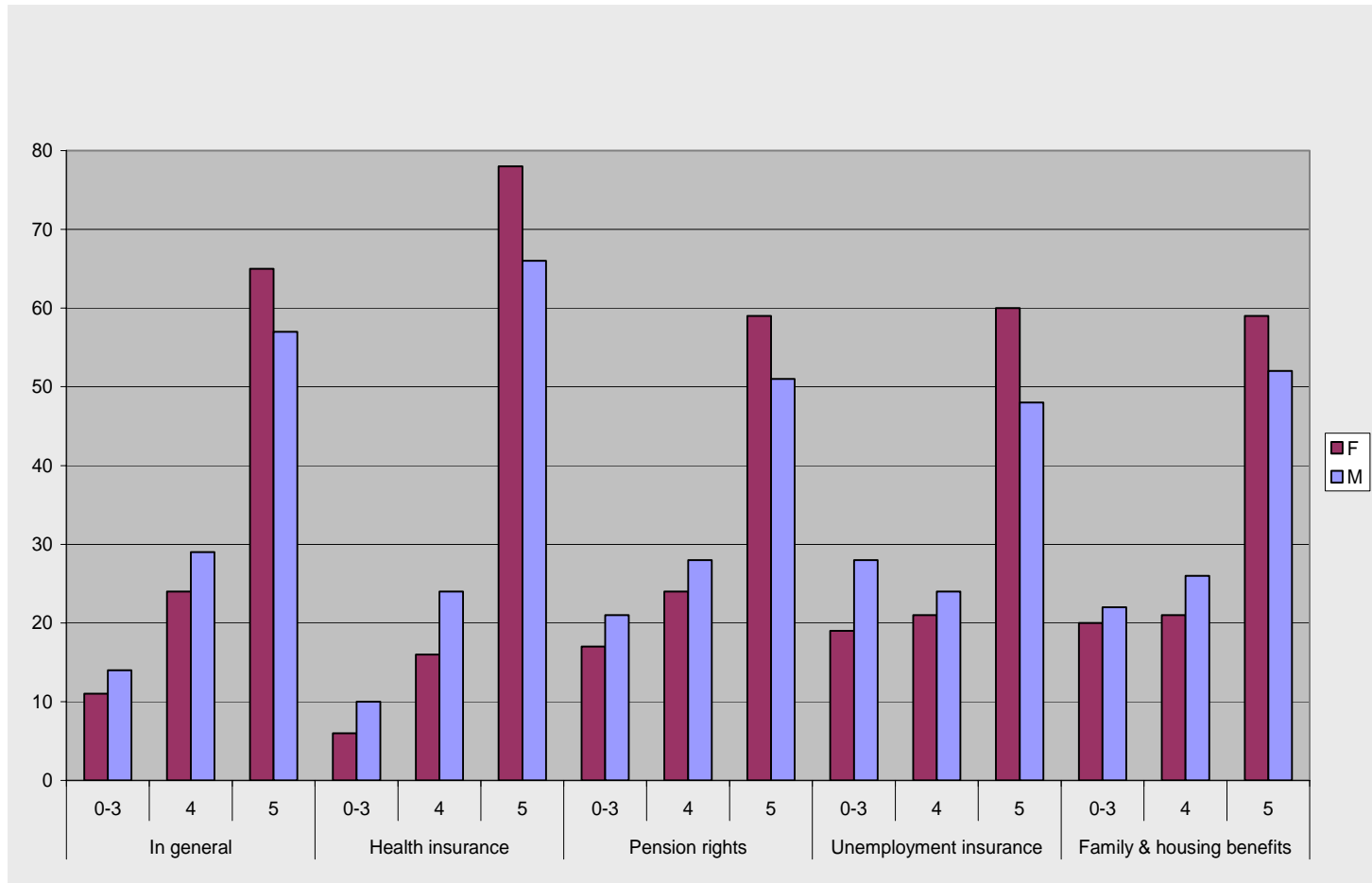
*"My host Institute does not want me to join the pension scheme here. I can't join a pension scheme in my home country (the UK), because I'm not taxed there"*

*"Pension contributions were heavily taxed when I tried to move them out of the host country"*

*"I never received any information about the social security system of the host country. The health insurance was a catastrophe..."*

**When absolutely impossible to transfer pension fund contributions,  
at least reimburse the researchers for what they paid**

