



# Christina Egelunds tale ved overrækkelsen af L'Oreal-UNESCO-priserne

**Taler**

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forskningsminister

**Dato**

2. maj 2023

**Omstændigheder**

L'Oréal-UNESCO-priserne (L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Awards) blev oprettet i 1998 med det formål at forbedre kvinders position i videnskaben ved at anerkende fremragende kvindelige forskere, der har bidraget til videnskabelige fremskridt.

Thank you for the invitation.

I have really been looking forward to being here today.

To talk about the intersection between two very essential subjects – science and equality. And of course – to celebrate.

**Science is science**

I'm pretty certain that everyone present will agree that science is an absolutely fundamental part of our society.

It broadens our perspective and helps us find new and better solutions to the problems we stumble upon. And it helps us understand the days of the past, so that we may build a better tomorrow.

Science in its nature is a means to decipher and grasp the world around us. Science is a way of thinking whether it revolves around people, literature or the dark matter swimming around in the universe.

And knowledge is not a constant. It is rather a living thing, that can change over time. History tells us over and over, that things we have been absolutely certain of – is utter nonsense.

That the earth is the center of the universe.

That mercury is great for curing diseases.

Or that women can't become great scientists.

As scientists, you don't just find new knowledge, you also continue to challenge the assumptions, on which we base decisions and build our society.

### **Inequality in science**

Today – we celebrate science and research done by three people. We don't just celebrate it because it was made by women.

We celebrate it also because it is good.

Sophia, Charlotte and Fatima – congratulations to the three of you!

You have each conducted research in different scientific fields. But today we are gathered with a common cause.

To discuss the role of women in science. And to pave the way for younger generations in the times to come.

Because even though it may seem obvious for everyone present; that women should be represented more widely in science – the gender gap remains. Especially when it comes to STEM.

If we look at the data, it tells the following story: The higher one climbs the career ladder in science, the fewer women one shall find.

At the same time studies show that female scientists internationally publish less than their male colleagues – and some studies even suggest that this might partly be due to women struggling to get the same professional recognition as men.

Something that – without regard for the injustice in the matter – could have consequences for how we might try to inspire more girls and women to pursue a career as scientists.

We have also seen several examples of how scientific studies are leaning heavily towards one gender or another, even though it has relevance for everyone.

Getting more diverse groups working on studies together is also a way to cancel out biases that could otherwise be overlooked.

In fact – studies tell us that diversity helps produce even stronger research.

So, let's mind the gap. The gender gap that is.

### **Talent has no gender**

Most importantly there is one thing that I wish to make abundantly clear today.

There is absolutely no reason why women shouldn't become excellent scientists.

I realize I am saying this to a group of highly qualified and resourceful individuals. Individuals who might not doubt their intellect or creativity. Individuals who might not think less of themselves because of their gender.

But we must try our very best to inspire the coming generations of girls and women to be fearless and ambitious, so that they might experience some of the same successes as you.

In order to do that, we must break down cultural inequalities and basic gender assumptions from past times.

Women can achieve an ambitious career in science while having kids.

Women can lead a research team and be senior scientists.

They deserve to know that.

### **Education and science**

We live in a time where crisis queue up to be solved. The climate crisis. The

biodiversity crisis. The energy crisis. And the list continues.

I think we can all agree, that there is enough work for everyone.

In fact, we need every capable braincell we can get our hands on – no matter the number of X-chromosomes of its owner.

To make the world a better place for more people. To make the green transition possible.

And last but not least, to let more women enjoy the thrills and excitement of a career in science.

As Minister for Higher Education and Science I have met a lot of highly talented women, who dream of changing the world for the better.

Hard working women who want to succeed – and women who have already done so in spite of a strong headwind.

In order to get more women in STEM, we need to continue the dialogue between all of our key partners.

We need the universities, our innovative companies, the research foundations and everyone else in the sector to take active part in changing the culture about women in science.

In April it was published that the Novo Nordisk Foundation for the first time ever has funded more scientific positions occupied by females, than males. Things are changing – even though it might not always be in the desired pace.

As a part of the research reserve negotiations for 2023, we have chosen to continue the support for the Inge Lehmann program with an investment of 80 million kr. on behalf of the government.

The agreement was adopted by a broad majority in the Danish parliament, which also indicates the political awareness on the matter.

The initiative that was started back in 2020 aims to support a more equal

gender distribution in the Danish science scene.

On top of that the Ministry for Higher Education and Science has recently published information and data regarding the development in gender equality in Danish research environments.

And in 2023 the National Research and Analysis Center for Welfare will conduct a broad investigation of everyday sexism and sexual harassment amongst former and current Ph.D. students, and what effect it might have on women in science and on their career-choices.

With these different initiatives we hope to not only spark interest in the sector – but also in the broad public.

Finally, I want to thank you all for being a part of this important development.

We need courage and vigilance if we want to change the opportunities for more women in the future.

Luckily, we already have some great women in science. Sophia, Fatima and Charlotte have all in one way or another added something to the pool of knowledge and thus pushed civilization forward. May your research be an inspiration for the coming generations.

Once again, congratulations to the three of you!

And thank you L'Oréal and UNESCO for hosting this event on such an important topic.

Now, I promised myself I wouldn't end this speech by saying: "Because your worth it", so someone else will have to do that.

Instead I will say something to the girls and women who might still be in doubt.

Talent has no gender. Don't ever let anyone tell you differently.

So, let's strive to give more women a seat at the periodic table.

Thank you!

**Kilde**

ufm.dk

**Kildetype**

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**Tags**

Moderaterne, Prisuddelingstale

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