

## RESEARCH TALENT CIRCULATION WITHIN THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA (ERA)

POSITION DATED 3<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2020

The [leading universities of science and technology](#) united within [CESAER](#) express appreciation for the focus on brain circulation of the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2020 and underline the need to reduce inequalities within the European Research Area (ERA), to achieve inclusiveness within it and to boost the sharing of excellence in the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon Europe).

The momentum in shaping the future of the ERA and the ongoing preparations for Horizon Europe provide for an excellent opportunity to establish (i) effective framework conditions for research talent circulation, (ii) a new funding instrument and (iii) for boosting the science management at research performing and funding organisations in lesser performing countries. We encourage the European institutions to adopt the boldest ambitions to promote research talent circulation.

### ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

Our Members are confronted with barriers and obstacles to the circulation of researchers within the ERA in areas such as social security, pension rights, and migration. Particular difficulties arise for researchers with a non-EU nationality moving between research performing organisations.

- ⇒ We welcome the [call](#) of the European Research Area and Innovation Committee ([ERAC](#)) to adopt an integrated approach towards effective framework conditions.
- ⇒ We plea for establishing simplified and optimised conditions concerning social security, pension rights and migration.
- ⇒ We recall the countries' own responsibility to strengthen their research and innovation capacity. The European Commission, in our view, has a role in incentivising countries to reform their research systems and to eliminate barriers and remove obstacles that hamper researchers and their employers to benefit from the ERA and the EU Framework programmes for Research and Innovation. We particularly call upon the European institutions and the countries to support world-class infrastructure and ensure sufficient funding for research.
- ⇒ We emphasise the need to modernise recruitment and promotion procedures and to establish a level playing field in research assessment for research talent circulation, shifting the focus from quantitative impact factors towards diversifying and including qualitative metrics (see [Leiden Manifesto](#)) and a culture of trust and risk-taking. In any case, excellence should be the key criterion in Sharing Excellence.

### CREATE NEW INSTRUMENT TO BOOST ATTRACTION AND RETENTION OF TALENT

We acknowledge the successes of the instruments under Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation in Horizon 2020. However, our Members lack an instrument to boost the careers of early-stage researchers at research performing organisations in lesser performing countries, which is essential for attracting and retaining young scientific talent. We point to the positive experiences with the [tenure track scheme](#) from the *Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne*

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([EPFL](#)) and the Croatian government (projects with [University of Zagreb](#) and [Ruđer Bošković Institute](#)).

- ⇒ We urge the European institutions to establish a new instrument to support scientific excellence under Sharing Excellence in Horizon Europe. This should concern a generous mono-beneficiary grant for excellent early-stage researchers along a tenure track model, offering talented young researchers a position as an assistant professor for a limited time (usually from 4 to 7 years), and - if successfully evaluated - a permanent position as an associate or full professor at the hosting institution in the lesser-performing country. Such a model provides an attractive career perspective going well beyond the position of a short-term postdoctoral researcher. An excellent partner institution from a well-performing country thereby provides guidance on research assessment and tenure track to boost excellence. Such grants should allow for co-funding with institutional, regional and national funds.

## CREATE NEW INSTRUMENT TO INCREASE SCIENCE MANAGEMENT

Another limitation of the current instruments is that they barely increase the science management capacity of the recipient research performing and funding institutions as a whole. We believe that sharing best practices and funding networking activities between research support offices at research performing and funding organisations from lesser performing countries with partners from better performing countries can be of great importance.

- ⇒ We encourage the European institutions to establish an instrument under Sharing Excellence in Horizon Europe to increase the research management and administration capacity at research support offices of research performing and funding organisations in lesser performing countries with partners from better performing countries. This could include supporting a network on research management and administration, knowledge and staff exchange helping to better tackle the respective demands and challenges, and making networking by research managers and administrators from research performing and funding organisations in lesser performing countries an eligible costing sort under Sharing Excellence.

## COMMITMENT TO CONTRIBUTE AND SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE ERA

We recall our [strong commitment and dedication](#) to contributing to shaping the future of the ERA and highlight the diverse geographical coverage of our membership and the strong cooperation between our Members in Europe and beyond. We offer our expertise and experience when addressing research talent circulation to reduce inequalities in research performance across the ERA and to increase the inclusiveness of the ERA.

- ⇒ We encourage the European institutions to develop and promote sound principles and values for the ERA widely beyond the EU, demonstrating the attractiveness of the ERA to conduct research and to the research performing organisations as partners for research and cooperation.

For more information about the [EPFL-Croatian government tenure track scheme](#), please contact the Chair of our Task Force Competitive Funding [Olivier Küttel](#).

For more information about this position, please contact our Advisor for Research & Innovation [Mattias Björnmalm](#) and our Secretary General [David Bohmert](#).

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