POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

EURAXESS Policy Workshop 3rd Dec 2021

The EURAXESS Policy Workshop is envisaged within the EURAXESS TOP IV project as an activity that will bring together the stakeholders working in this project or connected to the content of this project. Its objective is to introduce the recent European Commission policy steps for EURAXESS' future and the network achievements.

The discussion with the stakeholders was focused on the main directions of the network services and activities. Its aim was to draw stakeholders' recommendations for further implementation of ERA priorities.

1. **Tools for career development** – a lot has been done on organizational and in some countries on national level in regard of career development of researchers, a process that is also enhanced by the HRS4R activities. Although this is not a coherent process and geographically unevenly active there are many tools and materials produces by the network and different member organizations:

   - More **awareness and dissemination events** are need to guide on the tools: purpose / objective, how use, what to make with the result, digital kits – step by step guide on the application and implementation, human connection to help the tool and the user.

   - A hybrid operation by **using digital tools and personalized support** is recommended.

- Strong need to pay attention on mental health of researchers especially in early career stage which should be addressed by more planned and foreseeable career
- More funding for these activities is crucial in combination with internal organizational efforts.

2. **Industry collaboration** – supporting the intersectoral mobility of researchers to positions in industry, but also to other non-academic settings, has been part of the mandate of the EURAXESS initiative since its beginning. In earlier times, most of the efforts from the side of EURAXESS have been focused on trying to engage the private sector organizations in the initiative, and particularly in EURAXESS Jobs to publish available positions. Nevertheless, the extension of the mandate to researcher career development has allowed to shift the focus towards supporting researchers in making this transition. With this framework, a number of recommendations were posed during the discussion:

   - EURAXESS should continue with the focus on researchers to help them do the transition to non-academic positions. In general terms this is not sufficiently supported in the academic environment so more efforts would be welcomed.
   - Academia and industry differ in cultural aspects, including language. Support measures for researchers should particularly aim at these gaps.
   - Support for researchers to become entrepreneurs should also be part of this collaboration with industry.
   - The possible actions could also aim at raising awareness about the value of researchers, particularly the skills developed in research that are applicable in other professional environments.

- Build initiatives through key connection agents, such as business associations from the side of industry, or alumni organizations from academic institutions that already include researchers who have made the transition.
- For collaborating with industry, EURAXESS should not resign from their traditional mobility support services which can be very helpful for SMEs, start-ups, etc., especially if personalized support can be offered.

3. **Human Resources Strategy for Researchers** (HRS4R) – there is a strong need of further deepening the activities which would gather the most important stakeholders of the HRS4R:

- National and international Info days (including case studies, success stories, policy component)
- Webinars, workshops (online and onsite specially dedicated to newcomers and experienced)
- Promotion via different networks (e.g., MSCA, ERC, WIDERA – Twinning capacity building activities)
- Special forums (chats over coffee, 1 hour)
- Microsoft Teams channels for experienced and newcomers (providing a space for interaction)
- Promoting specific principles (gender, open science, mobility) and eventually when and if possible, connecting to GEP
- Promoting more the EU policy as such
- Following the rich experience and achievements so far, just broadened, further developed and improved (e.g., also finding a way to include both non-academic like NGO's, museums, art galleries, more of the public sector in general etc.)

4. **Mentoring/career guidance** - mentoring is not well developed and spread as an instrument to engage the academic communities in

better and faster integration of early career stage researchers and lower the stress at different levels of career, most organizations still use the "old" type that puts all responsibility on the shoulders of the PI. The increasing number of PhD students and the highly stressing environment that they work in calls for more active using of mentoring programs and career guidance that should engage the whole academic communities at organizations.

- **Hub model** gives an excellent opportunity to enhance the process of enforcing the use of mentoring programs – to put **more effort and funding in EURAXESS activities** in this regard and to pay special attention to gender issues and female researchers,
- To develop **more training and guidance for mentors**, develop positive attitude towards such activities and look for ways of formal inclusion in the attestation of mentors,
- To **engage professional career advisers** in the process of mentoring.

