

Women of Mathematics throughout Europe. A gallery of portraits.

15:45–16:00 **Welcome address** by Nicole Dehé

Dear mathematicians, dear colleagues, and dear guests here at the University of Konstanz.

I am very pleased to welcome you to the opening of the exhibition „Women of Mathematics throughout Europe. A Gallery of Portraits“.

As the Vice-Rector for Internationalization and Equal Opportunities I am delighted that our University hosts an exhibition that focuses on female researchers in a field where women are still strongly underrepresented.

Wikipedia has a list of distinguished mathematicians since the ancient world, starting from around 600 BC, continuing through the Middle Ages and on to the 19th and 20th century. This list comprises **80** researchers, among them names that are well-known beyond mathematics, such as Isaac Newton, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Carl Friedrich Gauss. But how many women appear in the list? Only shocking two: Emmy Noether and Sofja Wassiljewna Kowalewskaja¹.

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This is certainly not because there haven't been any distinguished female mathematicians in more than 25 centuries. For example, even not being a mathematician myself, I am yet aware of the late Maryam Mirzakhani, who was awarded the prestigious Fields medal in 2014.

So we all know that there have been more than just two female mathematicians in the history of Mathematics since the ancient world, but this list on Wikipedia shows what has traditionally been the pattern in this field. It also underlines the importance of an exhibition of the kind that we have the pleasure to be opening today and to be hosting at this university for the next month.

Looking at Germany, the share of female full professors in mathematics is around 15%. Here at the Department of Mathematics and Statistics of the University of Konstanz it is even lower than that, we only have 9% female full professors (15% if junior professors are included). But we all know that there are more female minds in Mathematics who can fill a professorship, and contribute to the long list of outstanding mathematical findings!

I am glad that we have the first and still the only female full professor of Mathematics at this university here with us today: Prof. Salma Kuhlmann.

Salma Kuhlmann will later give us a short introduction to the project "Konstanz Women in Mathematics", which we are very happy to have here at our university. The project runs a number of activities, such as a lecture series whose aim it is to increase the visibility of female mathematicians, and to provide a network for them.

Within our university, the project is special, because it was a department, the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, that took the initiative to build up a lively and long-term project for equal opportunities, while usually, measures for equal opportunity are coordinated in a central office, our Office for Equal Opportunities, Family Affairs and Diversity.

The project, Konstanz Women in Mathematics, is currently coordinated by the mathematician Dr Maria Infusino. She also keeps the main connections with the European networks for women in Mathematics and is chairing today's event.

The opening of an exhibition is a big chance to get information about the corner stone of the initiative behind it, and to put the exhibition into the right frame. The exhibition „Women of Mathematics throughout Europe. A Gallery of Portraits“ has its own history and we are really proud to say that Konstanz is part of this history: not only because we have the honour to host it for a month, but also because the idea of these 13 portrait-interviews of women mathematicians was conceived by Prof. Sylvie Paycha exactly four years ago, while she was preparing an invited lecture for our series “Konstanz Women in Mathematics”.

We are very happy that we were able win one of the curators of this exhibition to come to Konstanz today: Dr Sara Azzali from the University of Potsdam. She will give us insights into the development of this exhibition, which is travelling around the world. During the coffee break, we will have the opportunity to view these portraits.

After the break, we will welcome Prof. Aljosa Volcic, who is professor of Mathematics at the University of Calabria in Italy. His talk will broaden the view on female mathematicians from a social viewpoint.

In the last part of today's opening a special event is scheduled: we will leave the Library and enter the Audimax, where a grand piano will be waiting for us. There we will have the pleasure of welcoming Prof. Ingrid Carbone. Prof. Carbone is a professor of Mathematics at the University of Calabria **and** a renowned concert pianist. She has compiled for us an impressive all Liszt programme, which will provide a stunning closure of today's event.

And after that we are all invited for a refreshment.

I am delighted that you are all here to get to know “Women of Mathematics”. Let me also say that I very much appreciate that there are colleagues who take their time and energy to build up an exhibition about female researchers, and let it travel all over the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers of today's event, they are:

- Tanja Edelhäuser and Sandra Weimer, who work in the Office for Equal Opportunities, Family Affairs and Diversity,
- and
- Maria Infusino and Salma Kuhlmann who are members of the department of Mathematics.

I wish us all an inspiring afternoon and evening, and of course lively insights into the world of Women in Mathematics throughout Europe.

Thank you