PIPERS

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Project Acronym: PIPERS

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Coordination and support action. Theme [FP7-CDRP-2013-EUR-CD] [Transnational collaboration on career pathway development for researchers]

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HIGH LEVEL POLICY RECOMENDATIONS TO FOSTER RESEARCHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE.

The PIPERS project gathered a group of stakeholders with expertise on researcher career development in Madrid on July 8th 2015 (full list of participants in Annex 1). The main objective was to generate recommendations for the European Commission, Member States, research funding organizations (RFOs), research performing organizations (RPOs), the EURAXESS network and researchers themselves to jointly foster researcher career development as a crucial asset to support first class research in Europe.

CONTEXT

The way in which research is performed in the 21st century has radically increased the need for well-trained researchers in aspects that go beyond traditional scientific learning. Skills related to leadership, fund-raising, team and project management, open science, public engagement, etc., should be an essential part of the life-long learning that researchers require to fully develop their potential. Moreover, researchers with a good set of transferable skills are likely to be more mobile –across countries, sectors and disciplines.

Many different stakeholders (policy makers, funding agencies, research performing organizations, etc...) in Europe have acknowledged the need to develop and promote career development strategies and frameworks (understood as structured approaches to the continuous development of researcher´s knowledge, expertise and attributes) and have started working on this from different angles. Researcher career development awareness is rising in Europe, and the PIPERS project aims to contribute with this high- level policy reflection on what the next steps of the different stakeholders involved should be.

A number of representatives from different European organizations[1] worked together on a set of recommendations for the European Commission, Member states, research funding and performing organizations, the EURAXESS initiative, and researchers to support a harmonized strategy for researcher career development in Europe. It is worth mentioning that the expert group agreed on the importance of combining top-down (policy) and bottom-up (practice) approaches. Such an approach requires continuous dialogue between policy makers (EU, Member States) and RPO's as equal partners.

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[1] See list of participants

RECOMMENDATIONS

The EUROPEAN COMMISSION should:

- ✓ GATHER AND SHARE DATA ON RESEARCHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING
- By working with Member States to develop common data definitions, survey items and metrics for gathering researcher's careers information of pan-European interest
- By supporting and promoting researcher career development projects and commissioning studies about the matter, for example about academia to industry mobility, and the skill set required for this transition.
- By evolving the current EURAXESS platform to a more accessible, intuitive platform, thereby becoming the leading researcher career development source of information in Europe.

- ✓ DEVELOP A RESEARCHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP FOR EUROPE
- The roadmap would establish the vision of the EC for researcher career development and create the milestones and objectives for the EC, recommendations for member states and other stakeholders. This roadmap should be created with input from all the relevant stakeholders and should include the current EC activities in researcher career development, (i.e. the Human Resources Excellence in Research Award).

- ✓ DEVELOP A EUROPEAN RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (RDF)
- The harmonization of researcher career development language and vocabulary would help European stakeholders understand each other and map their activities and strategies.
- In coordination with all stakeholders, the EC should work on a European Researcher Development Framework[2] that all MS, RPOs, RFOs, researchers and other stakeholders can use as a common reference. This European RDF should be embedded in the Human Resources Excellence in Research Award as well as being available in as an independent tool.

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[2] Researcher Development Framework: Tool for planning, promoting and supporting researcher career development. It sets up framework of skills, capacities and attributes a researcher should have.

✓ SUPPORT THE UPTAKE OF RESEARCHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARENESS THROUGH HORIZON2020

- Evaluation and projects and initiatives funded through Horizon 2020 should take into account improvements in the career development plans' institutions and its costs should be eligible.

MEMBER STATES and RESEARCH FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS should:

✓ ENDORSE AND COMMIT RESOURCES TO RESEARCHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- The endorsement could be in the form of having researcher career development (RCD) strategies or in a more informal way, but it should be clear that the RCD is part of the political agenda.
- The commitment of resources could be achieved by mainstreaming researcher career development support within all funding schemes.

✓ IMPROVE RESEARCHERS CAREERS

- Researcher career development can only be fully achieved if other aspects of researchers´ careers are improved in parallel (pension schemes that do not hamper mobility, open recruitment processes, better availability of tenure track positions, dual careers opportunities and, in general terms, a research-friendly labor market). It should be noted that career development is important for researchers at all stages of their careers from R1 upwards, and that sometimes mid-career researchers would benefit a lot from career support at crunch times in their quest for funding or permanent positions.

