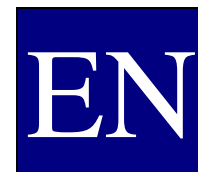




**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



## **Council conclusions on European researchers' mobility and careers**

*2999th COMPETITIVENESS Council meeting  
Brussels, 2 March 2010*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING:

- its Resolution of 15 June 2000 on establishing a European area of research and innovation<sup>1</sup> following the European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000 which agreed on the Lisbon Strategy;
- the general principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers and in the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (11 March 2005)<sup>2</sup>;
- its conclusions of 18 April 2005 regarding the reinforcement of human resources in science and technology in the European Research Area<sup>3</sup>;
- the Commission Green Paper of 4 April 2007 "The European Research Area: New Perspectives" where an adequate flow of competent researchers was identified as a main feature of the European Research Area<sup>4</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> Official Journal C 205, 19.7.2000, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Official Journal L 75, 22.3.2005.

<sup>3</sup> 8194/05.

<sup>4</sup> 8322/07.

# **P R E S S**

- its conclusions of 23 November 2007 on the future of Science and Technology in Europe that highlighted specific action was needed to ensure sufficient resources to R&D and to improve researchers' careers and promote balanced circulation of researchers with the rest of the world;<sup>5</sup>
- the conclusions of the European Council of 13 and 14 March 2008 which called upon the Member States to remove barriers to the free movement of knowledge by creating a "fifth freedom", confirming that investing in human capital and modernising labour markets, as well as investing in knowledge and innovation, are priorities of the strategy for growth and jobs;
- the Commission Communication of 23 May 2008 on "Better careers and more mobility: a European partnership for researchers" where the Commission proposed a set of actions to ensure that researchers across the EU benefit from the right training, attractive careers and removal of barriers to their mobility;<sup>6</sup>
- its conclusions of 26 September 2008 on "Better careers and more mobility: a European partnership for researchers" which recognised that “regarding social security coordination issues and supplementary pensions, relevant stakeholders in these areas will need to cooperate in the development of concrete solutions” and stressed “the need to draw fully on the European legal framework already in force and, especially, to consider the opportunities offered by the Community rules on the coordination of social security schemes”<sup>7</sup>;
- the report by Ministers Gago (PT) and Biltgen (LU) of May 2009<sup>8</sup>, in follow-up to the above conclusions, which provided specific proposals to speed-up the implementation of the Partnership for Researchers recommending the improvement of the employment conditions of researchers, to increase the share of women in research, and responding to the needs of the mobile researchers with respect to the social security and supplementary pension schemes, and suggested organising a joint session of the Council configurations of "Competitiveness" and "Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs" to make better progress along these lines;
- its conclusions of 9 March 2009 on “New Skills for New Jobs: anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs”, which emphasised the need to ensure a better match between skills supply and labour market demand, and the importance of upgrading skills at all levels for Europe's short-term recovery and longer-term growth and competitiveness, as well as for equity and social cohesion<sup>9</sup>;

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<sup>5</sup> 14693/07.

<sup>6</sup> 10059/08.

<sup>7</sup> 13671/08.

<sup>8</sup> 10003/09.

<sup>9</sup> 6479/09.

1. TAKES NOTE of the findings and recommendations of the ERA Expert Group set up by the Commission on “Realising a single market for Researchers”<sup>10</sup> that identified a number of barriers to the effective mobility of researchers and the policy options to overcome such barriers;
2. TAKES NOTE of the report of the European Parliament on “Cross-border Mobility of Young Researchers”<sup>11</sup> that identifies the challenges for the mobility of young researchers in Europe and describes the existing measures in the EU, the Member States and other countries, and notes the still uneven and slow progress of mobility in Europe, in particular for young researchers;
3. TAKES NOTE of the discussions at the Conference "Working together to strengthen research in Europe" held in Brussels on 21 - 23 October 2009 which, inter alia, expressed broad support for addressing issues in relation to employment conditions, social security, supplementary pension rights and other measures, so as to encourage further mobility of researchers;
4. TAKES NOTE of the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 16 December 2009 on “Concerted action to improve the career and mobility of researchers in the EU” recommending, among other things, that “urgent measures are needed to improve coordination between policies on education, research, labour and social security, to ensure that educational, scientific and social policy instruments are developed in a coordinated manner, so that Europe can achieve its goals in this field”<sup>12</sup>;
5. WELCOMES the consultation launched by the Commission on the future "EU 2020" Strategy, which emphasises achieving a “genuine European Knowledge Area, underpinned by a world-class knowledge infrastructure, in which all actors (students, teachers, researchers, education and research institutions and enterprises) benefit from the free circulation of people, knowledge and technology (the fifth freedom)”<sup>13</sup>;
6. STRESSES the crucial role that achieving the European Research Area and in particular the “fifth freedom” should have in the new EU 2020 Strategy;
7. UNDERLINES the importance of strong cooperation among research, education and innovation, strengthening the intersectoral mobility, where the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is expected to demonstrate how the new generation of researchers can be equipped with the right skills to be able to turn best ideas into new business opportunities;

