

**DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT
BY THE MEMBERS OF
THE EURAXESS SERVICES NETWORK (former ERA-MORE Network)**

Preamble:

The Communication "A Mobility Strategy for Researchers in the European Research Area."¹ aimed at enhancing the living and working environments of researchers in Europe in order to attract and maintain a high level of human resources in research, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

According to a Council Resolution of 2001², one of the priorities for the implementation of the mobility strategy for researchers in the ERA was the setting up of a European Network of Mobility Centres, to improve the provision of practical assistance to researchers, and of a European Researcher's Mobility Portal (ERMP), to improve information to them and better disseminate vacancies.

Within this framework, the Commission, in close co-operation with the Member States of the European Union and the countries associated to the Sixth Framework Programme of Research³, in 2003 decided to set up a European Network of Mobility Centres – ERA-MORE (hereafter referred to as "*EURAXESS Services Network*"), with the aim of providing customised assistance to researchers and their families in all matters relating to their mobility experiences. In close co-ordination with tasks undertaken by means of the European Researcher's Mobility Portal, the objective of the Network is to improve the overall environment of researchers in Europe.

As from June 2008 one unique slogan and logo will overarch several European initiatives for researchers, amongst which both ERA-MORE and the ERMP. *EURAXESS Services* will indicate ERA-MORE, whilst *EURAXESS Jobs* the European Researcher's Mobility Portal.

Aim:

Signing this Declaration entails the expression of a commitment to engage in a process towards common objectives provided by the articles laid down. Such signature also gives the right to use the EURAXESS logo, to benefit of the EXTRANET, and to participate to all the related animation activities.

¹ COM(2001)331 final

² Council Resolution of 10 December 2001, OJ C367, 21.12.2001

In its resolution, the Council reiterates the importance of eliminating persistent obstacles to the mobility of researchers, identifying them as "multifaceted in nature, including those of a cultural, social, administrative, legal and regulatory nature".

The Council also endorses efforts to improve information on the mobility of researchers, in particular through "the creation of a dedicated internet portal, (and) a network of mobility centres (...)".

These statements form the basis for the identification of priorities for the implementation of the Mobility Strategy, namely:

- to improve the provision of information and services to mobile researchers

³ Through the Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility whose scope includes the following Commission policy initiatives, taking into account the respective Council Resolutions:

- the *Mobility Strategy for the European Research Area*
- the *Researchers' careers Communication*
- the relevant actions contained in the *3% Investment Action Plan*

Moreover, within the scope of the Steering Group, its members provide input for the implementation of actions at Community level and their follow up at national level. (...)They also have an active coordinating role at national level in order to make sure that the specific needs of researchers are duly taken into account in other government policy areas.

CHAPTER 1 – MISSIONS DEVOTED TO MOBILE RESEARCHERS, HOST INSTITUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

Article 1 - Membership

Within each participating country, the Bridgehead Organisation (hereafter referred to as “BHO”) of the Network should be appointed by the Ministry or Entity directly linked to national research policy issues. Whilst the *EURAXESS Services Centres* (hereafter referred to as “ESC”) and Local Contact Points (hereafter referred to as “LoCP”) should be appointed by the BHO. In case the abovementioned Ministry or Entity is no longer invested in the initiative, any existing BHO or ESC or LoCP in the respective country would still benefit of the *EURAXESS Services* membership. This latter would be revoked only if the Ministry or Entity clearly recommends or demands it.

The Declaration (hereafter referred to as “DoC”) is designed to recognise the participation of the organisations concerned in the *EURAXESS Services Network*⁴ and to mark the commitment of all members of the Network to fulfil the objectives thereof.

For those who wish to withdraw from the Network the following applies: any member (ESC or LoCP) will duly notify the BHO of its decision; whilst any BHO will notify, if needed, the competent Ministry or Entity. The BHO will then notify the European Commission. Any ESC or LoCP who wishes to join the Network should notify a BHO in order to launch the membership. The BHO will then notify the European Commission and, if required, the competent Ministry or Entity.

