



Committee on the situation
of women in economics

Newsletter 2024: Interview with Laura Hospido (invited article)

We recently marked the 16th edition of the COSME Gender Workshop. This is the perfect moment to chat with one of its founders, Laura Hospido (Spanish Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business and Banco de España), about the beginnings of this workshop series and how COSME — the Comité sobre la Situación de la Mujer en Economía — came to be.

1. Laura, please tell us the origin of the COSME workshop

First, let me tell you about the origin of the committee itself. When I was doing my PhD at CEMFI, we had a physical mailbox to receive postal mail. One day the newsletter from the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) of the American Economic Association arrived in my mailbox. My thesis supervisor, Manuel Arellano, saw me pick it up and when I told him what it was, he said, “And we don't have a committee like that in the Spanish Economics Association. Why don't you set it up?” I told him that I was just a student. Still, he recommended me write a letter to many people in the profession to support my request for the creation of the committee. When I got about 70 signatures I requested it to the president of the Association, who at that time was Enrique Sentana, and the board said yes. It was December 2006.

In 2008 FEDEA, led by Sara de la Rica, began to organize a Workshop on Gender Economics in Granada. In 2009, the second edition of this Workshop was organized in Granada, and the first edition of the COSME Workshop on Gender Economics was held at the Banco de España in Madrid. In 2010 both initiatives were merged into one and have continued to be held every year alternating venues. Since 2015 the venue has been fixed at the Fundación Ramon Areces, which sponsors it. Each year about 100 submissions are received for only 8 slots. This guarantees the high quality of the speakers. In addition, the sponsorship of the Fundación Ramon Areces allows the Committee to invite two excellent speakers each edition. But what is a distinctive feature of the

workshop is the quality of the discussants who provide the best feedback for the authors.

2. What is the name COSME?

At the beginning, the Executive Board of COSME consisted of Carmen Herrero, as president, Miguel Ángel Ballester, Antonio Cabrales, Sara de la Rica, and me. For some time, we were discussing possible names for the committee. We also wanted an acronym that would be easy to remember. Carolina Ortega and I met for a few months while doing a doctoral stay at University College London and she came up with the idea of the Committee on the Status of Women in Economics (in Spanish, COmité sobre la Situación de la Mujer en Economía or COSME). I thought it was excellent: COSME, besides being easy to remember, is a rather old-fashioned man's name in Spain, just the opposite of what we wanted to push. I think that's where its strength lies. Then Antonio Cabrales told us that there was a Forges character named Cosme, which added a powerful image to the idea. Forges was a great Spanish cartoonist whom I admire very much. It was the ideal finishing touch to the beginning of an academic initiative that has only grown and improved over time.

COSME = COmité sobre la Situación de la Mujer en Economía
(Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession)



I don't understand it: I have a husband, two children, a wonderful house, my own car, I am pursuing my career as an executive, I am at my best age... I should be happy and I'm fed up...