# MCFA, Eurodoc & Pi-Net 2003 European Survey (2790 replies)



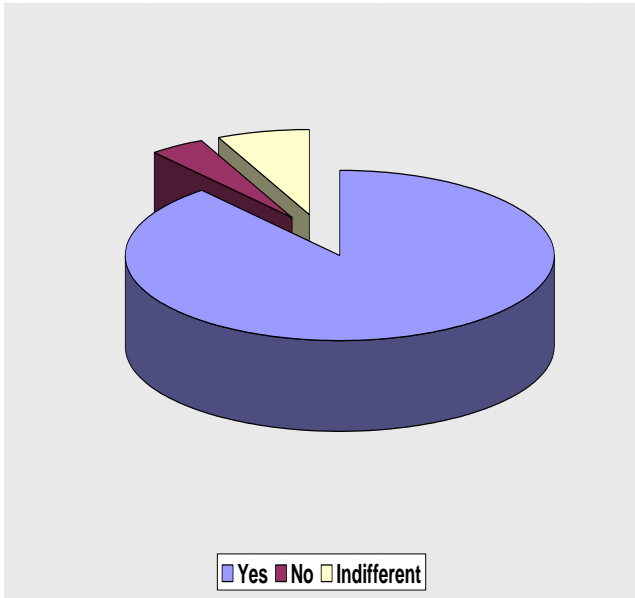
**Importance attached to social security by female (*red*) and male (*blue*) researchers.  
The ranking scales from 1 (*not important*) to 5 (*very important*).**

# Training in Soft Skills

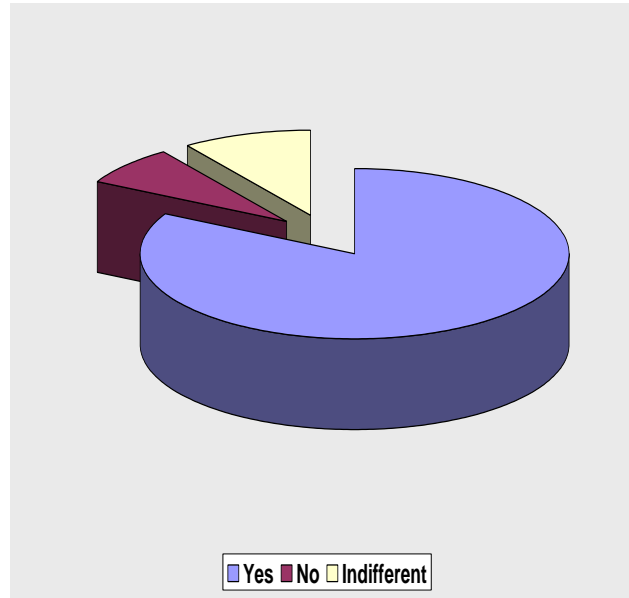
**Insufficient training in soft/transferable skills  
both in undergraduate studies AND PhD  
(i.e. 2003 MCFA survey)**

