

Better careers and more mobility: a European partnership for researchers

2008/2213(INI) - 23/05/2008 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to establish a European partnership to promote better careers and more mobility for researchers.

BACKGROUND: as the core producers of new knowledge and the main agents in its transfer and exploitation, researchers are indispensable for a competitive, knowledge-based EU economy. In order to retain and attract the best research talents a balanced approach is required to ensure that researchers across the EU benefit from the right training, attractive careers and the removal of barriers to their mobility.

The Commission proposed measures to increase the mobility of researchers across the European Research Area in 2001 and for their career development in 2003. These initiatives have yielded results. While EU countries still produce more science and engineering graduates and PhDs than the US and Japan, researchers make up a much lower share of the workforce in the EU. The influx of third country researchers to the EU is much lower, while the global competition for the most talented researchers is increasing with new players now able to offer attractive conditions. At the same time, concerns are growing in several Member States over the ageing of the research labour force and shortages of researchers are already becoming a problem in some regions and industries.

Raising the level of all national systems and institutions towards that of the best would go a long way to creating a world class European research system. Decisive measures are therefore needed for Europe's researchers now more than ever.

CONTENT: the 2007 [Green Paper](#) "The European Research Area: New Perspectives" launched a wide public debate on how to achieve a more open, competitive and attractive European Research Area. As one of five initiatives planned in 2008 to follow up the ERA Green Paper, this Communication proposes to develop a **partnership with Member States** to ensure the availability of the necessary researchers.

The partnership should make a commitment to achieving by the end of 2010 rapid, measurable progress to:

- systematically open recruitment;
- meet the social security and supplementary pensions needs of mobile researchers;
- provide attractive employment and working conditions;
- enhance the training, skills and experience of researchers.

Coordinated action in these areas, alongside renewed efforts on existing initiatives such as increasing the take-up of the principles of the **European Charter for Researchers and a Code of**

Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers adopted by the Commission in 2005, would provide better job opportunities and more rewarding careers for researchers and allow greater movement between institutions, between the public and private sectors and across borders.

In order for the partnership to successfully contribute to the creation of a world class European research system each partner will need to fully contribute. It is therefore important that:

- Member States, Council and Commission commit themselves to the **common objectives and endorse the proposed actions;**
-

- **Member States adopt a national action plan by early 2009** setting out specific objectives and actions to achieve the aims of the partnership. **Given the different starting positions of each Member State each plan is expected to focus on different aspects of the overall objectives of the partnership;**
- the **priority actions** identified are **implemented by the end of 2010;**
- the **Commission seeks to optimise existing Community instruments**, including those available through the FP7 People programme, to reinforce the partnership;
- as an integral part of the partnership, Member States and the Commission: i) **identify good practice** and where appropriate **develop common guidelines;** ii) **monitor progress** at national and EU levels and report annually based on agreed indicators; iii) make **maximum use of the existing Community legal framework** for the benefit of researchers;
- in line with its central role in the governance of ERA initiatives, **the Competitiveness Council monitors and assesses progress** in the implementation of the partnership actions;
- at the end of the first stage of the partnership in 2010 an **overall evaluation of the situation and results from actions by the partnership** is made and the need for further EU action to address specific outstanding issues is considered.

The evaluation should **fully incorporate the views of researchers themselves**. A **single contact point for researchers** to notify the partnership of examples of good practice and ongoing difficulties should be considered as well as the **organisation of a major conference in 2009** to provide a platform for researchers' views.