



EUROPEAN SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN EDUCATION

Report from Working Group n°3, Higher Education & Research

Background

The Higher Education & Research Group was set up by the Plenary Committee of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Education (ESSDE) on 11 June, 2010. The Working Group is assigned to meet three times over the period of a year and to report to the Plenary Committee on the procedure and content of the European Social Dialogue regarding Higher Education & Research (HE & R) for the period 2012/13 and on the question of the Working Group's membership of both employers and employees within HE & R.

This paper has been considered at the Working Group's meeting on 5 October and is being presented to the meeting of ESSDE's Plenary Committee on 25 October 2011 for adoption. The paper has two purposes: 1) to provide an overview of the current membership of the Working Group and 2) to outline the possible content of the WG's programme for 2012/13.

Higher Education & Research Working Group membership

The current EFEE HE membership now stands at 9:

Country	Name	Organisation
Cyprus	Stelios Christophides	Ministry of Education and Culture
Finland	Nina Pärssinen	Association of Finish independent Education employers
Germany	Gerhard Klassen	TdL (Tarifgemeinschaft deutscher Lande)
	Rolf Bernhardt	KMK
Ireland	Gearóid Hodgins	Institutes of Technology Ireland
Italy	Marina Cavallini	CRUI - Responsabile Ufficio Relazioni Internazionali, CRUI - Head of International Relations Office
Latvia	Dace Ratniece	MoES (Ministry of Education and Science)
Sweden	Robert Cloarec	Swedish Agency For Government Employers (Arbetsgivarverket)
UK	Helen Fairfoul (chair)	UCEA (Universities and Colleges Employers Association)
Norway	Vidar L. Haanes	Virke

Within ETUCE, all EU countries are represented at the level of HE & R. Among them, the following are members of the working group:

Country	Name	Organisation
Denmark	Jens Vraa-Jensen (chair)	DM
Finland	Riku Matilainen	FUURT
Germany	Andreas Keller	GEW
Italy	Joelle Casa	FLC-GIL
Latvia	Ilze Trapenciere	LIZDA
Lithuania	Linas Sumskas	FLESTU
Norway	Anne-Lise Brox Larsen	UEN
Portugal	Manuel Pereira dos Santos	FENPROF
Sweden	Ann Fritzell	SULF
Ireland	Joan Donegan	IFUT
France	Hélène Hemet	UNSA Education

Higher Education and Research in the EU agenda

Our HE&R working group operates in a challenging economic and financial context. In its Europe 2020 Strategy, the EU's Growth Strategy for the coming years, the European Commission (EC) underlines -once again- the importance of higher education, research and innovation in delivering its contribution to overcome the financial and economic downturn, to face unemployment and to modernise the European labour market: *“Smart growth means strengthening knowledge and innovation as drivers of our future growth. This requires improving the quality of our education, strengthening our research performance, promoting innovation and knowledge transfer throughout the Union...”* (Excerpt from the European Commission Communication Europe 2020, A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth).¹ HE&R is thereby given a central position in the restructuring of the economy by the European Commission, however one must not forget the social, cultural and critical role HE&R has in society; a role that should not only be determined by the immediate demand of the labour market, but also by a more long-term vision.

Furthermore, the EC promotes international cooperation through the European Research Area (ERA)², which is composed of all research and development activities, programmes and policies in Europe. The ERA consists of activities, programmes and policies which are designed and operated at all levels: regional, national and European. There are a number of fully integrated European-level structures and programmes among which are the EU RTD Framework Programmes, including the current Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013). The EC also encourages quality, notably via the Marie-Curie programme 3 for the

¹ COM (2010) 2020 http://europa.eu/press_room/pdf/complet_en_barroso_007_-_europe_2020_-_en_version.pdf

² http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/index_en.htm

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/>

career development and mobility of researchers and by supporting the post-doctoral programme at the European University Institute in Florence. Attention on how mobility can affect working conditions and rights of especially young researchers should however be a matter of further interest since there is no clear general procedure of employment status. Other EC Education programmes like ERASMUS 4 enable higher education teaching and other staff to go abroad and to teach in a higher education institution or for universities to receive international teaching and other staff.

Outline of the possible content of Working Group's programme

The most valuable resources in HE & R are the personnel employed at the institutions of HE & R. To deliver top quality education and research, the HE & R institutions need to be able to recruit and nurture the best qualified individuals. This can be achieved by HE & R institutions establishing attractive career opportunities both for those entering and for those already employed in HE & R. Hence the Working Group proposes to focus on the question: *"What makes up an attractive career in Higher Education & Research?"*

A proposed framework for considering this question in employment terms within HE & R is:

- i) Recruiting the best people
 - Drawing in people at different stages of their lives, careers and professional practice
 - Encouraging and nurturing new researchers
 - Attracting and developing appropriately skilled and trained individuals
- ii) Developing and retaining talent
- iii) Embracing diversity and embedding equality of opportunity.

This framework is of course informed by previous work at international level, including the European Charter for Researchers – code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers⁵, the UNESCO 1997 Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel⁶, and the Council of Europe's recommendation on Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom from 2006⁷.

