

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Enabling the Future - Developing the Space Workforce (5)

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WOMEN IN AEROSPACE EUROPE: PROMOTING GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE AEROSPACE
SECTOR

Abstract

Motivating women to work and pursue careers in the aerospace sector can be used as an efficient tool to extend and reinforce the global space workforce.

Although technology related fields as the aerospace sector offer promising career opportunities, comparably few women choose to work in this field and even fewer women advance to leadership positions in the space community. In order to counteract this phenomenon, the association Women in Aerospace (WIA) Europe is establishing a network of women and men across Europe, who share the same vision of "a European aerospace sector with a balanced representation of women on all levels".

Founded in June 2009 in close coordination and cooperation with Women in Aerospace USA, WIA-Europe aims at increasing women's visibility and expanding their opportunities for leadership positions in the aerospace community. This is done by offering professional development, mentoring and networking opportunities. Furthermore the first WIA-Europe awards were presented in 2011 to recognize outstanding women in the space sector. The variety of WIA-Europe activities ranges from local events in several European aerospace sites to global events at international conferences. They do not only offer benefits for individual members, but also for companies and institutions, that participate in the network with a corporate membership.

This paper describes the current situation of the female workforce in the aerospace sector, the challenges faced in different countries and suggestions of measures to promote gender diversity, using WIA-Europe as a case study.