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INFORMATION NOTE

from : The Commission

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Subject : Implementation report by the Commission on retaining and attracting researchers to European Research Area (ERA)

To secure and expand its role in science, technology and innovation, Europe needs an integrated strategy for developing human potential in research and technology. This includes stimulating people to embark on and follow research careers, encouraging European researchers to stay in Europe, and attracting the best brains from all over the world. With this objective in mind, the Commission suggested specific actions to improve the mobility of researchers in its 2001 Communication "*A Mobility Strategy for the ERA*"¹. Thereafter, in 2003, a further Commission Communication "*Researchers in the European Research Area: one profession, multiple careers*"² highlighted research careers and suggested a series of measures to build up a genuine European labour market for researchers. This document is part of the regular reporting process on the mobility of researchers and career development, requested by the Council as a result of the measures proposed in the two communications.

¹ COM(2001) 331 final of 20.6.2001.

² COM(2003) 436 final of 18.7.2003.

The *aim* of the current 2005 implementation report (the fourth overall) is to provide an update on major achievements and progress made as part of the ongoing process in 2005, both at European and national level, through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC).

The main achievements in 2005 were as follows:

In March 2005 the Commission adopted the Recommendation on the "*European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*"³. These documents, resulting from broad consultation among stakeholders throughout Europe, are key elements in the EU's policy to make research an attractive career and improve employment and working conditions for researchers and, as such, are vital features of the EU strategy to stimulate employment and economic growth.

The first major initiative to raise awareness and support the *Charter and Code* implementation was the conference "*The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment: turning policy into practice - Building the pool of talented researchers to achieve Europe's goals and future innovation*" which was organised under the UK Presidency in September 2005 and set benchmarks for further action. The *Charter and Code* has been adopted or signed, or a commitment made for adoption, by a significant number of national Rectors Conferences, Research Councils or other major organisations and its principles have been incorporated into several national legislative acts or proposals for new regulatory frameworks. With regard to incentive schemes for the mobility of researchers, apart from the Community Marie Curie Schemes under which 1425 research institutions received funding in 2005, innovative actions were reported from a number of countries. These were mainly aimed at experienced researchers and attracting top scientists of all nationalities to the EU, and also encouraging inter-sector mobility.

³ COM(2005) 576 final of 11.3.2005.

Actions for establishing links with European researchers abroad have been explored. At EU level, the ERA-Link initiative, launched in 2005 and initially focusing on European researchers in the USA, aimed at networking European researchers active abroad to inform them about research developments in the European Research Area and the possibilities of contributing to them. At national level, several countries have also launched activities to establish links with expatriate researchers to promote collaboration with the European research community. This is seen as an important part of the strategy to develop an open, competitive and attractive European labour market for researchers, to encourage "brain circulation" and limit "brain drain" at European and world level.

In the field of support to mobile researchers, the European network of mobility centres (ERA-MORE), launched in June 2004, has been consolidated in the course of 2005 both at national and European level. Significant progress can be reported in terms of the operability of the 200 mobility centres in 32 countries. With the last 15 national launching events in 2005, all mobility centres are now operational. The network activity included training sessions and working groups as well as the 2005 annual conference, which was held in Bled (Slovenia) and was attended by 230 network members.

The European Researcher's Mobility Web Portal, with information on fellowships, grants and vacancies available throughout Europe, on questions relating to entry conditions, access to employment, social security rights, taxation and the cultural aspects of a host country, is currently complemented by 29 different national mobility portals. Its job vacancy tool announces approximately 250 new job vacancies per month and the number of research organisations making use of this service is steadily increasing.

With regard to the "*researchers*" *package*, a Directive and two Recommendations on the admission of third-country nationals to carry out scientific research in the European Community, proposed by the Commission in March 2004, were adopted in September⁴ and October 2005^{5 6}. All three instruments were published in the Official Journal (OJ L289) on 3 November 2005. The two Recommendations entered into force immediately, whereas Member States will have two years to implement the Directive by transposing it into national law. For the first time, a set of legal instruments specifically addressing researchers has been adopted at EU level.

Finally, a 6-month public-awareness-raising initiative, the *Researchers in Europe Initiative*, was launched in Luxembourg in June 2005 and concluded in Dublin on 2 December 2005. As part of the initiative, the *European Researchers' Night* was held in Brussels on 23 September, complemented by 37 *Researchers' Nights* held in 15 European countries. A further 60 projects, partially funded by the Commission, took place in 27 European countries.

⁴ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 September 2005 to facilitate the issue by the Member States of uniform short-stay visas for researchers from third countries travelling within the Community for purposes of carrying out scientific research (2005/761/EC).

⁵ Council Recommendation of 12 October 2005 to facilitate the admission of third-country nationals to carry out scientific research in the European Community (2005/762/EC).

⁶ Council Directive 2005/71/EC of 12 October 2005 on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purpose of scientific research.