

Nobel prizes are growing more diverse, academy insists

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Only one woman won a Nobel science prize this year and all 2022 laureates hail from the United States or Europe, but a prize official said Monday the prestigious awards were becoming more diverse.

Hans Ellegren, the secretary general of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences that awards the Nobel prizes for chemistry, physics and economics, said he was "rather glad" about the progress being made.

"During the last five years, we have had four women Chemistry Prize laureates. That's half of all women laureates in chemistry that have ever been awarded the [prize](#)," he told AFP in an interview.

"You have two women in physics, despite physics being a very male-dominated scientific field, and we have one in the economic sciences," he said.

Carolyn Bertozzi of the US shared this year's Chemistry Prize—with two men, Barry Sharpless of the US and Morten Meldal of Denmark—becoming the only woman to get the nod this year in a [science](#) discipline.

Ellegren said the Nobel science prizes typically go to people who conducted their research several decades ago when there were fewer women in the labs.

"The laureates (honoured) now reflect what the [scientific community](#) looked like then," he said.

The only other woman laureate this year was French author Annie

Ernaux, who won the Literature Prize.

The record for most women winning a Nobel in a single year was in 2009, when five [women](#) were honoured, followed by 2018 and 2020 when four won.

The most recent year without a [woman](#) laureate at all was in 2017, though that was common until 2000.

The 2022 season did not offer much geographic spread among laureates, either. Five hailed from the European Union (Austria, Denmark, two from France, and Sweden), while six were from the US.

Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski, a jailed dissident from Belarus, was the only laureate who didn't come from a rich country.

Ellegren said he believed there would be more geographic diversity in years to come.

"I expect that. But we can't guarantee and we don't really foresee who will be awarded the prize. But one could really think that there will be a change also when it comes to geographical origins," he said.

Several Asians have won Nobels in the science fields, a trend that is expected to grow in the future.

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