



Academic precarity

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Initiative for Science in Europe

The Initiative for Science in Europe is an independent platform of European Learned Societies and Research Organisations operating within different disciplines and across sectors. ISE supports **all fields of science** at a European level, involves researchers in the design and implementation of **European science policies**, and advocates strong independent **scientific advice** in European policy making.



Background - I

ISE report and webinar series: in winter 2021, ISE published a report where we identified the main drivers for academic precarity. The report was followed by a series of panel discussions with many stakeholders to understand how the problem shall be addressed.

Academic careers are a complex issue with important nuances that shall not be overlooked. We consider broad issues that are common to most cases of academic precarity and recommend the goals that need to be achieved without dwelling on the process.

Background - II

OECD report: in May 2021, the OECD published a policy report where precarity in research careers is considered of **high concern because it hinders the capacity to deliver the new knowledge and solutions necessary to address urgent societal challenges**. In addition, precarity is having detrimental effects on researchers' well-being, selection procedures are often not open or transparent, only researchers from privileged backgrounds can afford prolonged precarity (concerns about diversity and equality), women are disproportionately affected, and the quality of science is imperilled by a “publish or perish” culture, in which risk aversion hinders novel research, and research integrity and rigour are of diminishing importance in the face of excessive competition.

Background - III

European Council: on 28th of May, the European Council adopted conclusions on "Improving conditions for research careers in Europe", where it asks Member States and the Commission for appropriate instruments and tools promoting attractive working conditions within and beyond academia. It also invites Member States, the Commission, higher education institutions and research performing organisations, and Research Funding Organisations to work together towards a broad development and application of modern assessment and rewarding practices in order to set the right incentives including for open science practices.

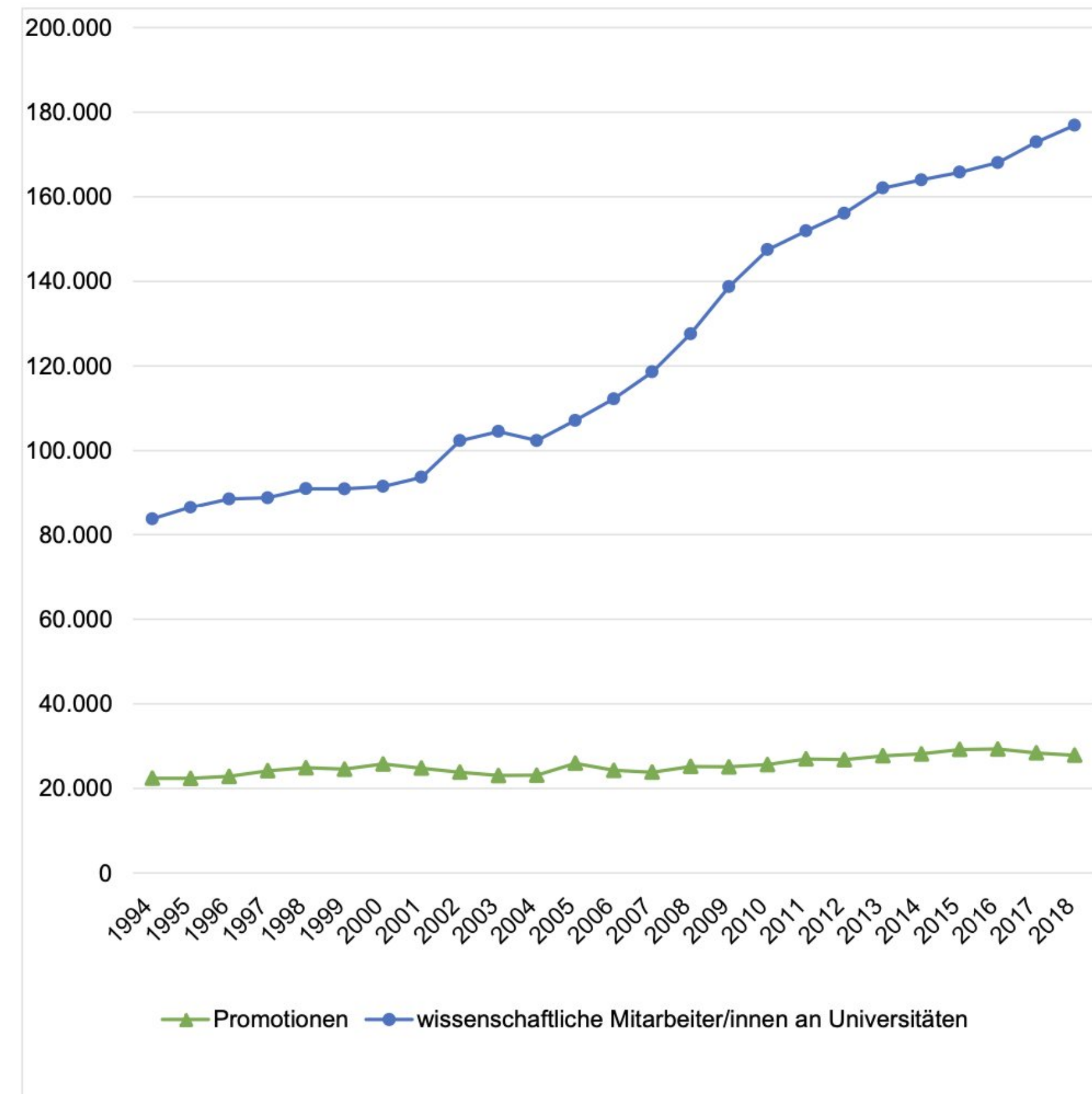
Background - IV

Slovenian Presidency: There is also a call now from the Slovenian Presidency for Member States to sign a pledge on gender equality in research. This is going to be one of the 4 priorities in Research and Innovation in this semester.