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<sup>10</sup> European Commission (2008). Realising a Single Labour Market for Researchers: Report of the ERA Expert Group. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, EUR 23321. Available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/era\\_green\\_paper\\_eg1\\_lowres.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/era_green_paper_eg1_lowres.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> European Parliament (2009), “Cross-border Mobility of Young Researchers”, Brussels. PE 416.244 (IP/A/ITRE/NT/2009-08). Available at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/studies.do?language=EN>

<sup>12</sup> SOC/359 - CESE 1941/2009.

<sup>13</sup> 16016/09.

8. WELCOMES the valuable contribution of the Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility in the European Research Area (SGHRM) in the implementation of the European Partnership for Researchers and ENCOURAGES the Steering Group, for its part, to pursue its efforts taking duly into consideration the need for coherence among relevant policy areas;
9. WELCOMES the efforts made by Member States in setting up their National Action Plans with the aim of contributing to the goals of the Partnership;
10. CONSIDERS that there is scope for further measures aimed at fostering the mobility of researchers in Europe in order to fully translate the ambitions of the ERA into a high level of results;
11. ACKNOWLEDGES the consistent results of the analyses carried out (as referred above) on the mobility of researchers, which have identified the main challenges for Europe to reach the necessary level of mobility of researchers;

Therefore,

12. AGREES that a fresh impetus is needed to design and implement concrete actions to be taken by the European Union and the Member States in those areas already identified as requiring urgent action for promoting mobility, better working conditions, and improved careers of researchers, with special attention to those issues which are related to age and gender aspects.
13. STRESSES that such actions require due coordination among Member States and cooperation between different policy areas in the EU and, therefore, CALLS FOR joint action to implement this cooperation when appropriate, most particularly between policy approaches in the areas of Research and Employment and Social Security, in consistency with the integrated approach in the new EU 2020 Strategy.

In this respect, IDENTIFIES the following areas for which specific action is required<sup>14</sup>:

**a) Provision to individual researchers of information on social security rights in case of trans-national mobility**

- INVITES Member States and the Commission to enhance the existing information services, in particular by making it possible for interested individual mobile researchers to easily obtain accurate information on their social security rights and obligations when moving, notably through an approach provided via EURAXESS. In this respect:
- INVITES the Commission to propose plans for enhancing existing services where necessary;

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<sup>14</sup> In follow-up, notably, to the general lines of action set out in the Council conclusions of 9 March 2009 on "The professional and geographical mobility of the workforce and the free movement of workers within the European Union" (doc. 6480/09).

- INVITES Member States to implement or reinforce these information services by ensuring appropriate coordination on national level between the various areas of administrations involved;
- INVITES the Commission to provide the Council with a follow-up report by mid-2011.

**b) Solutions for social security needs of researchers**

- INVITES the Commission to identify any specific shortcomings at European level in relation to coordination of Social Security schemes between Member States which may hinder mobility or have a negative impact on the employment or on the career of researchers, and to propose appropriate actions;
- RECALLS that researchers constitute a group of knowledge-based workers who may go through significant periods of professional activity possibly with limited social security coverage from the National systems (health assistance, pension, maternal and parental leave, or unemployment). Yet, researchers are also productive during those periods and their activity has a high potential for yielding benefits for the economy and the society. Therefore, in order to provide more stable and attractive working conditions for researchers:
- INVITES Member States, in accordance with their national legislation, to ensure appropriate social security coverage to all researchers, including doctoral candidates, who are engaged in remunerated research activity;
- INVITES the Commission to present a roadmap for appropriate actions at European level to promote social security coverage to all researchers who are engaged in remunerated research activity. The actions in the roadmap should include the promotion of coordination and best practice, as well as any relevant further measures.