✓ REFLECT ON THE CURRENT RESEARCH RESEARCHERS EVALUATION SYSTEMS

- The outputs from scientific research are many and varied, and the evaluation systems should be flexible enough to also acknowledge transferrable and interdisciplinary skills. This flexibility would encourage researchers to engage with research career development plans that foster new attributes and capacities that will enrich their career.

RESEARCH PERFORMING ORGANIZATIONS should:

✓ DEVELOP RESEARCHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

- RPOS need to work on RCD strategies that harmonize and channel all the activities within the institution.
- The strategies need to be accompanied with funding strategies to guarantee their sustainability.
- The strategies need to find a good balance between the institution's responsibility for supporting RCD of their staff and the personal responsibility of researchers for their own development.

- The strategies should have principal investigators as key targets, as they can be multipliers of the cultural change needed in research environments.
- The strategies should contemplate enhancing researchers' engagement in mentoring, skills teaching and/or science policy through reward systems including economic complements and other recognitions.

✓ CONTRIBUTE TO THE REFLECTION ON CURRENT RESEARCH EVALUATION SYSTEMS
  - So that they become more flexible and include acknowledgment of broader activities beyond classic research outputs

✓ CONTRIBUTE AND USE THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WITH AUTONOMY
- Research funding organizations should use the European Research Development framework for their researcher career development strategies and activities so that a common language is used throughout Europe. Of course, they will have the freedom and autonomy to adapt it to their own context.

EURAXESS should:

- ✓ BECOME ONE OF THE COMMUNICATION BRIDGES BETWEEN DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS IN RESEARCHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT
- EURAXESS could facilitate the communication between the European Commission, MS, RFOs and RPOs in RDC issues (policy, projects, etc.). It is recommended that current EURAXESS related European projects should explore this possibility further
- It is understood that the EURAXESS network as it exists now, should not necessarily attempt to be the one stop shop for RCD, but rather it should identify other existing specialist individuals, institutions or networks in this area, and attempts to either bring them into the EURAXESS community or ensure that there is strong signposting to their services and resources within the EURAXESS portal.

- ✓ BECOME AN OPEN ON-LINE PLATFORM FOR DATA AND PROJECTS OF RESEARCHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT
- EURAXESS could offer access to curated relevant information about researcher career development.

RESEACHERS should:

- ✓ ACTIVELY SUPPORT AND REQUEST MORE FLEXIBLE AND HARMONIZED RESEARCH PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEMS
- Evaluation systems should acknowledge all sides of research outputs, including those that require sets of transferrable skills. Researchers should request these systems to be harmonized in Europe so that the current imbalances (for example, some institutions still almost exclusive consider research papers) are polished.
- ✓ ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN DECISION MAKING BODIES OF THEIR INSTITUTIONS
- To make sure their RCD needs and expectations are heard and supported by their institutions
- ✓ SUPPORT THE UPTAKE OF MENTORING ACTIVITIES AS A KEY GUIDANCE ON RESEARCHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Policy into Practice:
EURAXESS Researcher Career Skills for Career Development

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ANNEX 1
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
The experts listed below participated in the workshop on an individual basis. Their participation does not indicate endorsement of their institutions

NAME	INSTITUTION	COUNTRY
Borja Izquierdo	Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT)	Spain
Cecilia Cabello	Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT)	
Izaskun Lacunza	Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT)	Spain
Esther Rodríguez	Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT)	Spain
Cristina Gómez	Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT)	Spain
Noelia Romero	Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT)	Spain
Cristina Gracia	Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT)	Spain
Foteini Ziogou	Center for Research and Technology (CERTH)	Greece
Miroslav Trajanovic	Nisu University	Serbia
Svetlana Dimitrova	Sofia University	Bulgaria
L. David Finger	University of Sheffield	UK
Iben Rørbye	University of Copenhaguen	Denmark
Iain Cameron	Research Councils UK	UK
Bert Overlaet	University of Leuven and LERU Research Careers Community member	Belgium
Sébastien Huber	Science Europe	Belgim
Siobhan Phillips	European Science Foundation (ESF)	France
Mario Cervantes	OECD	France
Janka Kottulova	Slovak Academic Information Agency (SAIA)	Slovakia
Janet Metcalfe	VITAE	UK
Javier Lopez	Fundación Barrié	Spain
Kevin Quinn	British Council	UK
Diana Beech	The Von Hügel Institute	Cambridge
Martina Marín Dobrincic	University Autónoma of Madrid and Voice of Researchers member	Spain
Eduard Lorda	AGAUR	Spain
Carmen Méndez	Bizkaia Talent	Spain
Jesús Rojo	MADRI+D	Spain
Lidia Bocanegra	University of Granada	Spain
Ferando Josa Prado	CRE -Returned Spanish Researchers	Spain