#IchBinHanna: recently, a bottom-up movement of German researchers has gained momentum. They protest against unfair exploitation of researchers with grim future perspective to stay in Academia.

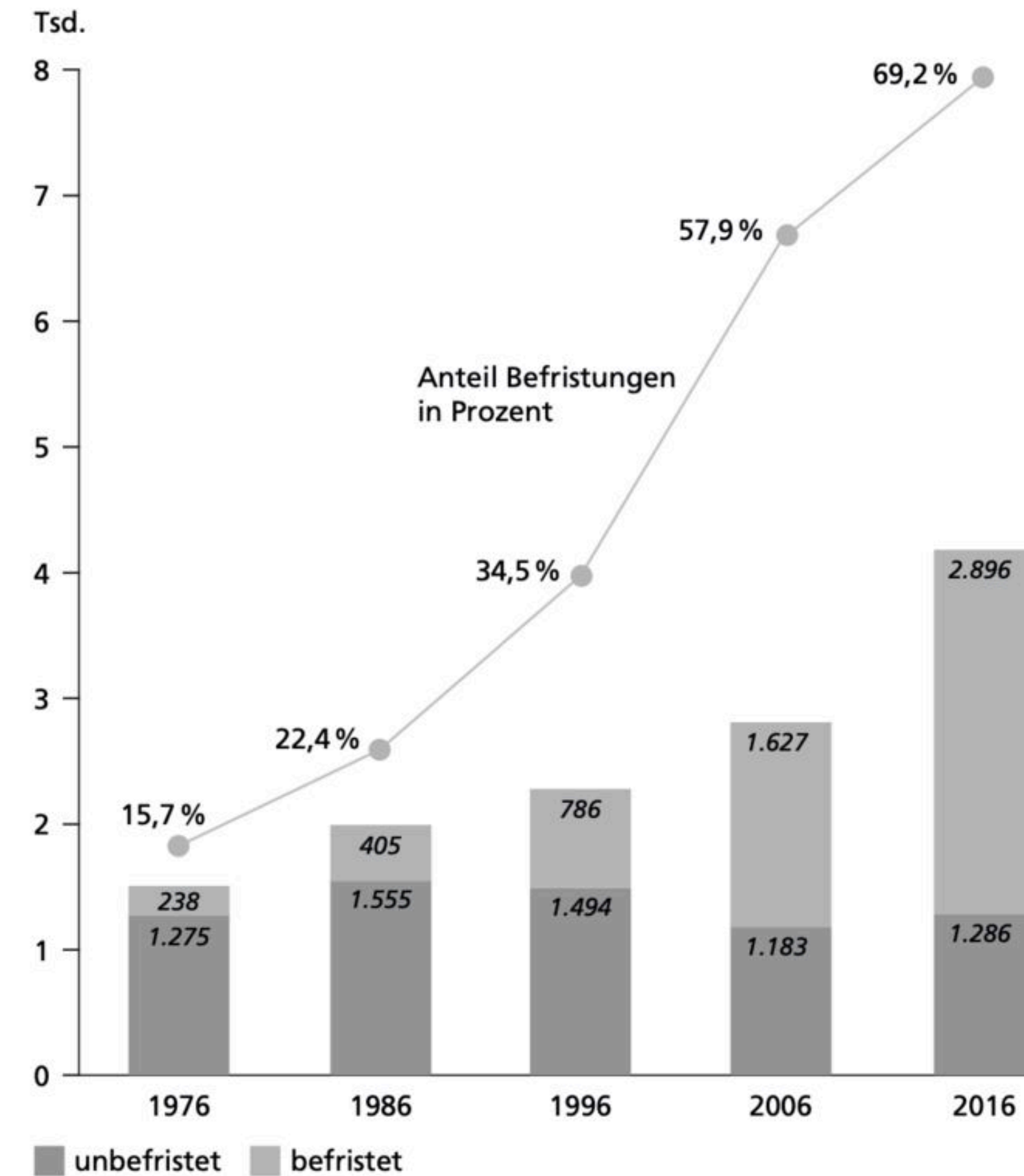
Evolution of fixed term positions

Abbildung 7: Promotionen und wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter/innen an Universitäten



Quelle: Statistisches Bundesamt (Personal an Hochschulen 1994-2018; Prüfungen an Hochschulen 1994-2018), eigene Darstellung, vgl. Gassmann 2018a, S. 108.

Abbildung 1 Entwicklung des wissenschaftlichen Personals in der MPG, 1976–2016



Our recommendations - Funding of Academic careers

increase of funding for permanent positions

Our recommendations - Research Assessment Practices

promote qualitative judgement and consider

also various research activities and societally

relevant outputs

Our recommendations - Research grant evaluation

adopt novel approaches to guarantee more equity like multi-stage evaluation procedures and post peer review randomization

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- EU projects to develop skill training (DocEnhance and DIOSI)