Better careers and more mobility: a European partnership for researchers

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The European Parliament adopted by 512 votes to 16 with 14 abstentions, a resolution on better careers and more mobility: a European partnership for researchers, in response to the Commission Communication on the subject. It welcomes the Commission's initiative and considers that the measures proposed should be effective in removing the main obstacles to the creation of a European Research Area. All partners at regional, national and European levels need to contribute fully.

Parliament stresses the importance of **open recruitment and the portability of grants**. It calls for improved availability and transparency of information on recruitment opportunities for researchers and more openness in recruitment procedures by public institutions. Recruitment information should be published on the website of the respective research institutes and on the EURAXESS website. It stresses the following:

- the need to establish a single **EU career model** in the field of research and to introduce an integrated system for information on offers of employment and trainee contracts, considering this to be key to the creation of a single employment market for researchers;

- the need to provide the necessary support services for researchers by simplifying application procedures and facilitating researchers' access to funding, inter alia, by means of individual grants which promote freedom of researchers to pursue research topics of their choice;

- Member States and the Commission are asked to review the necessary conditions for introducing portability of individual research grants when this enables funding bodies better to meet their research needs and researchers to access research facilities not available in their home institutions. The review should, in particular, address the consequences of portability for research institutions in Member States and the threat of the "unequal allocation of researchers" within the EU, and from and to third countries;

- the importance of making the processes for the selection and promotion of male and female researchers completely open and transparent; and to ensure a better balance between men and women within the bodies responsible for hiring and promoting researchers;

Increased mobility should be achieved by strengthening the benefits for research institutions to host researchers from other Member States by means of a **"research voucher" scheme**. This research voucher should transfer money for researchers and follow those participating in research institutions in Member States other than their own. This added support for mobility of researchers should be additional to current funding schemes, and the research voucher will be an incentive for Member States and for research establishments to compete in attracting the most talented scientists.

The Commission and the Member States are asked to explore the possibility of creating a **European Pension Fund** for researchers, regardless of the duration of the research contract.

Parliament recommends a series of measures to ensure attractive employment and working conditions, such as the provision of the necessary support services for researchers from other countries, including access to lodging, schools and childcare facilities. In order to avoid a "brain" drain" within the EU, Member States are urged to exploit better the opportunities offered by the funding schemes of the specific programme 'People', and to make returning to their home institutions more attractive for researchers by

increasing their salaries or offering additional benefits. Parliament expresses its concern at the lack of flexible contracts for experienced researchers and researchers at the end of their careers. It calls on Member States to facilitate participation in the Seventh Framework Programme for research, by ensuring efficient support services, in particular national contact points. Member States must also continue to increase the budgetary resources allocated to research, as a means of creating quality jobs that comply with basic ethical principles and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

Parliament also recommends a series of measures aimed at **enhancing the training skills and experience of European researchers.** It stresses the need to improve career opportunities for young researchers, for example in terms of increased funding and allowing career advancement on the basis of achievements rather than seniority, such as innovation capacity, stages in enterprises, etc., and in supporting interdisciplinary training as well as recognising the value of interdisciplinary mobility.

Lastly, the Council, the Commission and Member States are asked to raise the profile of scientific research in the general budget, in accordance with the undertaking given to achieve 3% growth and to train 600 000 more researchers, on average, by 2010.