

Herlitschka, Sabine E., Dipl.-Ing, Dr., MBA, Graz, Österreich

Vice-Rector for Research Management and International Cooperation, Medical University of Graz, Austria; food and biotechnologist, specialised in molecular biology genetic engineering; previously Deputy Director of the Bureau for International Research and Technology Cooperation (BIT) in Vienna; served as expert evaluator for the European Commission and coordinated several EU initiatives

Vizerektorin für Forschungsmanagement und Internationale Zusammenarbeit, Medizinische Universität Graz, Österreich; Ernährungs- und Biotechnologin, spezialisiert auf Molekularbiologie-Gentechnik; vormals stellvertretende Direktorin des Büros für Internationale Forschungs- und Technologiekooperation in Wien; wirkte als Gutachterin für die Europäische Union und koordinierte mehrere EU-Initiativen

Training and Mobility of Researchers at a European Level

Abstract

Forschung und Innovation spielen für die Stärkung und den Ausbau der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit Europas eine wichtige Rolle. Ein wesentliches Instrument zur Erreichung dieses Ziels auf europäischer Ebene stellen die mehrjährigen EU-Forschungsrahmenprogramme dar, welche seit 1984 Forschungsprojekte zu einer Vielzahl von Themenbereichen mitfinanzieren. Die Durchführung von Forschungsarbeiten ist darauf angewiesen, dass qualifizierte WissenschaftlerInnen in Europa ihr Wissen ausbauen, weitergeben und anwenden können. Daher ist die Unterstützung der Ausbildung und internationalen Mobilität von WissenschaftlerInnen ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der Strategie zur Schaffung eines Europäischen Forschungsraumes, der als Vorschlag der Europäischen Kommission gemeinsam mit den Mitgliedsländern umgesetzt werden muss. Im derzeitigen 6. Forschungsrahmenprogramm stehen unter dem Titel Marie Curie bis zum Jahr 2006 rund 1,6 Milliarden Euro für die Förderung der Ausbildung und Mobilität von ForscherInnen zur Verfügung. Eine Vielzahl von Programmen kann von ForscherInnen dazu genutzt werden, im Rahmen der internationalen Mobilität ihre Forschungskompetenzen auszubauen und damit ihre Karriereperspektiven zu stärken. Entsprechend den Vorschlägen der Europäischen Kommission zum 7. EU-Forschungsrahmenprogramm soll ab 2007 der Bereich der Ausbildung und Mobilität weiter ausgebaut werden.

**

A favourable political environment for research:

„The European Commission set as priority goals for the EU to foster sustainable prosperity and solidarity, to reconnect the EU with the citizens, and to make the Union a strong global partner. As the driver for the production and exploitation of knowledge, research is above all a linchpin in the implementation of the Lisbon strategy to make Europe the most dynamic and competitive, knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining economic growth, employment and social cohesion”, as indicated in the press release of the European Commission on *Building the European Research Area of knowledge for growth*.

Research plays a key role in the future development of Europe:

Research in itself and researchers in particular will have to play an important role in achieving the goals mentioned above.

Research at a European Union level is supported by the flagship “Framework Programme on Research, Technological Development and Demonstration”, which is the largest trans-national and competitive programme worldwide.

The multiannual framework programmes have co-funded research projects since 1984. The current sixth framework programme, spanning from 2002 to 2006, has provided some almost 20 billion Euros. Topics covered include life sciences, information and communication technologies, nanotechnologies and socio economic research among others. Funding is provided for both small and larger projects in the areas of research and technological development, coordination of research and for supporting researcher training and mobility. Preparations for the new seventh framework programme have started already in accordance with the proposal published by the European Commission on 6th April 2005, and some 73 billion Euros are foreseen to fund research in the years 2007 to 2013.

Training and mobility of researchers:

The training and mobility of researchers plays an important role in the current sixth framework and will continue to do so in the upcoming Seventh Framework Programme (FP7).