Article 2 -Joining the *EURAXESS Services Network*

BHO are appointed by the responsible Ministry or Entity which countersigns the present DoC⁵. This latter is then notified to the European Commission (EC) by the appointed BHO.

Membership by a potential ESC or LoCP to the *EURAXESS Services Network* is achieved through the following process:

1. Application to the BHO;
2. Approval by the BHO and signature of the Declaration of Commitment by the applicant;
3. Countersignature by the BHO and, if required⁶, by the responsible Ministry or Entity;
4. Notification by the BHO to the European Commission (EC).

Article 3 -Implementation:

The present Declaration must be duly filled in and signed in three (3) copies; it will be collected by the national BHO as official link to the European Commission. One copy shall be sent to the member, one to the European Commission and one remains at the Bridgehead’s premises.

⁴ Depending on the national situation, a national *EURAXESS Services Network* may have a variable structure (e.g. one or more BHO, one or more ESC and/or one or more LoCP).

⁵ Countersignature by the responsible Ministry or legal Entity is mandatory for BHO.

⁶ According to national organisation, this process can have different forms: e.g. the BHO is appointed by the responsible Ministry or Entity, and then the BHO appoints the ESCentre which appoints the LCP.

Article 4 - Mission Statement:

The *EURAXESS Services* Network will:

- Assist researchers and their families in all mobility (geographical, industry-academia, etc) related matters with reliable information/answers;
- Provide mobile researchers and their families with customised access to legal, administrative and procedural formalities;
- Assist, whether possible, mobile researchers and their families in tackling daily-life burdens that could arise;
- Ensure that the queries falling outside any of the above mentioned tasks are transferred within three (3) working days to the most appropriate structure;
- Be in contact – through their BHO – with local and national authorities, as well as with the European Commission to provide expertise and assistance in mobility policy issues in close collaboration with the Steering Group for the Human Resources and Mobility of Researchers (hereafter referred to as “SG HRM”);
- Report back to the European Commission's person in charge of the *EURAXESS Services* Network on frequently encountered problems by researchers in the context of mobility;
- Liaise with the local and national authorities on frequently encountered problems by researchers in the context of national/local mobility;
- Provide all aforementioned services/assistance to third parties acting on behalf of mobile researchers like host institutions, National Contact Points (NCP), etc., provided that these latter will pass on the information received free of charge.

Article 5 – Use of *EURAXESS Services* logo and slogan:

All signatories of this commitment (BHO, ESC, LoCP) shall use the *EURAXESS Services* logo and slogan ("EURAXESS - Researchers in Motion") according to the User Guide provided by the EC.

CHAPTER 2 – GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS

Article 6: Rules of Conduct

The *EURAXESS Services* Network promotes a service-culture approach, ensuring that the system is transparent for the client.

The work of the Network's members shall be client-oriented and run with politeness, reliability, openness, competence, reachability and professionalism. All researchers shall be treated according to the principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment irrespective of their nationality, gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disabilities, age or sexual orientation.

All the signatories of this Commitment agree upon the necessity to guarantee the quality of the information provided. Signatories will make best efforts to ensure that information provided is complete, impartial, accurate, practical, user-friendly and up-to-date.

Article 7: Response modalities

All requests shall be treated with respect. All queries shall get an immediate reply unless they can be regarded as improper. If the nature of a query requires a certain time to answer, a holding reply shall be sent within three (3) working days, indicating an estimated time span within which the answer can be expected.

The Network's members make sure that they can be reached by at least one means of communication (e-mail, help-desk, telephone, fax, face to face, etc). Public holidays, and days off should be clearly indicated on the website or through automatic responses on the phone and e-mail (if possible).

Article 8: Data Protection

The Network's members shall comply with national and, when applicable, European Union legislation regarding the procession and protection of personal data. These latter will be treated as confidential. No sensitive data related to the clients should be made available to other network members or the public for commercial purposes.

Article 9: Complaints

The Network's members shall treat researchers' complaints in a respectful way and reply to their queries within three (3) working days after receipt of the complaint.

