



# The Mapping of Euraxess Service Centres

June 2010

Erich Schwarz

Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS)



**crus.ch**

Rektorenkonferenz der Schweizer Universitäten  
Conférence des Recteurs des Universités Suisses  
Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Svizzere  
Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities



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Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA  
**State Secretariat for Education and Research SER**  
Multilateral Research Cooperation

Hallwylstrasse 4  
CH-3003 Bern  
T +41 31 323 52 78  
F +41 31 322 78 54  
[europrogram@sbf.admin.ch](mailto:europrogram@sbf.admin.ch)  
[www.sbf.admin.ch](http://www.sbf.admin.ch)



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Despite the regular spelling of EURAXESS in block letters in the documents of the network and of the European Commission, “Euraxess” (with lower case letters) will be used for the sake of better readability in this report.

## Zusammenfassung

Die Forschung gehört zu den internationalen Arbeitswelten, in denen der Wettbewerb am intensivsten spielt und die Rekrutierung der besten Forscherinnen und Forscher eine grosse Herausforderung darstellt. Die europäischen Universitäten haben erkannt, dass sie deutlich bessere Chancen haben, die herausragendsten Forschenden für sich gewinnen zu können, wenn sie ihnen bessere Arbeitsbedingungen und effizientere unterstützende Strukturen bieten als die meisten anderen Universitäten der Welt. In dieser Hinsicht stellt das Euraxess-Netzwerk mit seinem Betreuungsservice für mobile Forscherinnen und Forscher eine unverzichtbare Errungenschaft der europäischen Zusammenarbeit dar.

Forschende sind mit den gleichen Problemen konfrontiert wie alle anderen mobilen Erwerbstätigen auch: Wie finde ich eine neue Wohnung? Was ist mit meinem Partner, meiner Partnerin und meinen Kindern? Die Beantwortung dieser Fragen kostet mobile Arbeitskräfte viel Zeit und Energie. Insbesondere junge Forscherinnen und Forscher mit Kindern sind bei einem Standortwechsel mit erheblichen Schwierigkeiten konfrontiert. Gleichzeitig liegt es jedoch im Interesse des Arbeitgebers, vielversprechenden Nachwuchskräften beim Umzug einen effizienten Betreuungsservice zu bieten: Sie sollen ihr Potenzial möglichst in die Arbeit investieren können und sich nicht um Fragen im Zusammenhang mit dem Standortwechsel sorgen müssen.

2008 wurde die Strategie «Euraxess – Researchers in Motion» im schweizerischen Hochschulbereich eingeführt. Das Euraxess-Netzwerk, das von Beratungsstellen in allen Schweizer Universitäten, einer Koordinationsstelle bei der Rektorenkonferenz der Schweizer Universitäten (CRUS), der Europäischen Kommission und weiteren europäischen Partnern gemeinsam betrieben wird, will Forscherinnen und Forschern bei ihrem Umzug vor Ort unterstützen und betreuen.

Die vorliegende Studie, die von der CRUS in Auftrag gegeben wurde, konzentriert sich auf die Kontaktstellen von Euraxess an den Schweizer Universitäten. Diese sogenannten Euraxess-Servicezentren (ESC) bieten Informationen und Beratung zu so verschiedenen Themen wie Wohnen, Immigration, Pensionsansprüche, Versicherungen, Kinderbetreuung und vieles mehr.

Über das 7. Rahmenprogramm (RP7) der EU wurde der CRUS als Koordinationsorgan von Euraxess in der Schweiz eine Startfinanzierung in der Höhe von 200 000 Euro zugesprochen, um Euraxess in der Schweiz einzuführen und den Aufbau dezentralisierter ESC in der hiesigen Forschungslandschaft zu fördern. Nach Abschluss des RP7-Projekts, das von Juni 2008 bis Mai 2010 dauerte, wurde nun eine Bestandesaufnahme der noch relativ neuen ESC vorgenommen. Zu diesem Zweck wurden die Verantwortlichen von sieben der zehn Schweizer ESC interviewt und die ESC-Webseiten beurteilt.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Analyse zeigen, wie sehr sich die einzelnen Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter aller Institutionen persönlich für die Entwicklung der ESC eingesetzt haben. Da gemäss ursprünglicher Planung keine neuen Strukturen geschaffen, sondern auf den bestehenden aufgebaut werden sollte, arbeiten die ESC mit den bereits vor der Einführung von Euraxess vorhandenen Fachstellen zusammen. Die Universitäten haben deshalb auch nur begrenzte zusätzliche Mittel für die Finanzierung des neuen Netzwerks eingesetzt: Im Durchschnitt reichen diese Ressourcen aus, damit eine Person einen Tag pro Woche für die Euraxess-Servicestelle arbeiten kann. Die Studie zeigt zudem, wie gut sich die ESC bereits in den bestehenden organisatorischen Kontext integriert haben und auf welche Weise sie das Know-how der übrigen Fachstellen ergänzen. Ausserdem beschreibt sie, inwieweit die Vernetzung mit anderen organisatorischen Einheiten gelungen ist, die sich ebenfalls mit Fragen der Personalentwicklung beschäftigen, und macht auf das noch vorhandene Potenzial zur Koordinierung der diesbezüglichen Bemühungen aufmerksam.

Wie die Studie zeigt, hängt die Zusammenarbeit der ESC mit anderen Fachstellen zum Teil von ihrer Beziehung untereinander ab und ist im Allgemeinen nicht institutionalisiert. Die Kooperation kann deshalb ganz unterschiedliche Formen annehmen. Ein klarer definiertes Mandat innerhalb der Institutionen würde mithelfen, mögliche Rechte und Pflichten zu verdeutlichen, und insbesondere zur Klärung der Frage beitragen, welche Ressourcen mit anderen Partnerstellen geteilt werden könnten.

Die vorliegende Studie ist deshalb ein wertvolles Instrument zur Planung von Massnahmen zur Qualitätsverbesserung und kann sowohl den betroffenen Interessengruppen als auch den Betreibern und Betreiberinnen des Netzwerks zusätzliche Anregungen liefern.

## Résumé général

La recherche compte parmi les milieux professionnels internationaux les plus compétitifs. Recruter les meilleurs chercheurs est un gros défi. Les universités européennes ont réalisé qu'elles augmentaient considérablement leurs chances d'attirer les meilleurs talents en leur offrant des conditions de travail et des structures d'appui plus intéressantes que celles proposées par la plupart des autres universités à travers le monde. Le réseau Euraxess est un des atouts majeurs de la coopération européenne dans ce domaine.

Les chercheurs qui s'expatrient font face aux mêmes problèmes que les autres travailleurs mobiles. Comment trouver un logement? Qu'en est-il du conjoint et des enfants? Ils passent beaucoup de temps et dépensent beaucoup d'énergie à résoudre ces questions pratiques. Spécialement les jeunes chercheurs avec enfants sont confrontés à des obstacles quand il s'agit d'accepter un poste dans un autre pays. Les employeurs ont donc tout intérêt à fournir un appui pratique aux scientifiques recrutés à l'étranger: un jeune talent prometteur doit s'investir dans son travail plutôt que de gaspiller ses forces dans le règlement de questions pratiques liées à son déménagement.

Une extension du réseau européen «Euraxess – Chercheurs en mouvement» a été mise en place dans le milieu universitaire suisse à partir de 2008. Animé par un centre de coordination rattaché à la Conférence des Recteurs des Universités Suisses (CRUS) avec l'appui de la Commission européenne et d'autres partenaires européens, le réseau comprend des centres de services locaux établis dans chaque université de Suisse, fournissant une assistance de proximité aux chercheurs recrutés à l'étranger.

La présente étude, qui a été commandée par la CRUS, s'intéresse plus spécialement aux centres de services Euraxess établis dans les universités suisses. Ces centres de services dispensent des informations et des conseils sur les questions liées au logement, aux formalités d'immigration, au régime des retraites, à l'assurance maladie, à la prise en charge des enfants et à d'autres questions encore.

En sa qualité d'organe de coordination d'Euraxess pour la Suisse, la CRUS a obtenu un financement de départ de 200 000 euros sur le Septième programme-cadre de recherche (PCR) de l'UE pour établir le réseau Euraxess en Suisse et promouvoir la mise en place de centres de services disséminés dans le paysage universitaire suisse.

Au terme de ce projet du PCR qui s'est étendu de juin 2008 à mai 2010, il s'est agi de dresser un état des lieux du réseau des centres de services qui venait d'être mis en place. A cet effet, on a interrogé les responsables de sept centres de services sur les dix que compte la Suisse et on a évalué les sites web de ces centres.

L'enquête révèle combien les collaborateurs et collaboratrices des diverses institutions se sont personnellement impliqués dans le développement des centres de services. D'emblée, l'approche avait consisté non pas à créer des structures nouvelles, mais à mettre à profit celles qui existaient déjà. Les centres de services coopèrent donc avec les structures préexistantes. De ce fait, les universités ont pu se contenter d'allouer un financement restreint au nouveau réseau. En général, ces moyens permettent à une personne de se consacrer une journée par semaine aux services Euraxess. L'étude montre que les centres de services sont déjà bien intégrés dans le contexte institutionnel et qu'ils complètent utilement les compétences présentes dans les autres services spécialisés. Elle met en lumière les relations que les centres de services ont su nouer avec les entités organisationnelles chargées du développement des ressources humaines et elle fait apparaître le potentiel qui reste à exploiter pour coordonner mieux encore ces efforts.