5. **Social integration of researchers & families** – a special focus is important on **gender equality issues and female researchers** while taking steps for social integration and this should be addressed in all activities below:
   - *Dual Career Services for the partners of mobile researchers*
     - o Cluster the needs of companies and universities
     - o Language classes to be provided via an IT structure
     - o Besides informing spouses about legislative issues to enter the labour market, there should also be focus on cultural information and the explanation of unwritten rules on how to get a job in the new country

- o Engaging new centers who are also working with Dual career issues – such as municipality Dual Career Programmes or activities organized in other places such as "international Houses" which are already available in different cities in Europe.
    - o Continue sharing experiences between the experienced and the less- experienced EURAXESS members
- *The EURAXESS Family Network*
    - o Address the topic of well-being and work-life balance for researchers and their families
    - o Continue and improve with language skills – English and the local language – courses for the incoming researchers and their partners' families
    - o Initiate local campaigns to improve the housing situations
    - o Give a platform to new initiatives of what helps the incoming researchers and their families to settle in and integrate
    - o Update and enlarge the guide on local initiatives of institutions
- *Managing Diversity for EURAXESS*
    - o Cooperate closer with national governments for overcoming legal obstacles
    - o Top down and bottom-up work should be equally active
    - o Collect best practices on how to create an inclusive environment for international researchers and promote them widely (bottom-up)
- *Refugee initiatives*

- o Interconnect with diversity, well being and mental health activities
- o Collect data on how many universities are concretely doing something and what, extract good practice and spread it

6. **Brain drain vs. balanced brain circulation** - special attention is needed to foster attractiveness of all regions of Europe towards researchers and their families. In this regard also measures to attract and retain female researchers are of high interest. Moreover, an open dialogue on persisting obstacles (including evidence/cases collection) to both physical and virtual mobility of researchers among crucial stakeholders at various levels is perceived as crucial as the high expertise of the EURAXESS network in this area could be built upon. On top of that mutual sharing of practices across the EURAXESS network is highly inspiring and improving overall performance and services to researchers.

These aspects should be specifically further addressed:

International level

- Act as a networking platform for professionals from EURAXESS/outside of EURAXESS to exchange experience on persisting bottlenecks in smooth mobility (physical/virtual – remote working) (e.g. regular meetings/seminars, online collaboration platforms, study visits);
- Share best practices in talent attraction and retention measures to ensure brain circulation;
- Promote the development of reintegration programmes (to support researchers while going abroad to gain experience and at the same time to include incentives for the researchers to return;

- Facilitate dialogue of stakeholders on challenges in smooth mobility of researchers and foster collaborations of diverse actors (institutional/local/regional/national/European level) (e.g. round tables, policy workshops, position papers);
- Collect and provide evidence from the field (e.g. case studies) to national/European policy makers to complement statistical data (e.g. Researcher´s Career Observatory);
- Act as a networking platform for „alumni/diaspora" researchers to stay connected and interested in ERA;

National level

- Organise trainings for professional community of research managers/management/outreach experts, partnership building experts / liaison officers to initiate/support the positive change e.g. the role of transparent recruitment for better career prospects and institutional benefits, why and how to establish local collaborations
- Organise trainings for EURAXESS staff members/other professionals providing services towards researchers - allowing them to meet various stakeholders to discuss directly issues of interest – access to experts
- Promote EURAXESS "mobility" services among researchers and their employers outside traditional academic environments (higher visibility, broadening of the impact and potential EURAXESS Network growth);
- Facilitate collaboration of various actors – e.g. ministries, immigration and tax offices, social insurance agencies, funding agencies – to foster mutual dialogue on issues of EURAXESS expertise and communicate the needs of the research community; provide direct opportunities for young

researchers and RPOs to demonstrate their importance to these actors and declare their needs for making any changes long-lasting and sustainable;

- Promote R&I potential in liaison with innovation/scientific diplomats and diasporas and other actors;

- Consider developing more advanced online tools to provide easier access to standardized questions.

Local level

- In addition to the above actions to take the coordinating role in training for researchers.