The Sixth Framework Programme's Human Resources and Mobility (HRM) activity has a budget of some 1.6 billion euros and is largely based on the financing of training and mobility activities for researchers. These activities, known as the Marie Curie Actions, are aimed at the development and transfer of research competencies, the consolidation and widening of researchers' career prospects, and the promotion of excellence in European research.

The actions are open to researchers in all fields of scientific and technological research from the EU Member States as well as from countries associated with FP6 and from third countries. To take part in most of the Marie Curie Actions, a researcher must be prepared to relocate to another country.

Eligibility for the various schemes is based on research experience and expertise, not age. All levels are covered, from researchers at the start of their career to world-class researchers with well-established scientific expertise. The actions are also open to business, universities and institutions active in research.

What's on offer to researchers?

The opportunities open to individual researchers depend on their level of research experience. There are two main categories of researchers eligible for funding:

- Early-stage researchers: This refers to researchers at the beginning of their research career with less than four years' active research experience (e.g. researchers undertaking a doctoral degree);
- Experienced researchers: This applies to researchers with more than four years of active research experience or those with a doctorate degree. For some actions, researchers with more than ten years of experience will not be eligible.

Individual researchers interesting in taking part in a Marie Curie Action have two options:

- To apply directly to an institution that has been selected by the Commission for a Host-Driven Action. This covers:
 - Marie Curie Research Training Networks
 - Marie Curie Host Fellowships for Early Stage Research Training
 - Marie Curie Host Fellowships for the Transfer of Knowledge
 - Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses

- To prepare a project together with a host institution of their choice and submit it to the Commission. This options applies to:
 - The Marie Curie Individual Fellowships
 - The Excellence Promotion and Recognition Actions and
 - The Return and Reintegration Actions

In the proposal for the Seventh Framework Programme a specific activity focusing on 'People' has been set out, with the objective of strengthening, quantitatively and qualitatively, the human potential in research and technology in Europe.

The activities proposed include:

- Initial training of researchers to improve their career perspectives, to be implemented through Marie Curie Networks in order to overcome fragmentation of, and to strengthen at a European level, the initial training and career development of researchers.
- Life-long training and career development to support the career development of experienced researchers. This line of action will be implemented through both individual fellowships awarded directly at Community level and through the co-financing of regional, national or international programmes.
- Industry-academia pathways and partnerships: Support to longer term co-operation programmes between organisations from academia and industry, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises.
- The international dimension aims to attract research talent from outside Europe and foster mutually beneficial research collaboration with researchers from outside Europe, through international outgoing fellowships, international incoming fellowships, and partnerships to support the exchange of researchers.
- Specific actions to support the creation of a genuine European labour market for researchers, and awards to improve the public awareness of Marie Curie Actions.

Services for researchers:

In order to facilitate the process and to support researchers in the best possible way, the European Commission together with the member states has launched two new services. The Researcher's Mobility Portal website provides country-by-country information about careers, grants and training opportunities. 400 mobility centres opening in 30 EU and associated countries will help researchers to confront bureaucratic and cultural barriers. Each of the mobility centres will provide face-to-face advice on matters such as administration and paperwork, childcare and housing.

Secondly, the European network of “National Contact Points”, made up of experts in all countries, provides information and assistance to researchers interested in participating in the Marie Curie Programme.

Further supportive initiatives:

Other European Commission initiatives for supporting the strong role of researchers in Europe include the EU Charter for researchers and a code of conduct for the recruitment and retention of researchers, both of which were adopted in March. The Charter addresses career development and sets out researchers’ entitlements and the roles and responsibilities of their employers. The code of conduct aims to make recruitment fairer and more transparent. Both are voluntary standards.

For further information:

Overview on research and innovation in Europe:

www.cordis.lu

6th Framework Programme:

<http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/home.cfm>

Towards the 7th Framework Programme:

<http://www.cordis.lu/fp7/home.html>

Mobility of Researchers “Marie Curie Actions”

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/home_en.html

European Researcher's Mobility Portal and mobility centres

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