Ainsi que le relève l'étude, la coopération des centres de services avec d'autres structures dépend parfois de leurs relations mutuelles et n'est généralement pas institutionnalisée. Cette coopération peut donc prendre des formes très diverses. Un mandat plus clairement défini au sein des institutions permettrait de préciser les droits et les obligations, notamment en ce qui concerne le partage des ressources avec les services partenaires.

En conclusion, l'étude est un instrument fort utile pour la future démarche de développement de la qualité et elle pourra indiquer des pistes intéressantes, à la fois pour les divers groupes d'intérêts et les responsables du réseau.

## Executive Summary

Research is one of the most competitive international working environments. Recruitment of the best researchers is one of the most challenging quests. European universities have realised that the chances of attracting the best researchers are substantially enhanced by providing better working conditions and support structures than in most other universities in the world. One of the indispensable gains of European collaboration in this field is the Euraxess Network. A substantial contribution in the Euraxess initiative is made by providing proximity assistance to mobile researchers.

Researchers face the same problems when relocating as do other members of a mobile workforce: How to find new accommodation? What about my partner and children? They spend much time and energy on finding solutions. Especially young researchers with children are substantially handicapped when it comes to relocating. At the same time, it is also in the best interest of employers to provide proximity support to promising young talent, as mobile researchers are to invest their potential in their work rather than in worries caused by their relocation.

In 2008, the brand “Euraxess” with the catchphrase “Researchers in Motion” was introduced to the Swiss academic environment. Local service centres at each Swiss university, an intermediate body at the Rectors’ Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS) and the European Commission together with other European partners operate the Euraxess network to provide on-site assistance to researchers when relocating.

The following survey, commissioned by CRUS, focuses on the contact points at Swiss universities. The so-called Euraxess Service Centres (ESCs) provide information and advice about accommodation, immigration, pension rights, health insurance, childcare and many other subjects.

CRUS – as the coordinating body of Euraxess in Switzerland – received a start-up grant of 200’000 Euro from the Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7) of the EU to introduce Euraxess to Switzerland and to promote the idea of establishing decentralised service centres, the ESCs, in the Swiss Research Area between June 2008 and May 2010. Now, at the end of the FP7-project, the current state of these still rather young ESCs has been analysed. For this purpose, the persons responsible at seven out of the ten Swiss ESCs were interviewed and the ESC websites were assessed.

The findings reveal how much personal commitment was devoted to the development of the ESCs by individual collaborators at all institutions. Since ESCs cooperate with offices that existed before Euraxess (as the original plan was not to create new structures, but to build on existing ones), the universities allocated a limited sum of extra funding to the performance of the new network. This extra funding enables on average one person to devote one day of the week to their Euraxess Services. The study shows how well ESCs already managed to integrate into the existing organisational context and how they complement the know-how of the existing specialised offices. Furthermore, it describes how the ESCs were able to connect with those organisational entities that further the perspective of human resources, and it draws attention to the still pertinent potential to coordinate these efforts.

As the study reveals, ESCs’ cooperation with other offices depends partly on their relationship with each other, and it is generally not institutionalised. Thus, cooperation can vary widely. A more visible mandate within the institutions would help to clarify possible rights and duties, particularly on the question of which resources might be shared with the partner offices.

Consequently, the study is a valuable instrument for the future planning of quality enhancement and will certainly add to the inspiration of stakeholders and operators alike.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Researchers' Mobility – then and now

During the years from 1860 to 1910 Switzerland attracted a particular group of migrants. Female doctoral students from the Czarist Empire decided to pack their suitcases and move to Switzerland. They were aspiring to the freedom of acquiring a higher education, a privilege they were deprived of in Russia. Coming mostly from poorer families, and to a three-quarter proportion Jewish, the academic degree was one of the few possibilities to gain professional freedom and the privilege to live independently for these women after returning to Russia. The University of Zurich awarded the first doctoral degree to a woman and to a foreign national ever in 1867 to Nadežda Suslova, a doctoral student in Medicine from Russia. In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century women from the Czarist Empire sometimes represented one fifth of all students at Swiss universities. During their stay above all in Zurich or Berne they lived separately and were dependent on the services of the large Russian community. Some local landlords did not want to rent rooms to single women or foreigners, hence finding accommodation was a problem.<sup>1</sup>

A hundred years later, finding an accommodation is still among the top three concerns of incoming academics.<sup>2</sup> The mindset of the landlords might have changed though. On one hand, researchers from abroad – our ultimate reference point in this report – are not anymore only tolerated in Swiss universities cities, but are sought actively. On the other hand, researchers also demand more from their living conditions – especially if they come to Switzerland with their beloved ones. An old shed shared with two fellow-students as in the case of the Russian doctoral students as hundred years ago will not do anymore.

Swiss universities have witnessed these developments towards an academic environment competitive on a global scale, and introduced help points taking care of incoming researchers. This went along with efforts by the European Commission sustaining these offers in a concerted and networked way. European mobile researchers are the focal point in a strategy called Euraxess – Researchers in Motion, wherein service centres at the local level (so-called Euraxess Service Centres or ESC) should be at disposal for practical relocation needs.

The Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS) plays a crucial role in forwarding the idea behind Euraxess into the Swiss academic landscape. CRUS was granted 200'000 Euro to strengthen and update Euraxess activities in Switzerland, by means of an accepted Support Action Proposal<sup>3</sup> to an extraordinary call issued by the Research Framework Programme 7 (FP7) of the European Commission within the People programme. CRUS commissioned this mapping survey to obtain an accurate description of the current state of the ESCs at the end of the project. Furthermore, the survey is apt to fulfil the report requirements of the project funder European Commission. The provided information is also targeted at stakeholders in the Swiss Higher Education and Research area to draw their attention to the Euraxess initiative. People who are not yet involved, but deal with the development of universities are given a comprehensible overview. The main target group addressed by the survey are meant to be those working in the field of assisting researchers in the range of Euraxess topics. The survey provides comparative fundamentals and inputs into the discussion about how the support structures for mobile researchers should develop further.

### **The central research question:**

What is the profile of the Euraxess Service Centres (ESCs) in Switzerland after the start-up phase? More precisely: How are the ESCs institutionalised and what services do they perform?

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<sup>1</sup> Ziegler, Beatrice / Bolliger, Silvia (2007): Russländische Studentinnen in der Schweiz im späten 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert. [Russian-speaking female students in Switzerland in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.] In: Bade, Klaus J et al. (eds.): Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa. Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart. [Encyclopaedia Migration in Europe.] Munich.

<sup>2</sup> Statement of Kitty Fehringer, European Commission, DG Research, at Euraxess Think Tank event, Zurich, 2010/03/17.

<sup>3</sup> FP7 Specific Support Action in the thematic priority „Human Resources and Mobility“. Project No 221916: „Swiss Network of Mobility Centres“, coordinator CRUS, Johanna Ziberi

The report is structured as follows:

We start by explaining the meaning of the European support framework for researchers, Euraxess. The four pillars of the framework are presented, and one of them, the Euraxess Services, is the main focus for the rest of the survey. After this short contextual embedding, the result categories are described. We briefly mention the methods used, then move directly to the findings. Emphasis will be mainly laid on two things: firstly, on the various organisational types of the ESCs, and, secondly, on how information services are provided to the target group of mobile researchers migrating to, from and within Europe.

## 1.2 Development

The Directorate-General for Research (DG Research) of the European Commission enables research projects, notably through the Research Framework Programmes' funding scheme. Other initiatives aim to improve working conditions and career prospects for researchers themselves. A couple of those were the forerunners of the Euraxess framework. As a pan-European milestone, the European Research Mobility Portal (ERMP) was launched in July 2003, followed by the European Network of Mobility Centres (ERA-MORE) in June of 2004. While ERMP was a web portal that mainly listed employment opportunities for researchers throughout Europe, ERA-MORE brought in the idea of decentralised service centres coordinated by a national institution acting as a bridgehead organisation (BHO) between the local and the European level. In 2005, ERA-LINKS US was introduced, an initiative to bring back knowledge of European researchers who are on a research stay in the United States. However, this step-by-step approach led to an inconsistent mix of initiatives tackling the same idea – providing solutions for researchers while mobile. To strengthen this common goal, the European Commission brought together the single threads under a new framework called Euraxess. As a result, researchers' employment opportunities should rise and researchers should connect more easily with other researchers and organisations. On the European scale, a new web portal for enhancing researchers' careers was launched on June 24, 2008, providing job offers and information for mobile researchers.

The Euraxess initiative contains now four sub-parts:

### 1. Euraxess Services

replaced the former ERA-MORE network and provides information and proximity assistance during and after researchers' relocation. There are more than 200 mobility centres in Europe set up by the participating countries of the European Research Area (EU states and associated countries like Switzerland).

### 2. Euraxess Jobs

lists job opportunities funded by the Marie Curie Actions and other grants as well as vacant posts in research establishments throughout Europe. The previous ERMP was replaced. On the one hand, researchers who want to advance their career in another European country can rely on this portal. On the other hand, organisations wishing to employ researchers are provided with a single recruitment platform.

### 3. Euraxess Rights

provides a new home for the activities related to implementing and promoting the “European Researchers' Charter and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers” (C&C), a policy instrument for enhancing researchers' careers that was adopted by the European Commission on March 11, 2005. The Charter names minimum rights and obligations for both researchers and employers. The Code of Conduct provides a frame of reference for recruiting researchers that is transparent and merit-based.