**Need to promote structured training courses  
at the latest during PhD research**

# 2003 MCFA Survey on Training Needs of Fellows



*“Would you like to receive further training in complementary skills?”*



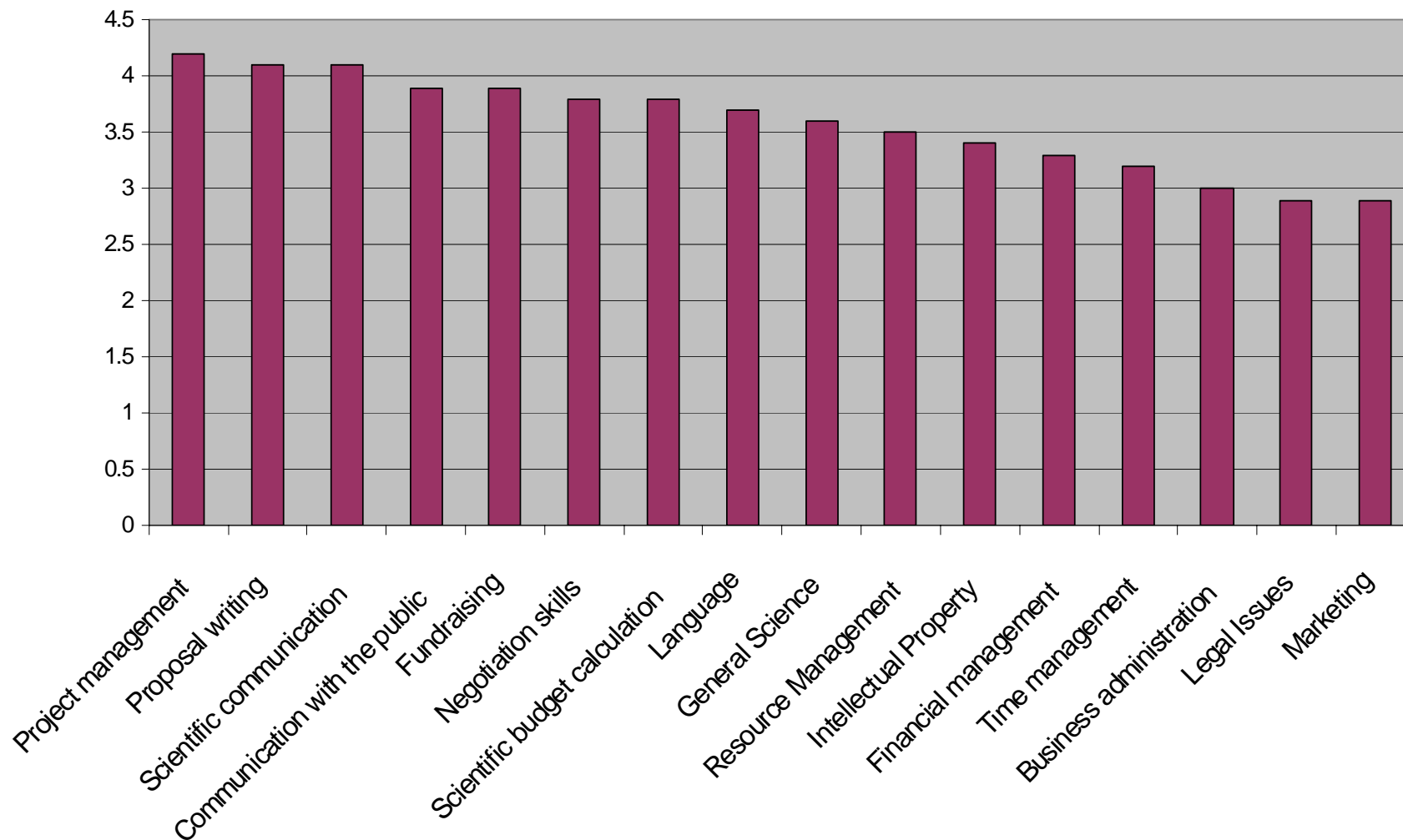
*“Would such training make you a more attractive candidate for a job?”*

- (i) Structured training preferred
- (ii) Fellows note that there are severe time and funding constraints that forbid obtaining this training

***It would have been more efficient to obtain it at the University***

## Which areas for skill development you consider important?

*(ranking scales from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important))*



# Examples of existing and proposed initiatives

## Awareness of available career and funding opportunities

- European Mobility Portal & Network of Mobility Centers
- Need for better information infrastructure
  - within universities and research centres
  - between public & private sector

## Training in scientific / transferable skills

- Identify scientific & market needs *(multiple careers)*  
through improved interaction of all stakeholders
- Structure programmes accordingly  
*(recommendations of working groups)*
- Promote training courses in transferable skills  
as a part of University studies & Post-doctoral programs

## Researchers Careers

- Longer term appointments of experienced researchers in academia and industry
- Better balance between short & long term positions
- Better conditions:  
*Research cannot be attractive when linked to instability, low salaries, lack of social security, ...*
- Early independence of researchers  
provide opportunities
  - to access funds
  - to build up own research teams
- Transparent recruitment & career development
  - *European Researchers Charter*
  - *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*



