

**European Stakeholders Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> December 2004**  
**Human Resources and Mobility programme / Marie Curie Actions**

**Submission of recommendations by Irish Delegation to the FP6 HRM**  
**Programme**  
**10<sup>th</sup> January 2005**

The Marie Curie programme is arguably the most popular part of Framework across all areas of research. In Ireland, this programme currently accounts for over 25% of Irish activity in FP6. In the lead up to previous framework programmes Marie Curie actions were planned on the basis of past history of success (failure) of the schemes to attract applicants. There is now a clear European policy framework in place to plan the Marie Curie actions for Framework Seven. The Commission has made excellent progress with the Mobility Steering Group on developing European policy for research careers. The network of mobility centres has been established and the Researchers Charter will soon be launched. On another front Europe is striving towards the target of 3% of GDP on R&D by 2010. This means an increase in the number of researchers by about 700,000 with two thirds of these extra researchers in industry (470,000). In planning the HRM programme and Marie Curie actions for FP7 we believe that there should be two overriding principles:

- *Enhancing/Establishing Research Careers*
- *Increasing the number of researchers in industry*

We should stress that the proposed programmes do respect these principles and believe that all of those proposed should be implemented. However we believe that they are not sufficient to meet the two demands above. In all cases we are fully behind the Commission in promoting cofunding of national and international programmes.

**Enhancing/Establishing Research Careers**

In FP6 the HRM programme funds schemes that support researchers at all stages of their careers. The early stage training (ESTF) supports PhD researchers, individual fellowships (EIF, IIF, OIF) support postdocs, the excellence teams (EXT) helps postdocs establish a fully independent research career, and the chairs (EXC) support senior researchers. We note the absence of the latter two schemes in the FP7 proposal and consider this a mistake. There are no details yet concerning the proposed “European Research Council” and therefore it is premature to drop schemes on the assumption that they will be supported elsewhere.

We feel very strongly that one of the main obstacles to establishing a research career is the piecemeal nature of current national and European fellowship schemes. ***We strongly believe that the Commission should take the lead in supporting long term post PhD fellowships of 7 years to give researchers a sufficient period to enhance their research training and establish a research career.*** Such a scheme would be open to applicants who have just completed their PhD and would give them funding to enhance their research training in the initial years and subsequently establish a research career. This scheme would be portable between institutions, countries and sectors. Each fellowship would be periodically reviewed and funding continued only with satisfactory progress. As you may be already aware such a scheme is being planned in Ireland by the Chief Science Advisor to government and has the full backing of the universities and industry sectors. This

research career enhancement/establishment scheme would be unique and it would provide a solid career structure tempting enough to help keep Europe's top researchers and attract more globally. In the spirit of the 3% target it would be important to promote this scheme strongly to industry.

### **Increasing the number of researchers in industry**

There is one specific scheme proposed in FP7 to support industry through industry-academic partnership. We do know that, to date, this scheme has failed completely to attract proposals in FP6. While there are novel features for 2005 (as in the proposed new scheme) there is no guarantee that this will be successful in attracting industry applicants. While we support this action we think that final planning should be based on the outcome of the IAP scheme for 2005. If this is not successful then it should not form part of FP7.

There is of course horizontal support in that industry can act as a host in all of the host and individual fellowship schemes. However, we know well that in the past and in FP6 the level of participation by industry has been very low. In order to attract industry participation the scheme must be branded for industry. This can be achieved by introducing specific schemes with "industry" in the title as was the case in FP5 with the Industry Host Fellowships. Now the current Transfer of Knowledge (DEV) scheme has proved very popular with industry in Ireland (especially SME's) and we would propose that this be, in addition to convergence countries, be also targeted at industry in FP7. We cannot forget that the Europe has agreed to significant increases in R&D in industry and the HRM programme should take the lead in supporting industry specific schemes.

## **Specific Comments on the Proposed Schemes**

In addition to the new schemes proposed above we also have specific comments on those circulated by the Commission.

### **Marie Curie Networks (MCN) for early-stage researchers**

We warmly welcome the proposal to cofund national schemes and while there are issues around implementation and allocation of budget these are problems for implementation rather than principle. We do believe that this cofunding should also be available for the RTN host scheme. Currently the Commission will fund early stage researchers for up to 3 years while in Ireland the average time to completion of a PhD is 4.5 years (it is certain that 3 years would be too short for completion in most countries). Cofunding national "RTN" schemes would achieve a number of objectives beyond the basic full financial support for early stage researchers PhD programmes. It would encourage greater emphasis on collective education and training of PhD students, inclusion of generic skills, and promote the implementation of the European Researchers Charter.

### **The international dimension of Marie Curie Actions in FP**

I warmly welcome the proposal to reduce the time for eligibility from 5 to 3 years for reintegration. We believe that the action proposed to attract European researchers in Third Countries is too weak and does not go far enough. In order to attract back our brightest researchers that have left Europe we must offer them a full fellowship just like one of the international incoming or intra European fellows. This should allow them to return to their home country if they have been outside Europe for more than 3 years. This could be done by setting a specific budget line for such expatriates. This would be a far stronger message to send to the research diaspora and make Europe a far more attractive location.

## **Summary of Recommendations**

- **Introduction of a long term (seven year) post PhD fellowship to support career enhancement and establishment**
- **Introduction of a specific host fellowship scheme for industry based on the current Transfer of Knowledge Development Scheme (TOK-DEV)**
- **Introduction of a specific fellowship scheme to attract back to Europe the research diaspora**

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