Identifying factors that make up an attractive career in HE&R

The following are suggested (in random order):

- Academic freedom
- Open recruitment
- Attractive working conditions
- Collegiate decision-making process
- Processes for advancement
- Appropriate and sufficient opportunities for continuous professional development or training

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc1059_en.htm

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/eracareers/pdf/am509774CEE_EN_E4.pdf

⁶ http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13144&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

⁷ <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta06/ERec1762.htm>

- Recognition of individuals' needs for stability and fairness in employment conditions
- Work-life balance, taking into account the needs of both of the individual employees and of the institutions in which they work
- Enabling mobility taking into account the needs and responsibilities of both the individual employee and the institutions in which they work (e.g. within HE & R, between HE & R and business, internationally)
- Internationally oriented institutions
- Valuing individual contributions/engaging the workforce
- Culture of cooperation and teamwork
- Links with business
- Links between teaching and research.

The above list is not exhaustive.

Conclusion

With the engagement of nine countries on each side, the Working Group has shown that there is a sufficient nucleus of interest to continue the process exploring the possibilities for a European social dialogue for Higher Education & Research. The proposed focus of this social dialogue in 2012/13 will be to deepen our reflections on the issue of what makes up an attractive career in HE & R and to exchange good practices in this field. Whilst not wishing to exclude other topics from its discussions or for future exploration, the group would propose that it undertakes in 2012-13 work to explore up to three particular issues: gender equality, the environment for early career researchers, and mobility. The group would also want to use its meetings in 2012 to continue to share and collect examples of practice in relation to what makes an attractive career in HE & R.

The appendix to the report lists some examples of national practice that have already been shared in the working group.

Appendix

National examples of practices on how to form attractive careers in HE & R

Working group members offered the following specific examples at the meetings on 15 June 2011 and 5 October 2011:

- In **Cyprus** all universities and research centres have signed the European Charter for Researchers mentioned above. This is seen as important for several reasons; including opening up the HE & R sector in a small country to a wider recruitment market in the EU and globally. At the same time, there are problems related to short-term contracts for researchers, reflecting the short duration of funded projects. A suggestion for helping with this problem is to combine research work with part-time teaching to ensure continuity of employment and some income between externally funded research projects.
- In **Ireland** academic freedom is defined in law and thus there is statutory protection and complaints that it has been impaired can be tested in court.
- A Concordat on the career development of Researchers was agreed in **the UK** in 1996 and updated in 2008. This complements the European Charter and Code and embodies the following seven principles:
 1. Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.
 2. Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation's human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world class research.
 3. Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile global research environment.
 4. The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.
 5. Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to proactively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.
 6. Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.

7. The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK.

Progress in reviewing the implementation of the Concordat is regularly reviewed, with the most recent report being in September 2010

(<http://www.researchconcordat.ac.uk/documents/HEIstrategicresponses.pdf>).

- The *Templin Manifesto (a dream career in academic life, for a reform of personnel structure and career paths in higher education and research)* was launched in 2010 by GEW, a union in **Germany**. This embodies the following ten principles:
 1. Enhancing the security and structure of early-stage research
 2. Reliable prospects for postdocs
 3. Permanent jobs for permanent tasks
 4. Regular, not precarious employment
 5. Striking a balance between teaching, researching and life
 6. Gender balance
 7. Equality in decision-making
 8. Encourage mobility, don't penalise it
 9. Building higher education and research to meet needs and demand
 10. Collective negotiation to govern all forms of employment.
- Trade unions in **Sweden, Germany and the UK** have produced a joint position paper on work life balance in HE & R [*this was mentioned in passing by the Swedish TU delegate on 15 June but no further details were given*].
- In the **UK**, the five HE trade unions and the employers' organisation (UCEA) established a joint working group that has together commissioned and published (in February 2011) reports on equal pay reviews and examining the issues underpinning the gender pay gap in higher education (<http://www.ucea.ac.uk/en/Publications/index.cfm>).
- In **Germany**, the issues of working conditions and the selection of personnel has always been regulated to a large extent by legislation or by collective

agreements. In the past however for the universities the implementation was the business of the ministerial bureaucracy of the Länder. In the context of the increasing autonomy of universities in Germany, these institutions are receiving increasing competencies in human resources. Together with the statutory expansion in employment opportunities (e.g. tenure track), the universities have now even the responsibility for the selection and further development of the entire scientific staff. Since the universities increasingly compete for high potential students and excellent staff in order to attract the highest possible state budget and to improve third-party funding, the task of attracting and keeping good staff gets increasingly challenging. Because of tight budgets these aims cannot be achieved through financial benefits only; therefore more and more concepts are being developed for a comprehensive career development of young talents at universities. Strongly linked to these attempts are specific measures to improve female participation in scientific careers at universities. It remains to be seen whether the changes associated with increased competition are always positive for the employees, otherwise one has to reflect on countermeasures. At the moment, however, positive aspects are seen in terms of increasing the attractiveness of careers in science.