Article 10: Data Collection

Each member shall keep track of the requests according to the operational rules of the Network. Data shall be uploaded according to the reporting periods on the EXTRANET.

CHAPTER 3 - STRUCTURE OF THE *EURAXESS Services* NETWORK

Article 11: The European Commission (EC)

The European Commission's role is to coordinate activities at European level and to liaise with the BHOs of the participating countries. The EC organises activities (e.g. training, conferences and seminars, working groups, etc.), collects data and the annual reports of the members, and maintains the EXTRANET. Furthermore, the European Commission defines and implements communication and policy strategy at European level in collaboration with the Network's members and the Steering Group for HRM.

Article 12: The *EURAXESS Services* Bridgehead Organisation (BHO)

a. Description

BHOs act as coordinators at national level of the Network and liaise with the European Commission, national governments and other organisations. They act also as link to the Steering Group for each country. The BHO is either a *EURAXESS Service* Centre itself or is closely related to one, providing expertise in matters falling under the scope of the *EURAXESS Services* Network. They coordinate the whole network of ESCs and LoCPs at national level.

b. Benefits

BHOs may participate in all animation activities organised by the European Commission for the *EURAXESS Services* Network. BHOs represent their countries at the BHO-meetings and at the *EURAXESS Services* conference. BHOs shall get special access rights to the EXTRANET.

c. Duties:

Each BHO is responsible for the management and coordination of the national network and is in contact with other BHOs in Europe. The BHO is requested to provide data and statistics through the EXTRANET, and to collect data provided by the ESCs and LoCPs (if not directly submitted by these latter). BHO should also provide an annual report to the European Commission. Besides that, the BHO decides on and communicates the number and names of participants attending the different animation activities organised by the European Commission. The BHO is also responsible for keeping the Network's contact data up-dated in the EXTRANET.

BHOs shall disseminate information to the Network's members, organise trainings at national level and launch national promotion campaigns. They shall guarantee also: maintenance of the national Portal (either performing this task directly or delegating a ESC. *See separate Declaration of Commitment for national Portals*);

BHOs are in contact with both national government and national authorities.

Article 13: The EURAXESS Services Centre (ESC)

a. Description:

The *EURAXESS Services* Centres provide all services described in Article 4. They may also coordinate the network of Local Contact Points in their region.

b. Benefits:

The ESCs are in contact with the national BHO as well as regional and local authorities. They get assistance and support from their BHO respectively. ESCs are entitled to participate in trainings at national level as well as those organised at European level. They shall represent their country at the *EURAXESS Services* conference, participate in working groups, and get access to the EXTRANET.

c. Duties:

They are requested to collect data and provide statistics either directly through the EXTRANET or to the BHO. They shall individually liaise with the BHO. ESCs shall promote the activities of *EURAXESS Services* at regional and local level. If not carried out by the BHO, a ESC may be responsible for the maintenance of the national Portal (*See separate Declaration of Commitment for national Portals*).

Article 14: The EURAXESS Services Local Contact Point (LoCP)

a. Description:

The Local Contact Points support the staff of their own institution by providing assistance to researchers coming to or leaving the institution. They offer hands-on-support on matters with mainly a local dimension and are often in face-to-face contact with the researchers and/or the families.

b. Benefits:

The LoCPs are in contact with the national BHO and ESCs. From which they get assistance and support. LoCPs are entitled to participate in trainings at national level as well as those organised at European level. They shall represent their country at the *EURAXESS Services* conference, participate in working groups, and get access to the EXTRANET.

c. Duties:

LoCPs shall provide data and statistics either directly through the EXTRANET or to the BHO. They are also requested to report back to the BHO and shall distribute promotion material from BHO and the European Commission.

We,, undersigned organisation declare our commitment to the abovementioned principles and requirements.