### 4. Euraxess Links

is a networking tool for European researchers and scholars who currently work on other continents. Euraxess Links aims at helping them to collaborate with colleagues back in Europe and at offering them incentives to return to rewarding careers in Europe. The previous ERA-LINKS US was incorporated into this section, while new countries were added steadily to the cooperation since: June 2008 brought the start of Euraxess Links in Japan,

followed by China in December 2009. Next destinations will include India and Singapore, while Brazil and Canada are on the long list.<sup>4</sup>

The need to attend to researchers' interests outside their actual vocation was acknowledged in Switzerland as well. The Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER) pushed forward the idea of a Swiss mobility portal and localised service centres which are meant to be part of the larger European network of ERA-MORE.

How was this **network** shaped? Although leading national institutions such as CRUS and SER could assert their own understanding of implementing researcher-friendly solutions and although autonomous universities make the final decision, the European Commission was and still is distinctly nurturing the network with ideas, form suggestions and support processes. The Commission stimulates concerted action through its intermediaries in the various European states, which, however, leads to different, country-specific outcomes. The representatives of Euraxess Service Centres can also take part in the programme process to a certain extent. Thus, the network consists of all the stakeholders working on assisting mobile researchers, ranging from the European to the local, university level.

The Swiss portal eracareers.ch was introduced in December 2005. In 2008, the name was changed to Euraxess Switzerland in compliance with the European network. On that occasion, all twelve universities (ten cantonal and two federal ones) plus CRUS signed the Declaration of Commitment<sup>5</sup> that described the scope and quality of the services to be provided to researchers. Subsequent to this political step, each university appointed an appropriate organisational entity to become a Euraxess Service Centre. The signatures of the Declaration of Commitment and the official acknowledgement of the Swiss Euraxess Network by the SER in October 2008 represented a significant symbolic step in the development towards researcher-oriented policies in Switzerland.

The Research Framework Programme 7 (FP7) of the European Commission issued a call, making funding available to install new ESCs and fortify the position of the existing ones in the initial phase. In this context, the FP7-project "Swiss Network of Mobility Centres" (June 2008-May 2010)<sup>6</sup> has focused on deepening the connections among the Swiss Euraxess network partners, with their European counterparts as well as with the DG Research of the European Commission. In May 2009, CRUS re-launched the national web portal Euraxess Switzerland, including links to the ESCs, elaborated introductory texts in the thematic range of Euraxess Services and the central job platform. Meanwhile, the ESCs were encouraged to live up to the Declaration of Commitment by installing and maintaining new support structures for researchers.

An essential strength of Swiss ESCs is their openness to act as network nodes to other initiatives supporting researchers. Besides being the national coordination institution between the European and local level, the so-called Euraxess bridgehead organisation CRUS handles related projects. It is responsible for coordinating the "Swiss Federal Equal Opportunity at Universities Programme 2000-2011", for promoting the Charter and Code process within universities as well as for implementing the Sciex Programme (Scientific Exchange Programme for visiting scholars from EU member states of 2004 to Switzerland). CRUS actively advanced the idea that the ESCs strongly correlate to these HR-related initiatives within academic institutions.

What is the landscape of ESCs like today? What do they offer? This paper assesses the current situation in Switzerland. The next chapter describes which categories helped us to evaluate the ESCs, followed by a discussion of the methods used.

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<sup>4</sup> Statement of Kitty Fehringer, European Commission, DG Research, at Euraxess Think Tank event, Zurich, 2010/03/17.

<sup>5</sup> [S. n., 2008?]: Declaration of Commitment by the Members of the Euraxess Services Network (former ERA-MORE Network). Downloadable on: <http://www.crus.ch/dms.php?id=7170> [Visited on May 17, 2010]

<sup>6</sup> FP7 Specific Support Action in the thematic priority „Human Resources and Mobility“. Project No 221916: „Swiss Network of Mobility Centres“, coordinator CRUS, Johanna Ziberi

### 1.3 Overview of oncoming chapters with findings

*How can current conditions in the ESCs be reasonably analysed?*

Euraxess Service Centres have been assigned by each university which is a signatory to the Euraxess Declaration of Commitment. Offices that act as ESCs are embedded in a specific organisational environment. How the centre is connected with other departments and with the university's executive level has significance in light of the ESC's main duty: to inform about a wide spectrum of topics that are already treated by many specialised departments. For instance, advice for researchers about tax regulations requires input from the human resources department. When a researcher's family looks for schooling, information might only be available at the equality office (used representatively for other denominations such as Gender Office, Gender Equality Office or Equal Opportunity Office). Existing network connections are crucial for the information-based services of an ESC, which is why the findings chapters beginning with 2.1 deal with the organisational integration of an assigned office per se. ESCs tackle issues from a human resource perspective as do the equality offices or the Charter & Code supporters. Chapters 2.2 and 2.3 therefore demonstrate how like-minded organisational units cooperate with each other. Chapter 2.4 makes reference to the formation of the ESCs in Switzerland. How does being assigned to an existing office affect an ESC's self-perception? Chapter 2.5 outlines an important element for the ESCs' potential to develop: internal financing by the universities.

The second half of the analysis examines the information services that ESCs deliver on behalf of mobile researchers. Acting as a preliminary remark, Chapter 2.6 points out the context in which the support structure of the ESCs can be seen. Chapter 2.7 juxtaposes the list of topics that are to be covered by the centres with the actual topics requested by researchers. In chapter 2.8 we examine the various media channels used to promote the Euraxess activities, and, again, ask how collaboration with other departments involved in welcoming researchers might look. Chapter 2.9 asks an important question: Who do the ESCs actually address? To get an initial idea, we differentiated between the ESCs' target groups on the basis of employment status and current location. Finally, chapter 2.10 sheds light on the current practices of ESC websites. This chapter aims to reflect on good examples that can be used explicitly for ESCs.

Let us briefly round up these different aspects in a table:

Tab 1: Overview of oncoming chapters with findings

| <b>Organisation</b>             |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| no.                             | chapter                    |
| 2.1                             | Organisational integration |
| 2.2                             | Link to equality office    |
| 2.3                             | Link to C&C supporter      |
| 2.4                             | Self-perception            |
| 2.5                             | Financing                  |
| <b>Services</b>                 |                            |
| 2.6                             | Support structure          |
| <b>Provision of information</b> |                            |
| 2.7                             | What?                      |
| 2.8                             | How?                       |
| 2.9                             | To whom?                   |
| 2.10                            | On the web?                |

## 1.4 Methods

### 1.4.1 Course of analysis

The analysis is based on a triple approach. Firstly, a short questionnaire was sent to each Euraxess Service Centre asking for information regarding financing, the allocation of personal resources, user statistics (amount of requests, topic of questions, website use) and network connections. Secondly, the researcher performed an analysis of the ESCs' websites which included the assessment of both editorial criteria (check if the topics named in Declaration of Commitment are covered) and formal criteria (structure, links, usability features and contact information). The criteria were chosen from the self-assessment form provided by the European Commission which had been presented to the ESCs' delegates at the annual conference of ERA-MORE in May 2007.<sup>7</sup> Thirdly, and most importantly, personal visits to the ESCs took place between February 11 and March 30, 2010. Following the discussion of the results from the questionnaire and the website analysis, a semi-structured interview with the ESCs' responsible persons was performed. The interviewer always used open-ended questions, allowing the interviewees to engage as long and as thoroughly as they wished. Sometimes the researcher put in new discussion items or referred to cases of other ESCs for the sake of illustration and activation. As a result, the involvement of the interviewees was generally high. Furthermore, the ESC's staff questioned were motivated to participate, as it established a possibility to present themselves. Sometimes one person, sometimes two persons attended the session. As a positive side effect, it provided the interview participants with the opportunity to hear what exactly their colleagues were doing.

### 1.4.2 Coverage of data

All the ESCs sent back the short questionnaire. The website analysis was carried out on seven of the ten ESCs at the universities. The missing cases include St. Gallen, Neuchâtel and Lucerne, with Lucerne being the only one that had a designated site for Euraxess researchers at the time of the analysis. While the website of the responsible unit in St. Gallen (International Exchange Office) is currently being revised, Neuchâtel has started to build a welcome centre as of June 2010 whose website for mobile researchers should be accessible in the autumn of 2010 in French (an English version is also planned). Lucerne has also been restructuring the welcome services: The human resources department and the international relations office are currently planning and implementing new virtual reception services directed at all employees.

The personal visits to the Euraxess Service Centres had to be confined to seven centres due to time restrictions. The selection could not take St. Gallen, Geneva and Neuchâtel into account. Nevertheless, the visits to the other centres made clear the different approaches that ESCs take to handle the new target group of mobile researchers.

#### **Disclaimer:**

It must be emphasised that the following observations are purely subjective. If an occurrence is described for one case, it does not exclusively claim that it can only be found in that one. In other words, there was *no systematic countercheck* to determine whether a procedure is also applied in other ESCs as well. After all, these case studies have mostly an illustrative function for the sake of discovering trends.

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<sup>7</sup> However the European Commission stresses that the self-assessment tool is just an auxiliary form for the ESCs. Neither ESCs nor the bridgehead organisation, which is the connection link between the European Commission and the ESCs, have the duty to report on that (statement by Kitty Fehring, DG Research, March 25, 2010).

## 2 Findings

### 2.1 Organisational integration

#### 2.1.1 Affiliation to Euresearch and international relations offices

After the decision to participate in the Euraxess network (as described in chapter 1.2 Development), each Swiss university appointed an organisational unit to be a Euraxess Service Centre. Two principal types of entities were selected and now have the responsibility for Euraxess Services activities: Euresearch and international relations offices.