**Women particularly vulnerable:**

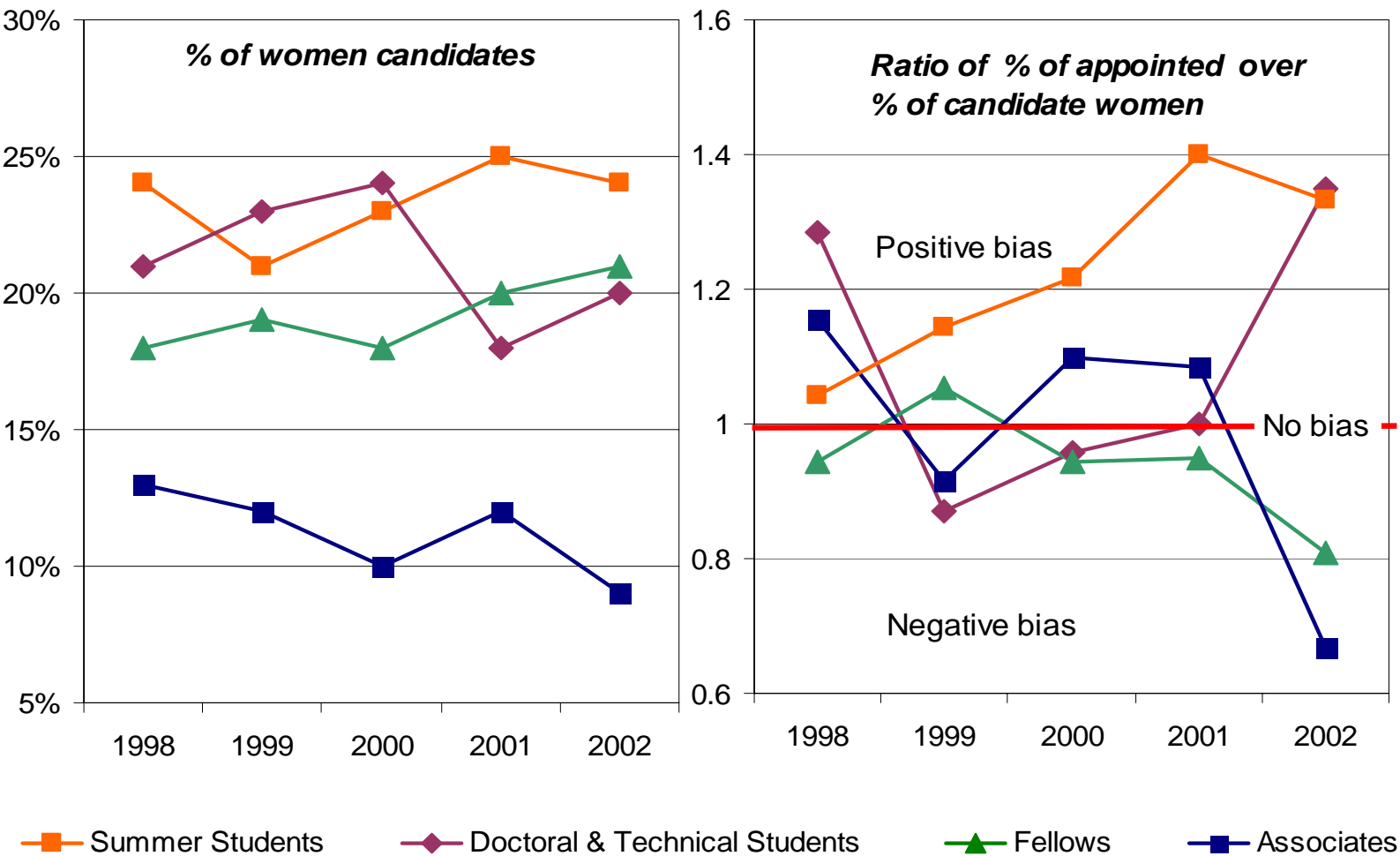
their percentage drops significantly when passing from:

(i) Undergraduate to Doctoral stage

(ii) Doctoral to Post-graduate research and even more  
to senior positions

# Gender Statistics from CERN (*European Center for Nuclear Research*)

- 1. No bias at selection level
- 2. % of women candidates drops significantly as passing from undergraduate to PhD students, and then to fellows & senior associates



# Need:

- **Reinforcement & monitoring of Equal Opportunity Policies in Universities, already at the level of doctoral research**
- **Information databases**  
*(with lists of experts & contact points)*
- **Adequate representation of women in University governance**
- **Provisions for maternity leave with appropriate conditions, also for PhD researchers** *(linked to the establishment of a professional identity)*
- **Childcare centers on site**
- **Flexible hours, part time arrangements for PhD work if required**  
*(concrete provisions needed in funding schemes)*
- **Dual career services to help couples with employment after PhD**

**TO SUPERVISORS: avoid calling meetings that start after 17.00 pm!**

*Many improvements desired,  
but also concrete ways to do so*

*Through **appropriate actions**  
the perspectives for  
**Doctoral Programmes in EHEA**  
can be greatly enhanced*