

TOWARDS A EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH CAREERS

Europe lacks an open and transparent internal labour market for researchers. There are no "comparable research career structures" as asked for in Innovation Union commitment no. 4 on ERA. The researchers' labour market is fragmented nationally and there is segregation between careers in academia, industry and other sectors. There is cross-country and cross-sector mobility, but many barriers remain. Career choices are often irreversible as it can be very difficult to move between sectors. Research careers frequently lack a clear and transparent prospective; early career researchers may not be aware of the range of opportunities across employment sectors. Employers are not always clear of the competences that researchers possess and the benefits they could bring to their company.

One way to address this issue is create a reference tool to make career structures more comparable across employment sectors and countries. This tool is the "European Framework for Research Careers". The Framework describes four broad profiles, with the following working titles:

- R1 First Stage Researcher (*up to the point of PhD*)
- R2 Recognised Researcher (*PhD holders or equivalent who are not yet fully independent*)
- R3 Established Researcher (*researchers who have developed a level of independence.*)
- R4 Leading Researcher (*researchers leading their research area or field*)

The framework is "sector-neutral". The descriptors apply to all researchers, independent of where they work in the private or public sector: in companies, NGOs, research institutes, research universities or universities of applied sciences. The four profiles do not replace the local or national nomenclature, but provide a bridge across national or sectoral divides.

The framework is intended to foster cross-border and cross-sector researcher mobility, helping researchers to identify job offers and employers to find suitable candidates.

The European Framework for Research Careers has been prepared by a working group of national delegates, Commission colleagues¹ and experts from academia and industry. Preparation included a public consultation. The framework has been adopted by the ERA Steering Group Human Resources and Mobility and finalised on 21 July 2011.² Promotion of the framework was one of the action points in the September 2011 Communication on the modernisation of higher education³, endorsed by Council Conclusions in November 2011.⁴

The framework is currently being used - for self-categorisation purposes - on the EURAXESS Jobs Portal.

¹ RTD, EAC, ERC

² Towards a European Framework for Research Careers, 21 July 2011 (final). Report adopted by the ERA Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility
http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Towards_a_European_Framework_for_Research_Careers_final.pdf

³ COM(2011) 567 final of 20.9.2011
http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc/com0911_en.pdf

⁴ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/126375.pdf