The **Euresearch** network in Switzerland includes the offices within universities that offer information and advice on how to acquire research funding from the various sources established throughout Europe. As Swiss research institutions and enterprises can also apply for the extensive research funds of the European Union (structured in the so-called Framework Programmes, with the seventh one now operative), the responsible Swiss ministerial unit, the SER, established the Euresearch network and has been co-funding it with the universities.<sup>8</sup>

The second group consists of the different functional sections of the universities that are named **international relations offices** (IROs) or similar. These units have so far mainly dealt with the numerous student exchange programmes, both in a European context and on the basis of bilateral agreements. Some IROs carry out duties to encourage early-stage researchers or to promote the higher education institute altogether.

At the beginning of ERA-MORE activities in Switzerland – the predecessor of Euraxess Services – the regional offices of the Swiss Euresearch network were mainly considered as the apt partners for installing a service point for researchers. Besides having the same target group of international researchers, the network quality was another reason for some universities to, in combination with additional funding, appoint the Euresearch offices as ESCs.<sup>9</sup>

While some universities considered their Euresearch regional office as the right partner, others handed over the Euraxess Services to their IROs. After all, each university individually determined the responsible office. It is interesting to see now that, of the ten regional ESCs<sup>10</sup>, half are connected to a Euresearch regional office and half to an IRO.

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<sup>8</sup> For a short sketch about the development of Euresearch, see the box below. Information provided by Sibylle Hodel, ESC / Euresearch Zurich, Kurt Kamber, ESC / Euresearch Basel and Olivier Küttel, Euresearch Head Office

<sup>9</sup> The ESC activities are fully financed by the additional contribution of each university to the Euresearch office. The Euresearch mission does not include Euraxess services.

<sup>10</sup> The two cities equipped with both a cantonal university and a branch of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology are distinctive: Zurich's ESC is organisationally affiliated to the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) but carries out actions on behalf of both universities in Zurich. The respective branch in Lausanne (EPFL) is only assigned as a Local Contact Point, an organisational form less involved in the coordination of the Swiss Euraxess network. The main access point for this region is the Euraxess Service Centre located at the University of Lausanne. There is formally even an 11<sup>th</sup> ESC centrally located at CRUS accounting for the euraxess.ch website and remote information facilities (e.g. about scholarships).

## About Euresearch

The formerly responsible Federal Office for Education and Science began launching information counters about European research funding at the universities – so-called Euro Guichets – in 1992. Universities and companies were thus encouraged to participate in the Research Framework Programmes of the European Community at that time. In 2001, the head office of the Euresearch network to come was introduced before the existing regional Euro Guichets were incorporated into the network. The SER triggered this development by anticipating the full association of Switzerland to the Framework Programmes and henceforth had a mandate at the Euresearch network to deliver information and perform advice services. All in all, close connections have been established between the head office and the regional offices at research institutions throughout Switzerland and among the regional offices themselves.

Yet, as some interview partners point out, the strategic decision has to be taken as to where the Euraxess Service Centres should be positioned in future and for what reasons. Depending on which target groups the offices align themselves to, this reveals an initial indication about their current position. The tables show the focal points of each centre, differentiating between the Euresearch-led centres and the IRO-led ones.<sup>11</sup>

Tab 2: Target groups of ESCs, administered by Euresearch offices (self-declaration)

| <b>Euresearch</b>                      | <b>Fribourg*</b> | <b>Basel</b> | <b>Zurich*</b> |
|--|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| External researchers exploring choices |                  |              | (X)            |
| Incoming researchers not yet here      | X                | X            | X              |
| Incoming researchers already on-site   | X                | (X)          | X              |

Tab 3: Target groups of ESCs, administered by IR offices (self-declaration)

| <b>International Relations</b>         | <b>Lucerne</b> | <b>Lausanne<sup>°</sup></b> | <b>Bern<sup>°</sup></b> | <b>Lugano</b> |
|--|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| External researchers exploring choices |                | X                           | (X)                     | X             |
| Incoming researchers not yet here      | X              | X                           | X                       | X             |
| Incoming researchers already on-site   | X              | X                           | X                       |               |

\* Fribourg and Zurich also explicitly mentioned outgoing researchers

<sup>°</sup> Bern and Lausanne also provide support for institutes that welcome researchers

X main focus

(X) these groups are also considered, but they are not the main focus

We see that nearly all ESCs have services available for researchers who have already moved to the research institution and might require help on-site, regardless of whether administration is conducted by a Euresearch office or an IRO. Before their arrival at their Swiss host institution, international researchers are generally helped by each ESC. However, Euresearch-led ESCs in general are less interested in addressing external researchers who do not have (yet) a specific relationship with the research institution, while three of the IRO-led centres also consider such researchers: ESC Lugano and ESC Bern regard their services as a potential recruiting instrument, and ESC Lausanne takes a holistic approach of welcoming researchers regardless of their status or interests.

<sup>11</sup> The self-positioning is based on a question from the personal interview. Therefore only seven cases can be considered.

## 2.1.2 Trilateral Fribourg and “Switcher” Bern

Two ESCs are exceptional cases: **ESC Fribourg** is actually a trilateral product between the Euresearch office (lead), IRO and equality office. The distinctive cooperation between the three bodies started with the implementation of the Euraxess Declaration of Commitment. First liaisons had been forged in the preceding project ERA-MORE. However, the requirement to put up a website on behalf of mobile researchers’ needs exceeded the single capacity of each unit in 2008. Furthermore, they had the idea to profit from each other’s knowledge. Therefore, a joint responsibility was established for the website to come. In September 2009, a first version of the website was launched, and revisions will take place regularly.

The three partners share their explicit knowledge:

- **Euresearch regional office** delivers information from the well-developed Euresearch network;
- **Equality office** provides data on employment, insurances and schooling among others;
- **International relations office** makes available information on accommodation or work permits.

The three units regularly meet and select the content to be put online. In addition to their exchange concerning the website, each office automatically refers to the other ones if a researcher asks a question relating to a specific matter.

In another case, the label of Euraxess was assigned to one entity and later changed to another entity that was considered the more appropriate place to cultivate the label. This happened at the **University of Bern**. In a pilot project, the university explored the possibilities of a Welcome Centre within the IRO. The key feature was providing information and advice to newly arrived researchers and faculty members. The university soon realised, however, that the Euraxess label had formerly been given to the regional Euresearch office. Its services included supporting Marie Curie fellows, but there was no extended personal service available as proposed in the Welcome Centre project. Therefore, the university suggested that the Euraxess label be assigned to the newly created Welcome Centre as its core mission corresponds to the Euraxess idea. All parties involved consented to the change. The ESC Bern is now an independent office within the IRO and offers direct relocation services, including dual career couples advice (whose meaning will be explained in the next chapter).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Jasmin Fallahi, ESC Bern, February 25, 2010.

## 2.2 Connection to equality offices

### 2.2.1 Dual career couples programmes as a catalyst

Dual career couples (DCC) as a term is used for a couple in which both partners have careers. It has been used in academic human resources in the USA for quite a while and has steadily become a familiar term in similar environments in Europe. When both partners pursue academic careers but also attach importance to their work-life balance, particular offers help the couple to organise their lives. This includes measures to find an appropriate position for both partners and flexible childcare facilities. Since women are still more likely to be the ones who follow their partners, it is important that these women have the opportunity to find a suitable job. Equality offices at Swiss universities coordinate these supportive measures. The “Swiss Federal Equal Opportunity at Universities Programme 2008-2011” (managed by CRUS) is active in supporting the initiatives of these offices.

Because they adopt a human resource perspective as well, ESCs can engage in dialogue with the equality offices at their university to the benefit of both units. But what do the connections actually look like? In general, ESCs are in close contact with the equality office within their academic institution. Lausanne, Lugano and Zurich are examples for this. Fribourg, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is a trilateral cooperation between ESC, IRO and the equality office regarding the content of the regional Euraxess website, including the online advertisement of the dual career couples programme. Incoming questions to each of these divisions will be redirected to the appropriate unit.

There is an even closer connection between the dual career couples services and the Euraxess platform at the ESC Bern. Here the person responsible for the Welcome Centre, the office that contains Euraxess Services, also manages the dual career couples services. This results in a high level of synergies, as the ESC employee can check if incoming researchers know about the DCC support measures and is able to advise them about possible funding directly.

A similar constellation was initially in place at the ESC Lucerne where the appointee for equal opportunity was in charge of implementing the ESC in the pilot phase. In October 2009, the newly institutionalised international relations office, in which the Euraxess services had been incorporated, was launched. Despite the change in the leading position, the ESC still maintains a strong connection to the equality office, above all due to spatial and project-based proximity. Case studies have been conducted at the office for the dual career couples programme, and further measures that combine fostering young researchers and the idea of equal opportunity are currently in planning.

The role of the ESC Basel will now be examined in detail because it clearly shows that measures on behalf of incoming researchers and of dual career couples should be dealt with concurrently because of their systemic proximity.

### 2.2.2 Basel and the working group process

Basel provides an example for the bottom-up process through its projects in general. The awareness that information and commitment from different sources was essential led Euresearch Basel (the operative player for Euraxess) to establish a working group in 2006 with the aim of conceptualizing an entrance web portal and a checklist for institutes that entailed information on how to hire and assist new staff from abroad. Delegates to this working group “Researchers’ Mobility Centre” came from six entities ranging from the departments for academic career development, career services and academic teaching to the division for students, division of human resources and the Euresearch office. The portal page “International Researchers” was launched in February 2009 (for detailed assessment see chapter 2.10.2 Portals. Case study Basel).

