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Community research

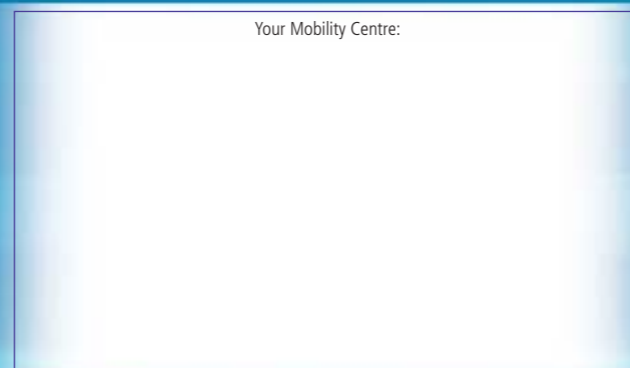
Removing the obstacles to the mobility of researchers in Europe

The European Union has set itself the ambitious goal of becoming the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. To achieve this goal, Europe depends, to a large extent, on the quality of its research and, therefore, its researchers. Not only is there a need for Europe to produce more R&D personnel, but it also needs to attract top international talent and allocate its existing pool of scientific skills as effectively as possible.

This can only be achieved through a high degree of researcher mobility.

Although researchers can, in principle, move freely within Europe and, therefore, access new knowledge and competencies, in practice, they still have to contend with numerous obstacles of an administrative, cultural and linguistic nature. This is why, in addition to removing legal constraints and providing funding via Marie Curie activities, the European Commission, in the context of its Mobility Strategy for the European Research Area and in close co-operation with all the countries participating in the Sixth Framework Programme for Research, has launched two concrete initiatives aimed at improved information and assistance to researchers:

- the European Researcher's Mobility Portal, intended to help researchers identify training and job opportunities throughout Europe;
- ERA-MORE: the European Network of Mobility Centres intended to facilitate the life of "mobile" researchers by tailored assistance.



Two keys to enhancing researchers' mobility

The European Researcher's Mobility Portal:

<http://europa.eu.int/eracareers>

The European Network of Mobility Centres: ERA-MORE

ERACAREERS: the European Researcher's Mobility Portal

Most economic and administrative borders in Europe have been dismantled and its political and cultural boundaries are gradually converging. This twofold opening of frontiers provides potentially unprecedented opportunities, not only for researchers looking to advance their career in another European country, but also for scientific organisations in search of international talent.

However, more needs to be done to optimise such opportunities.

With this in mind, and in the context of its Mobility Strategy for the European Research Area, the European Commission has launched the European Researcher's Mobility Portal. With more than 31 partner countries, this online tool represents a gateway to a continent of opportunities for researchers and research bodies alike. By providing researchers with more information on living conditions and career opportunities in European countries, the Commission hopes to make research in the European Union more attractive.

Single entry point

The portal is a single entry point for researchers wishing to work in another country and for organisations wishing to recruit the most talented European and non-European researchers.

Three main types of information are available:

- Fellowships/grants;
- Research job opportunities;
- Practical information.

Services offered

The portal, based on two databases (one devoted to job vacancies and the other containing researchers' CVs), is effectively an online job market for both researchers and research bodies.

Public research institutions, universities and the private sector can use the first database not only to advertise their vacancies online free of charge, but also to consult the online CVs of researchers who are interested in research opportunities in Europe.

Researchers can use the second database to upload their CVs and simultaneously consult job offers, as well as information on grants and training opportunities offered by research bodies.

Multiple content

In addition to the information described above and the access to the databases, the European Portal also offers a range of other useful services:

- Access to some 20 national portals for researchers, developed in the context of this initiative with a view to creating a more favourable environment for researchers in Europe;

- A section expressly devoted to job offers funded by the European Union's Marie Curie activities;
- A series of web links concerning the latest developments in European research policy and in the countries participating in the initiative;
- Other links of interest to researchers seeking an international career (EMBO, Science's Next Wave Europe, Naturejobs, Ploteus, etc.).

In the context of the growing European research integration, the portal aims to help amalgamate the available regional, national and continent-wide information.

In addition, the portal provides access to ERA-MORE, the European Network of Mobility Centres, with a view to assisting researchers and their families with matters relating to their professional and daily lives, thereby facilitating physical mobility as much as possible (see the ERA-MORE section below in this respect).

The address of the European Researcher's Mobility Portal: <http://europa.eu.int/eracareers>

Contact:

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ERA-MORE: the European Network of Mobility Centres

The saying "travel broadens the mind" is particularly true where researchers are concerned. Taking up a research position in another country gives scientists the opportunity to share their knowledge, learn new approaches and work with the best minds in their field.

Despite the undoubted advantages of a mobile career, moving to another country to live and work can be a trying experience. Pursuing a career abroad and setting up home in a foreign country involves a daunting array of practical hurdles, even before setting foot there.

The vexations of moving abroad

Before leaving, mobile researchers need to take care of their travel documents and other essential paperwork, as well as inform utility companies of their departure, pack up their home and belongings, choose a removals firm and possibly put things into storage. Then, once they have arrived in their host country, they must register with the local authorities, sort out any visa/residency/administrative questions, find accommodation, enrol the children in a new school ... all of this quite frequently in a foreign language and an unknown cultural context.

Newly arrived expatriates often do not have sufficient information and are left to their own devices, which obviously does

not enhance Europe's image as an attractive research destination. In addition, researchers frequently complain about the problem of finding up-to-date, reliable information to help them prepare for and complete their European move in the best possible conditions.

Customised assistance

In response to these problems, the European Commission has decided to set up the European Network of Mobility Centres, also known as ERA-MORE (European Research Area-MOBile REsearchers). This network, made up of organisations that provide concrete assistance to researchers and their families before, during and after their move abroad, helps to create a more favourable environment for the mobility of researchers in Europe and, accordingly, enhances the continent's attractiveness.

By tapping into the resources and experience of dozens of organisations in the 33 countries participating in the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme for Research, the ERA-MORE network offers researchers and their families comprehensive, up-to-date information, as well as customised assistance on all matters relating to their professional and daily lives in their host country.

Every mobility centre has special links to the universities and research bodies in its

country or region. This provides researchers with direct access to local expertise and highly reliable information.

Since the ERA-MORE network was launched in June 2004, thousands of researchers have benefited from the services of some 200 mobility centres in the following areas:

- visas
- work permits
- salaries and taxation
- social security, pension rights and healthcare
- accommodation
- recognition of qualifications
- day care and schooling
- language courses
- social and cultural aspects
- intellectual property rights

To find the nearest mobility centre to you, visit: <http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/era-more>

Contact:

rtd-mobility-centres@cec.eu.int