**c) Address the issue of supplementary pensions for researchers**

- TAKES NOTE of the intention of the European Commission to launch a Green Paper on developing a European Framework for adequate and sustainable pensions, and the ongoing work on the proposal of the Commission on minimum requirements for enhancing worker mobility by improving the acquisition and preservation of supplementary pension rights, that will now be taken forward in this wider context on this issue and LOOKS FORWARD to being informed as soon as possible of the results of these activities with a view to considering further political options.
- INVITES the Commission drawing on the Green Paper process, to examine the need for adequate pension provisions for highly mobile workers, taking into account, among other considerations, the specific problems and needs of researchers as highly mobile workers as well as the experiences acquired by supplementary pension providers to overcome mobility disincentives.

**d) Apply the common principles of flexicurity to research careers<sup>15</sup>**

- INVITES Member States to combine the employment mobility inherent to the development of a scientific career with an adequate social protection for all researchers and therefore to apply the common principles of flexicurity to policies supporting more and better jobs for researchers.
- INVITES the Commission to draw up specific case studies illustrating how flexicurity measures can best be applied to researchers taking into account the needs of this category of workers in Europe by the end of 2010.
- INVITES the Commission to take such highly skilled workers fully into account in the European Employment Strategy and the Integrated Guidelines underpinning the future EU 2020 Strategy to be presented in 2010.

**e) Contribution to the 'new skills for new jobs' agenda**

- WELCOMES the findings of the Commission's "New Skills for New Jobs" Communication<sup>16</sup>, in particular that education, training, immigration and employment policies must focus on upgrading and adapting skills, to develop a workforce that is highly skilled and responsive to the needs of the society and the economy; and that there is a growing demand for transversal key competencies, such as problem-solving and analytical skills, self-management and communication skills, linguistic skills, e-skills and, more generally, 'non-routine' skills.
- ACKNOWLEDGES that there is a need to emphasise and develop the role of the workers in knowledge-intensive sectors as an essential element for the future landscape of the workforce in Europe, including through PhD training to attain high levels of professional competence, especially in the context of a competitive knowledge-based society.
- STRESSES the high potential of the professions linked to research and innovation for contributing in a significant manner to the future EU 2020 strategy.

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<sup>15</sup> In follow up to Council conclusions of 5-6 December 2007 "Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity" (doc. 16201/07) which notably endorsed a set of common principles of flexicurity as annexed to those conclusions.

<sup>16</sup> Commission communication of 16 December 2008 "New Skills for New Jobs - Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs" (doc. 17537/08).

- In this respect, INVITES the Commission to identify those aspects of the “European Partnership for Researchers” initiative that could contribute to implementing and developing the “New Skills for New Jobs” agenda, and to propose specific actions in this respect by the end of 2010, including joint work of experts from the research, education and innovation, social security and employment areas, where appropriate, and in follow-up to Council conclusions of 9 March 2009.
14. INVITES the Social Protection Committee and the Employment Committee to give opinion on the issues and initiatives mentioned in these conclusions, as well as on any other related issue they could consider appropriate, according to their respective areas of responsibility, with a view to informing the Council before the end of 2010 by providing further advice on concretely implementing and taking forward the employment and social security aspects related to researchers.
  15. WELCOMES the work by the Administrative Commission on Social Security for Migrant Workers (CASSTM) in investigating ways to tackle obstacles in relation to Social Security within the framework of free movement of persons and ENCOURAGES it to continue this work addressing the key questions related to researchers.
  16. Further to the actions identified above, INVITES the Commission and the Member States to reflect on the feasibility of any additional legal, normative or administrative instruments that could help to remove the barriers to, or foster researchers' mobility, including those identified in the ERA Expert Group paper on ““Realising a single market for Researchers” and in the report of the European Parliament on “Cross-border Mobility of Young Researchers”.
  17. PRESENTS these conclusions to be also duly taken into account in the framework of the adoption and implementation of the new EU 2020 Strategy.”
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