At this time, the working group “Dual Career Couples” (DCC) was established in a similar procedure with participants from human resources, academic career development as well as from the newly created international affairs office, Euresearch, and with the leading partner from the equality office. The funding from the “Swiss Federal Equal Opportunity at Universities Programmes 2008-2011” enabled creative ideas about possible measures to help the partners of new faculty members. Results derived from the working group include the fortification of the existing jobs platform at the University of Basel. All open positions are to be placed here in future,

although this is currently not the case. Additional employment opportunities will be shared in a specific pool for the DCC partners with the nearby universities in Freiburg (Germany), Karlsruhe and Strasbourg. The interviewee concluded: «The discussion within the DCC working group has led us to recognise the broader context in which the support measures for incoming researchers and teaching staff are located. Some further initiatives are in consideration right now.»<sup>13</sup>

## 2.3 Connection to Charter & Code Supporter

### 2.3.1 Comparative View

CRUS has advocated linking the different HR-related initiatives as Euraxess Services, Charter & Code, Equal Opportunity and – more on an operational level – the Sciex exchange programme. Charter & Code support as an inseparable part of Euraxess Rights should be well connected with the corresponding ESC within the university. However Euraxess Services and Euraxess Rights refer to different processes in the institutions, the first one addresses the researchers when coming in or going out, to facilitate their mobility, and the latter improves working and employment conditions for researchers who are already in an institution and will remain there. Consequently, the Charter & Code affects larger areas, and, therefore, its support was delegated to a hierarchically high position in some universities, e.g. to the heads of the central administration.

The following assignments have been allocated at the research institutions:

Tab 4: Assignments of Charter & Code supporters and ESC at Swiss universities

| Euraxess Services and Charter & Code Supporter appointed to <b>same person</b>   | Euraxess Services and Charter & Code Supporter appointed <b>separately</b>   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Basel</li> <li>▪ Fribourg</li> <li>▪ Geneva</li> <li>▪ Lausanne University*</li> <li>▪ Lugano</li> <li>▪ Neuchâtel</li> <li>▪ Zurich ETH</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bern</li> <li>▪ Lausanne ETH</li> <li>▪ Lucerne</li> <li>▪ St. Gallen</li> <li>▪ Zurich University</li> </ul> |

\* The University of Lausanne recently appointed the responsible person for Euraxess Services as the new Charter & Code Supporter.

More than half of the Swiss universities appoint the task of the Euraxess Services and Euraxess Rights (the Charter & Code principles) to the same person. How is the connection between the ESC staff and the C&C supporter fostered in other cases?

In **Lucerne**, the person responsible for Charter & Code is the head of academic services which, in turn, is the overarching department of the IRO and where the Euraxess Services are provided. The person responsible at the ESC **Bern** attends the sessions of the working group “Charter & Code” in which the C&C supporter takes part. While the person in charge of the ESC **Zurich** is at the same time the C&C supporter for the Federal Institute of Technology, she also informs the C&C supporter of the University of Zurich about ongoing activities launched by the European Commission through the Institutional HR Strategy Group where she is also involved. Since the university C&C supporter is employed at the research and academic career development division, she is in regular contact with the Euresearch-led ESC Zurich about the Research Framework Programmes.<sup>14</sup>

The C&C supporters can also be reassigned if conditions have changed, as the following case demonstrates. The University of **Lausanne** was early in adapting the Charter & Code principles into the individual university strategy and had already established the position of the C&C supporter on the high level of the Secretary General. The

<sup>13</sup> Statement by Kurt Kamber, ESC Basel, during an interview on March 12, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> For further reference, see the documentation of Euraxess Rights Switzerland, including a list of the current C&C supporters (<http://www.crus.ch/die-crus/koordiniert-harmonisiert/euraxess-for-staff/euraxess-staff/euraxess-rights.html>; English/German mixed, last visit on April 15, 2010)

operative support for Charter & Code had been delegated since the end of the thorough, project-wise assessment of the HR-related issues in the institution in 2008.<sup>15</sup> The person responsible for ESC Lausanne is already in charge of Sciex operational activity and has recently been appointed C&C supporter.

It can be concluded that the link between the Charter & Code supporter and ESC staff is basically there, although more time is needed to establish proper and functional C&C support.<sup>16</sup> It is important to note that the Charter & Code measures are in no way the only efforts that universities take to address researchers' issues. Independent actions and programmes exist that deal with long term or quality assurance strategies not directly connected with the Charter & Code process.

### 2.3.2 Critical assessment by ESCs

Despite the clear tendency to consolidate the functions, combining different roles (responsibility for ESC, Charter & Code and Sciex) in one person can lead to distinctive difficulties. In reality, the Euraxess Service Centres are not the key identification factor for the organisations in charge of the services. To put it plainly, Euraxess is mostly a label that is carried by either a Euresearch office or an international relations office as shown above. The capacity to incorporate more duties or positions connected to the Euraxess mandate is therefore limited. In addition, even if an ESC is willing to take on these different activities, it may still run the risk of confusing them. Some ESCs pointed out that the sort of issues dealt with required a clear and separate communication each time. Charter & Code and Euraxess Services matters have been discussed as a single theme, with the result that the different requirements of and developments at the European level could only be followed by attending all information meetings organised by the bridgehead organisation CRUS.<sup>17</sup>

## 2.4 Self-Perception

Self-perception of the ESCs is difficult point to grasp.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, perceived identity clearly has a strong impact on an ESC's commitment to performing communication and services. It has already been mentioned in the chapter "Organisational integration" that either Euresearch or international relations offices have thus far taken care of the Euraxess Service Centre function. Having a wide spectrum of duties, these organisational entities have to take time to build up and maintain services on behalf of Euraxess.<sup>19</sup> In general, Euraxess is considered rather as simply a label where help and assistance is provided, causing self-identification as an ESC to be quite low. This is illustrated by the fact that CRUS had to encourage some ESCs to make the Euraxess logo visible on the respective website. The lack of a strong identity is due to – but also exacerbates – the limited use of the term in everyday activities within the universities. Euraxess is not yet a reference point on its own for the offices with ESC duties. The Swiss Euraxess network is considered as a top-down construction in which a single ESC – even if sharing the same idea – feels only little attachment to the network. However, on a more rational level, Euraxess does operate as another helpful inter-university network where interests, opinions and practices can be exchanged.

It must also be noted that Euraxess postulates a topical idea that, beyond doubt, is on the agenda of many university directives acknowledging the need to assist mobile researchers. Therefore, the Euraxess initiative suits already existing goals at the universities, but additionally shapes them into concrete, unified measures throughout Europe. The Euraxess actions can thus be seen more as an amplifier of existing ideas than as initiator of them. This assessment is given evidence in several cases. On the one hand, the task to launch a Euraxess web-

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<sup>15</sup> The assessment was conducted by an integrated approach, i.e. all Charter & Code regulations should be compared to internal processes and strategies. The principles should be implemented within the internal quality assurance process starting with a gap analysis.

<sup>16</sup> An initiative deriving from the European Commission to enhance a labelling process for excellence in Human Resources might have a welcome impact.

<sup>17</sup> ESCs put forward that, due to limited time resources, Euraxess information sessions could not be attended as often as necessary. Coherent minutes and summaries could clarify the discussion points in future. In light of the complex structure of the subject, the ESCs depend more than ever on structured information from the bridgehead organisation.

<sup>18</sup> Findings result here from the subjective perception with the personal contacts in the course of the research process.

<sup>19</sup> Short reference to funding of Euraxess activities will follow in the next chapter.

site caused the institutional partners of ESC Fribourg to initiate a collaborative effort towards this goal. On the other hand, setting up the Welcome Centre at the University in Bern and the international relations office at the University of Lucerne in the past two years happened without any direct reference to Euraxess promotion. Hence, Euraxess does play an important role, but it depends on how it aligns with the universities' mission of welcoming researchers.

## 2.5 Financing

In this section, the focus is on allocation measures at the universities for their ESCs. This **includes** above all the human resources dedicated to deliver **direct assistance to researchers** (analogous to a business-to-consumer model). Some ESCs also devote efforts to gathering information that will enhance the service level at a later stage (e.g. by exchanging good practises in support with peer institutions). Furthermore, instead of addressing the researchers themselves, ESCs are sometimes active in advising the researchers' host institutes (analogous to a business-to-business model). However, activities that **support the service staff are not the main focus** of the analysis.<sup>20</sup>

Tab 5: Funding sources of the ESCs by HR allocation and other funds from June 2008 to May 2010 (Source: self-declaration of ESCs)

| University funding |  |  |
|--------------------|--|--|
|                    | Human resources (in FTE*)  | Additional measures (in CHF)   |
| Basel              | 0,05 (including Sciex activities)  | 5000 per year (websites, activities, materials)  |
| Bern               | starting with 0,2 (June 2008) – increased to 0,6 (as of February 2010)       | DCC fund to build a contact point, also aided ESC development  |
| Fribourg           | 0,1 (shared by three partners: Euresearch, IRO, Equality Office)             | 3000 (website project)   |
| Geneva             | 0,2  | Additional measures/staff planned for 2010-2011  |
| Lausanne           | starting with 0,1 (June 2008) – increased to 0,2 (as of January 2010)        | none   |
| Lugano             | none**   | 4000 per year (not specified)  |
| Lucerne            | 0,15 (0,1 at IRO and 0,05 at HR)   | 18000 initial website project (for both Euraxess and Sciex)  |
| Neuchâtel          | none*** (till May 2010); 0,25 to build up a Welcome Centre (since June 2010) | none   |
| St. Gallen         | no estimation  | 1500 (2009/9-2009/12); 2500 (2010/1-2010/5) for Sciex, could also be used for ESC activity   |
| Zurich             | 0,25   | approx. 18000 (pro rata, starting 2009/8/1) through cooperation in Euraxess transnational project (e*care), obtaining first-hand information on obstacles for mobile researchers |

\* FTE=full time equivalent (0,2 FTE=20% job of one person)

\*\* due to a small number of incoming researchers (approx. 40 / year) and a highly involved HR department connected closely with other appropriate service offices

\*\*\* institutes' secretariats deal with the contractual agreements

In general it is very hard to compare these different allocation figures for two interconnected reasons. First, there is no official Euraxess funding within the framework of a mandate from the universities. To the contrary, the various Euresearch and international relations offices dedicate time at their own discretion to Euraxess business, as the universities committed themselves in the first place.<sup>21</sup> Secondly, the overall activities in respect to enhance-

<sup>20</sup> Differing opinions of ESCs exist as to whether these supportive actions count as Euraxess services. E.g. the new reception facility at the IRO of the University of Lausanne offers information about entry regulations and university administration procedures and *exclusively targets faculties or institutes* that invite researchers and teaching staff from abroad for a limited period. ESC Zurich is working in the multilateral Euraxess research project e\*care where best practises about serving the needs of mobile researchers are exchanged. Lausanne does not consider its activity a Euraxess one, Zurich does.

