

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)  
Space Education Outreach and Workforce Development for Emerging Communities (10-E11.2)

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TAKING OFF TOGETHER: SUPPORTING FEMALE PROFESSIONAL INCLUSION IN SLOVAK  
SPACE ECOSYSTEM

**Abstract**

According to a UK survey, 12 percent of the founders, owners, or entrepreneurs in the New Space market identify as female. This statistic prompts our curiosity about the situation in Slovakia, an emerging space country that just recently joined the European Space Agency - ESA as an associated member in 2022.

Slovakia has more than 40 companies actively involved in the space sector and the number has been dynamically growing over the past years. Is the increasing trend in the aerospace industry in Slovakia also reflected in the rising participation of women?

This article aims to map the gender balance in Slovak companies operating in the aerospace industry. Through interviews, the plan is to analyze what difficulties and challenges are faced by women working in this sector in Slovakia. The main goal of this paper is to identify recommendations for both the Slovak academia and the private sector to motivate girls and young women to study and pursue careers in space-related areas

For the Slovak Space Office team, it is essential to learn more about the current status of women's participation in the aerospace sector to break the assumption that this needs to be a male-dominated industry.

By fostering an open and inclusive discussion within aerospace startups and companies, this paper will contribute to a broader understanding of the key initiatives that can lead to a more balanced gender diversity and better career possibilities for female professionals in Slovakia as well as other countries - particularly those with emerging space ecosystems.