

EPSC Abstracts

Vol. 17, EPSC2024-1365, 2024, updated on 14 Apr 2025

<https://doi.org/10.5194/epsc2024-1365>

Europlanet Science Congress 2024

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Women in Astronomy in Belgium

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The under-representation of women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and astronomy is a fact that appears in multiple European countries, and has been extensively analyzed [1]. Female astronomers and women in STEM appear to face struggles throughout their academic career path, due to a combination of factors, like family formation, childbearing, expectations connected to gender, personal choices in lifestyle, career preferences, etc. [2].

In Belgium too, this seems to still be the case. In an early study, [3] analysed gender-specific statistics on the Belgian physicists. One of the difficulties they found was that Belgium keeps different statistics for the French-speaking and Flemish universities, and the career structure is different depending on the Communities.

In a preliminary work, we attempted to gather all information available to study the question of the representation of women in astronomy in Belgium, which was not a straightforward task [4].

In this poster, we will present the results of a quantitative and qualitative study carried out within the frame of a thesis of the Advanced Master in Space Studies at the KU Leuven and Universiteit Gent. We conducted a survey addressing the Belgian astronomer community currently working or who have worked in public institutes, such as universities and federal institutes.

References

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