<sup>21</sup> It is worth mentioning that, although Euraxess services are delivered by the staff at the Euresearch office, this is performed by means of additional university funding and does not extend into the Euresearch mandate (financed by the SER).

ing the mobility of researchers are not confined to the Euraxess Service Centres, but other university divisions share their activities and resources for this case as well (see especially the chapter “Division of labour with other university sections”). These two reasons may distort the results from the current assessment of allocated resources to the ESCs.

One finding is that almost all staff **dedicate 0,1 to 0,2 full time equivalents** (FTE) to Euraxess activities. It could be argued that this amount of allocation only covers general assistance and does not extend to specialised help on behalf of mobile researchers.

A clear exception is ESC **Bern**, where aggregated 0,6 FTE are available for welcoming tasks. The centre covers a wide range of support, including accommodation, social insurance, language courses and practical information about the city. It also provides personal DCC assistance and childcare information. The services are aimed at both researchers and institutional units.

The situation is quite different on the national level. The FP7-project “Swiss Network of Mobility Centres” (SNMC) endowed the bridgehead organisation CRUS with the necessary funds to reform the national Internet portal for mobile researchers (euraxess.ch). In addition, workshops and conferences the ESCs could take part in were organised. The follow-up financing of the BHO at CRUS is guaranteed by CRUS members for 2010. Other funding sources for the BHO include new Euraxess calls at the European level.<sup>22</sup> A specialised outlook on the financial allocation for both ESCs and the BHO will be provided by the “Report with regard to sustainability of the project / future of the network” that has to be delivered within the SNMC project.

## 2.6 Support structure

The idea behind Euraxess is that the Service Centres serve as the main contact point for international researchers. In general, the ESCs are supported by the national BHO which, in turn, is updated about ongoing developments in Euraxess implementation by the European Commission – DG Research.

Other support constructions also exist to assist mobile researchers. At the University of Lausanne, assistance has been extended to other levels, while ESC Zurich profits greatly from the multi-level aspect of Euraxess. On the one hand, the IRO at the University of Lausanne provides the ESC services that are directed at the researchers. On the other hand, the IRO helps institutes and faculty members who welcome a guest lecturer or researcher by giving information about university procedures, accommodation facilities and entry conditions. To describe it conceptually, the IRO in Lausanne provides second-level support, while other university units are responsible for the first-level support of their guests. However, the person responsible at the ESC Lausanne does not consider the second-level support as part of Euraxess Services.<sup>23</sup>

ESC Zurich takes charge of first-level support for mobile researchers. To improve assistance procedures, the centre exchanges best practices with ESCs in other countries in the FP7-project e\*care. Furthermore, the European network enables ESCs to take part in the Euraxess working groups concerned with its steady development. ESC Zurich participates in two working groups for quality and promotion hosted by the European Commission DG Research, providing the ESC with the opportunity to engage in policy work and to be informed on the latest details in Euraxess promotion.

The activities in Lausanne and Zurich help to strengthen the efficacy of providing services to individual persons. Nevertheless, the personal assistance of mobile researchers is actually the main mission of the ESCs, thus this report focuses on the aspects of first-level support.

Providing information is the main aim, but: what is explained, how is it done and who is the target group? For incoming researchers who have questions before their arrival at the host institutions, a highly usable website of the ESC (besides the national portal site as euraxess.ch) is of immense value. These issues will be discussed in the following chapters.

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<sup>22</sup> The Euraxess T.O.P. consortium has issued a call on updating the national portal in March 2010. Another call will be due in October 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Statement of Matthias Buess, ESC Lausanne on June 8, 2010.

## 2.7 Provision of information – what?

As we have seen, the Euraxess idea does not prescribe organisational form or funding for the individual ESCs. A broad coverage of help topics is among the sole prescriptives to be followed by an ESC. The Euraxess Service Commitment<sup>24</sup> stipulates the necessary topical range and ESCs' employees must be familiar with the items:

- Visas
- Work permits
- Accommodation
- Legal Issues
- Social security, medical care, pension rights and taxes
- Family support, language courses, childcare and schooling
- Research funding
- Social and cultural aspects

However, when we compare with the main concerns of mobile researchers in Switzerland<sup>25</sup> we see substantial differences:

- Living in Switzerland (presumably including accommodation)
- Working in Switzerland (including HR-related issues such as salary)
- Funding opportunities
- Health insurance
- Admission to university programmes

This list of concerns is in accordance with the overall situation in Europe with one major exception. "Funding opportunities" and "Accommodation" ranked second and third among the questions in 2009. But "Visa / Entry conditions" was the hottest topic among researchers in Europe last year.<sup>26</sup> Why is it not so in Switzerland?

This could be attributed to a new phenomenon: Researchers from most European countries no longer face official entry restrictions due to the freedom of movement and, to a certain extent, freedom of employment established by the agreements of Schengen and the Single European Market; with regard to Switzerland, this relates to the approved bilateral treaties with the European Union. Notwithstanding these agreements, the issue took on a new direction: Researchers from third countries are now even more restricted by the indirect effects of these treaties. However, the exact character and the extent of these effects are not entirely clear at the moment.<sup>27</sup>

Some topics also raise less interest than expected or hoped for. Exemplary topics are intellectual property rights (IPR), pension rights and social security. Some ESC interviewees stated that IPR issues might emerge in a later phase of a research project, but not necessarily during the relocation process. Information about pension rights is not actively sought by researchers in general according to personal statements of the ESC persons responsible.

Determining whether a topic is hot or not may also be biased by the fact that other university departments offer services in the Euraxess range. It is not only the ESCs that support advice-seekers – as suggested in the Euraxess Service Commitment – but other organisational entities take on this function, too, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>24</sup> [S.n., 2008?]: The EURAXESS Service Commitment. Downloadable on: [http://www.euraxess.de/drmp\\_de/doc/Euraxess-Services-Commitment.pdf](http://www.euraxess.de/drmp_de/doc/Euraxess-Services-Commitment.pdf) [Visited on May 17, 2010]

<sup>25</sup> Eight ESCs named the main categories of questions they received. These rough user statistics derived from the questionnaire (open-ended question) proved more valid than the user statistics provided by the Euraxess extranet (due to lack of inter-reliability). No user statistics available for ESC Neuchâtel and ESC St. Gallen.

<sup>26</sup> Statement of Kitty Fehringer, European Commission, DG Research, at Euraxess Think Tank event, Zurich, 2010/03/17.

<sup>27</sup> The delegate of the ETH Zurich to a new European initiative in climate research (CLIMATE-KIC), Peter Chen, mentioned substantial impediments when trying to hire non-European experts due to immigration regulations. The actual problems seem, however, to depend on the origin of the researcher. «Post-Docs are defined as 'very qualified personnel' and in most cases the applications are accepted by the authorities. Depending on the nationality, some insecurities remain until final acceptance of the application.» (Sibylle Hodel, ESC Zürich)