- EURAXESS Services Bridgehead Organisation**
- EURAXESS Services Mobility Centre**
- EURAXESS Services Local Contact Point**

Organisation: _____

Responsible: _____

Date and Signature: _____

Countersigned by appointing Ministry/Entity (if required): _____

Countersigned by *EURAXESS Services* Bridgehead Organisation: _____

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE NATIONAL *EURAXESS JOBS* PORTAL (former Researcher's Mobility Portal)

Background

National Researcher's Mobility Portals have been set up to complement information provided by the European one. In doing so, they all fall under a specific scope: to provide references to job and funding opportunities at national level, and to provide information about national regulations and procedures, as well as about administrative and cultural issues relevant for mobile researchers.

Within this frame, the European Network of *EURAXESS Services* plays a substantial role in the successful implementation of national portals since existing or newly created mobility centres act as *help desk* for the national portal and carry out the tailored and customised assistance to incoming and outgoing researchers.

As from June 2008 one unique slogan and logo will overarch several European initiatives for researchers, amongst which both ERA-MORE and the European Researcher's Mobility Portal. *EURAXESS Jobs* will thus indicate the European Researcher's Mobility Portal and complementing national ones.

<i>Principles of this Commitment</i>

- All the signatories to this Commitment are committed to guarantee the **maintenance** of their national *EURAXESS Jobs* Portal (hereinafter referred to as "EJP") in terms of quality and reliability of the information provided;
- They are committed to guarantee **compliance and harmonisation** with the European EJP by using all the tools developed to further enhance interoperability with this latter (e.g. RSS file; common home-page layout etc.), and by adopting common communication and awareness instruments set up by the European Commission;
- They are also committed to regularly **exchange information** with the European EJP (in particular, job advertisements) thus guaranteeing constant flow of information, to and from it;
- In particular, signatories are committed to display clearly both the national and the European EJP on their institution's web-site, and to ask members of the national *EURAXESS Services* Network to do the same;
- They are also committed, whether applicable, to **export or publish** their institution's job vacancies on the European EJP by receiving back a RSS file to display them on their local web-site and national EJ Portals.

The signatories will work together to achieve the following goals:

- To provide action and inform about the largest possible number of fellowships and grants from public and private organisations at national, regional and local level to be accessible, in a commonly agreed format, on the national RMP and the information provider's portal or web-site, as well as the European EJP's one;
- To guarantee access to research job vacancies through the use of inter-operational protocols (e.g. XML file, RSS, etc.);
- To contribute to an effective promotion strategy of both national and the European EJPs.

Commitments for the signatories

They include:

- **Use of the *EURAXESS Jobs* logo and slogan:** All signatories of this commitment (BHO, ESC, LoCP) shall use the *EURAXESS Jobs* logo and slogan ("EURAXESS - Researchers in Motion") according to the User Guide provided by the EC.
- **Interoperability with the European EJP:** Standardisation on core sets of inter-operational protocols, formats, search and retrieve functions, access interfaces and terminal interfaces and protocols: in conjunction with the relevant documents and deliverables as proposed by the European Commission;
- **Quality assurance:** All the signatories of this Commitment agree upon the necessity to guarantee the quality of the information: the information provided shall be complete, impartial, accurate, practical, user-friendly and up-to-date. The responsibility for this quality assurance lies entirely with the content manager of any national EJP sending information to the European one;
- **Accessibility:** The information provided shall be accessible to all researchers regardless of their situation, place of residence or social category;
- **Principle of non -discrimination:** The information provided shall respect the principle of non -discrimination and in particular shall guarantee equal treatment for its users irrespective of their nationality, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- **Confidentiality:** Where relevant, information and counselling are given in a way that respects the user's confidence and anonymity;
- **Common ownership of the EJP project:** Participating organisations are committed to exchanging information and to sharing experiences within the scope of this Commitment.

We,, undersigned organisation declare our commitment to the abovementioned principles and requirements.

- EURAXESS Services Bridgehead Organisation***
- EURAXESS Services Mobility Centre***
- EURAXESS Services Local Contact Point***

Organisation: _____

Responsible: _____

Date and Signature: _____

Countersigned by *EURAXESS Services* Bridgehead Organisation: _____