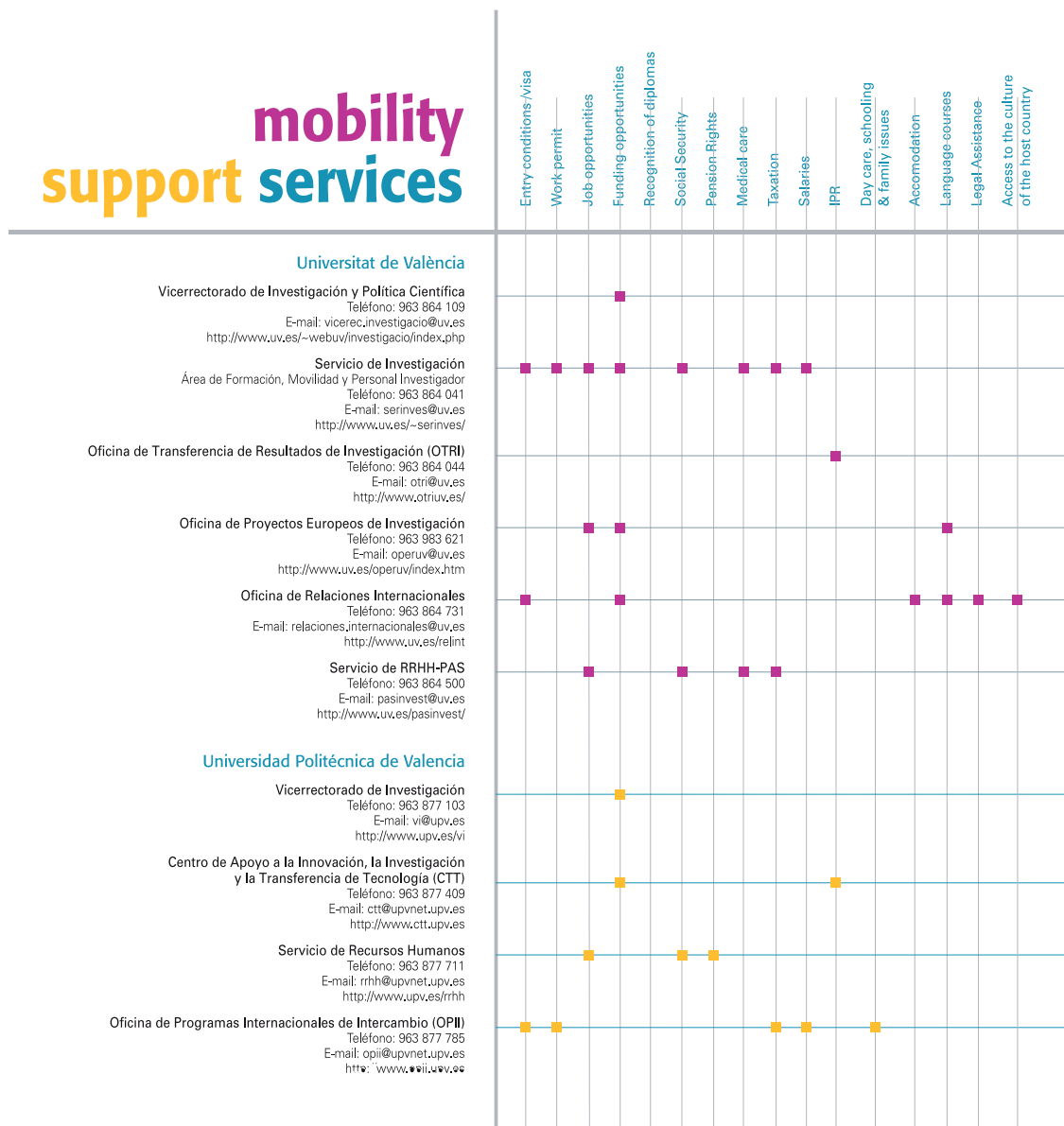
## 2.8 Provision of information – how?

### 2.8.1 Division of labour with other university sections

As shown above, the ESCs are theoretically recognised as the primary source of information and assistance on multiple service topics ranging from social security to childcare centres to funding opportunities. However, as a result of their place in an organisation, the ESCs possess specialised knowledge only with regard to certain matters and require external information in other fields. Often, knowledge is accumulated and processed at central departments or in institutes that have already been dealing with human resources issues for some time. This organisational history and the development of ERA-MORE mobility centres and, later, ESCs within the universities explains why labour is sometimes divided along topical lines.

This is not only true for Switzerland. The Network of Valencian Universities for the promotion of Research, Development and Innovation presents a typical example of how various organisational units take on different functions at the universities in the region. Above all, the flyer presented here shows how simply a researcher-friendly overview can be designed (see Graph 1). The columns represent the Euraxess topics, while the dots in a row stand for the services an organisational entity provides.

Graph 1: Detail of flyer “Mobility support services by universities”, provided by Network of Valencian Universities for the promotion of Research, Development and Innovation ([www.ruvid.org](http://www.ruvid.org))



In general, most resources from divisions outside of the ESC are dedicated to the hard facts on employment. Either the institutes' offices or the centralised HR section take care of immigration, visa, work permits, taxes, social security, pension funds, scholarships and salaries. This means that a number of issues are already handled outside of a given ESC by the human resources person responsible. How do these human resources departments and the ESCs work together? A rather unfortunate outcome is when the employment process and the information gathering process on matters related to relocation are treated independently, causing incoming researchers to spend more time and effort to obtain information and advice. To better serve to researchers' needs, some universities organise close collaboration between the two service providers, although they are clearly separated from each other in institutional terms.

ESC **Lucerne** is in regular contact with the human resources section. Both units are currently establishing extended support structures. These actions are well coordinated, especially in the new *website project* where both current and new employees will find suitable information. The following depicts some of its features:

### **1. Priority of specialised departments**

Knowledge should be spread by the main holder of specialised information. All human resources-related issues are in the competence of the HR department but receive prior consent from corresponding divisions (equality office, IRO, research development unit). Questions and requests are directed to the HR department.

### **2. Shared content, but separate displays**

Firmly connected to the concept of expertise above, the process of information gathering is done cooperatively. Thus all of the players involved become aware of what kind of information is available on certain subjects. For example, the content of the new service website on behalf of the university employees was initially collected by the HR department and then extended using special information required by the IRO. Altogether, the content is shared. Later, it will be displayed according to the needs of the different offices. This aims to create synergies in information processing and prevent redundancies.

### **3. Integrated approach / mainstreaming**

The HR department would like to incorporate the needs and wishes of mobile researchers, which is why the website, including all forms, will be available in English. Nevertheless, the virtual reception facilities should equally be able to help current and new employees from Switzerland. This website, to which ESC Lucerne will redirect requests concerning HR issues, has two intentions: easy accessibility for all incoming researchers (comprehensive use of the lingua franca English) and, at the same time, a non-discriminatory approach by offering the same service to all the other employees. This integrated approach could be conceptually acknowledged as a kind of mainstreaming of mobile researchers' needs.

The case of the ESC **Lugano** vividly illustrates the collaboration between the different divisions during the *physical* reception process of a new researcher. Altogether, between three to five units are involved in the initial phase of the employment of a new researcher. The various services are visited literally on a short walk around the small campus. Astonishingly, this tour does not require more than one hour for the new employee to have all necessary information to start his or her work.<sup>28</sup> Prerequisites for an efficient linked process include the special legal status of the university, which enables preparation of a private employment contract as well as the low number of new academic staff (approximately 40 per year) and the spatial proximity of central services.

**A typical researcher's walk could look like this:**

1. Welcome by the academic person responsible, i.e. at the *institute*: set up of office room and PC infrastructure;
2. Official settlement and entry at the *secretary general* and at *faculties' secretariats*;
3. *Human resources*: social security, work permits, salary. Reference is also made to the residents' registration office where an entrant has to go to register himself or herself;
4. *International relations office*<sup>29</sup> (for Swiss government scholarship holders); or
4. *Research service* (if participating on a funded research project); and, if applicable,
5. *Equality office* (for children or dual career couple advice).

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<sup>28</sup> Statement of Benedetto Lepori and Arianna Imberti Dosi, both University of Lugano, during interview on March 30, 2010.

<sup>29</sup> The IRO accounts formally for the ESC and is particularly responsible for the mobile researchers' website.

The aim is to provide personalised help during the initial phase at the university. On the other hand, these integrated steps also help to present the different service entities to the researcher. While the University of Lugano offers introductory tours at the beginning of each researcher's employment, ESC **Bern** organises a yearly welcome reception for new intermediate staff and professors in cooperation with the Intermediate Staff Association of the university. During this event, the equality office, the Euresearch regional office and the Intermediate Staff Association as well as the Corporate Communications and the Welcome Centre (where ESC Bern is located) present their services to the new employees.

If ESCs are not included in the institutional welcome process, they must take additional measures to make themselves visible. In order to raise their overall visibility, ESCs can also address internal departments. For example, ESC **Bern** increases its prominence by means of collecting and accumulating information from the institutes, departments as well as from public authorities on major issues a mobile researcher faces when relocating to Switzerland. This collection of both basic and somewhat more complementary information is also targeted at the human resources' departments or the various institutes that employ researchers from abroad. By providing these HR-related units with well-structured checklists or guides, they will become more aware of the ESCs' services and are likely to refer to the ESCs' knowledge in future.

## 2.8.2 Different channels of communication

Besides the operative departments, the channels of communication used also differ. Euraxess hardly prescribes the way in which services should be offered. The bridgehead organisation CRUS launched a national web portal for mobile researchers, representing one of the few formal requirements to use a specific medium. Alongside this national platform, what communication channels are most frequently used at the regional ESCs?

If we compare interpersonal communication (either face-to-face, by email or by phone) with both website and print information among the ESCs, we discover different preferences.

ESCs in Bern, Lugano and St. Gallen have assigned a time period when they are open for spontaneous **visits by researchers** looking for advice. All three also accept personal inquiries outside these help desk hours either on the basis of an open-door policy or during meetings by appointment. Other ESCs confirm that they are available during office hours.

The use of **website information** depends on the strategic importance afforded by the universities. In most cases, websites that were introduced during the Euraxess setting-up phase sustain and complement the personal assistance services. Furthermore, some ESCs have content on their platforms that generally provides an answer to mobile researchers' frequently asked questions. Among them, ESC Bern exclusively lists comprehensive information about non-academic relocation issues, while the websites launched by ESC Lausanne and ESC Lugano cover a broad range of subject areas that a researcher might face (cf. Guides: Case study Lugano).

It is interesting to see that **communication in print** is not very popular among the ESCs in Switzerland. In the interviews conducted for this research project, only ESC Zurich and ESC Bern referred to printed cards, flyers or booklets.<sup>30</sup> ESC **Zurich** lays special emphasis on its own well-designed print pamphlets and brochures, as clients appreciate these gestures. The interview partner clearly stated the need for a brochure describing typical Euraxess Services' themes (such as social security or salaries) for mobile researchers.<sup>31</sup> This communication mode is greatly preferred to an online publication. ESC **Bern** also makes use of a leaflet to advertise its services to employees of the university. Furthermore, welcoming packages for new researchers containing fact sheets about typical relocation topics will be introduced soon. The checklists "Before you move to Switzerland" and "After your move to Switzerland" have been tailored to incoming employees' needs. In addition, the ESC person responsible provides inquirers with third-party brochures about accommodation and social security among other things.

The prioritisation of information and communication channels is based on strategies conventions within the university, and available resources, but also on more precise decisions in regard to the main target groups. (This last point was already sketched in chapter 2.1.1 and will be resumed in the next chapter.)

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<sup>30</sup> The usage of print communication was not explicitly questioned, thus these results might overlook similar initiatives of other ESCs.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Sibylle Hodel, ESC Zurich, February 11, 2010.

The interdependence of these various factors will eventually be demonstrated using the ESC **Zurich**, where the Euresearch office accounts for the services. The contact with the researchers largely takes place on a personal level. Emails and phone calls are just some ways to reach the centre, but in many cases the researchers visit the service's staff on appointment and get customised information. Even though there is a substantial number of questions and dealing with them takes time, this sort of communication and interaction is favoured by the personnel:

*«We often decide not to put a piece of information online: Euraxess Services deals per se with individual matters according to our understanding. Regular direct contact to researchers greatly helps us to understand their needs. For providing general information on e.g. health care, we rely on the website.»<sup>32</sup>*

The communication channel chosen can be partly explained by the way the interaction with a researcher develops: In many cases, a researcher will contact the ESC Zurich for its Euresearch services after arrival, e.g. requiring help for checking a project proposal to a FP7 call. If a proposal is accepted, the Euresearch office or the ESC also knows which additional researchers might come. First, the ESC Zurich team learns about a researcher's academic plans, gets to know him or her personally, and thus establishes a form of contact which allows the centre to tailor future Euraxess services to the researcher's needs.

## 2.9 Provision of information – to whom?

The overall aim of Euraxess Services to provide localised assistance to mobile researchers helps reduce mobility obstacles. In the end, an open European Research Area should be created in which high-skilled workers can migrate without major problems.

However, there are not many recommendations on the phases in which ESCs should provide support. Should it already be before researchers arrive, or should ESCs predominantly help after arrival? Of course, assistance should be available during the whole process, but an emphasis can be both useful for focusing resources and in order to internally define which organisational entity could best execute these services (see the comparison in 2.1.1 Affiliation to Euresearch and international relations offices).

A conceptual division of phases of a researcher's stay could be: Pre-Arrival – Arrival – Stay – Departure.<sup>33</sup> The last point should not be underestimated, as some international researchers tend to decide to leave on short notice, regardless of existing legal bindings.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with Sibylle Hodel, ESC Zurich, February 11, 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Idea presented by Susanne Romanowski, Welcome Centre, University of Göttingen at Euraxess seminar in Trondheim, June 3, 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Christiane Roos, Max Planck Institute for Gravitational Physics Potsdam e.g. received a call from an international researcher who wanted to leave the following week, but who did not know that his apartment had a period of notice of two months (statement during Euraxess seminar in Trondheim, June 3, 2010).

Let us have a new look at the already presented results.

Tab 6: Target groups of ESCs, compiled (self-declaration)

|           | External researchers exploring choices | Incoming researchers not yet here | Incoming researchers already on-site |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Fribourg* |  | X                                 | X                                    |
| Basel     |  | X                                 | (X)                                  |
| Zurich*   | (X)                                    | X                                 | X                                    |
| Lucerne   |  | X                                 | X                                    |
| Lausanne° | X                                      | X                                 | X                                    |
| Bern°     | (X)                                    | X                                 | X                                    |
| Lugano    | X                                      | X                                 |                                      |

\* Fribourg and Zurich also explicitly mentioned outgoing researchers

° Bern and Lausanne also provide support for institutes that welcome researchers

X main focus

(X) these groups are also considered, but they are not the main focus

If the service centres are to facilitate researchers while relocating, this is included in the first instance for all incoming researchers – that is, researchers who already have an employment contract or an invitation to come to a particular university. The category of external researchers looking for choices can also be considered, although addressing this group can be seen rather as a marketing tool of the university to acquire researchers.

The phases when researchers need support depend on their main concerns and needs for assistance. We must bear in mind that ESCs are not the only offices researchers contact. Depending on the topic, other departments might also receive requests. In a recent qualitative survey, a small sample of HR-managers in universities, researchers and faculty members were asked about perceived obstacles to mobility. Besides the entry restrictions for countries outside the EU/EFTA area (limited amount of residence and work permits), the policies relating to family support issues and social security received special attention.<sup>35</sup> ESCs can supply further assistance ranging from information about financial aid to family issues, while questions about social security and immigration have to be tackled first on a political or public administration level. Although it is not the ESCs' responsibility to decide on those matters, they are at least able to inform external researchers about pertinent regulations.

A crucial question is how ESCs can identify prospective service users, be it for DCC measures or for childcare issues. An early notice of incoming researchers with family who might potentially make use of the ESCs' services later could help the ESCs to plan measures (e.g. reserving childcare or looking for employment opportunities for the partner) well in advance. If this is not possible prior to the researchers' arrival, ESCs must organise the resources necessary for tackling these issues in a short period of time.

<sup>35</sup> Schweizerischer Wissenschafts- und Technologierat (2009): Empfehlungen des SWTR zur Wissenschaftsaussenpolitik. Online: [http://www.swtr.ch/images/stories/pdf/de/swtr%20schrift%205\\_2009.pdf](http://www.swtr.ch/images/stories/pdf/de/swtr%20schrift%205_2009.pdf) (last visited June 15, 2010, French version also available)[Swiss Science and Technology Council: Recommendations of SSTC concerning Swiss foreign policy measures pertaining to science]

## 2.10 Provision of information – the website assessment

### 2.10.1 Portals and Guides

We can in general distinguish between two models of Swiss ESCs' websites: portals and guides. The models feature the following characteristics, although obviously in reality, structures might differ from the model.

- 1) **Portals** offer the opportunity to acquire a quick glance at the services available. For further information, links usually lead either to the specialised departments within an institution or to a large collection of selected external links. Therefore the structure of the site is quite simple, not exceeding two hierarchies. Portals are usually created in a single action and only altered when a major change in the underlying content occurs.
- 2) **Guides** intend to thoroughly inform about subjects that mobile researchers occasionally face. Introductory texts explain the matter in question. The number of pages can be considerable and extends to a couple of hierarchical levels. Besides the links, basic reference documents are available for download. The editorial responsibilities are clearly assigned.

Portals in various sizes can be found for in Zurich, Basel, Lucerne (version till summer 2010), Fribourg, Geneva, St. Gallen (only for mobile students) and Neuchâtel (only for mobile students). Guides can be accessed in Bern, Lugano and Lausanne.

The website analysis took all individual portals and guides of the ESCs into account. In a first step, the coverage of editorial categories required by the Declaration of Commitment was examined. In a second step, the quality of formal usability aspects was checked (coordinates, guidance, print version or last update indication). In addition, special features and general appearance of the website were evaluated. Over the course of time, the results of the website analysis were reported to the ESCs for their internal use.

### 2.10.2 Portals: Case study Basel

If resources are restricted, portals represent an efficient way to set up a new website. After a large-scale effort at the outset, (editorial) maintenance can be reduced to nearly nothing. In order to secure these gains, certain conditions regarding content have to be fulfilled, as the website of ESC Basel "Portal International Researchers" successfully illustrates.

- The portal must be clearly structured (see screenshot next page).
- Unambiguous titles and headlines must be chosen ("Contact Points, Childcare, Studying at Basel").
- Predominant use of links to primary sources of information (e.g. Human Resources, Euresearch), in contrast to intermediaries.
- Preferability of links to hierarchically higher URLs (e.g. homepages as <http://nachwuchs.unibas.ch/>) as opposed to subpages unless thematically necessary (reduces the risk of broken links).
- Important: only use links to trusted destinations (not only the institution behind the link, but also the quality of their website).
- Use clear texts to explain what users can expect from the links.
- For links to specialised offices, state their names and their main tasks *relevant* to the users of this site, i.e. for international researchers.
- State if the linked-to destinations have English versions and vice versa, if only German/French/Italian versions are available. Use consistent language when doing so.

Portals are only as solid as the weakest link, i.e. if the linked-to destinations do not meet the expectations of the users, the overall effectiveness of the portal page decreases rapidly. In this vein, the various websites at the University of Basel - where most of the portal links lead - unfortunately do not often offer English versions. As soon as more sites are accessible in English, the portal page "International Researchers" can show its strengths.

The next page shows a screenshot where the portal-specific features are easily recognisable (Graph 2).

Graph 2: Website „Portal International Researchers”, administered by ESC Basel (<http://www.unibas.ch/international-researchers>), as on 2010/06/08

**Portal International Researchers**

Dear Researchers  
 Welcome to Basel. This site aims to provide essential information and links to topics of interest for international researchers who are new to Basel. Please note that PhD students should also consult the [International Students](#) page.  
[Back Home](#)

Special interests

**Contact Points at the University of Basel**

**Human Resources**

- Information for new staff members - terms and conditions of your employment (ENG) - download: [A-Z Information for staff \(PDF/123KB\)](#) >
- Contact person for information on your employment (pension fund, insurance etc.)
- Personnel development - workshops, individual consultations

**EURESsearch**

- Contact point for EURAXESS Services - Researchers in Motion
- Provides support and advice for the EU 7th Research Framework Programme

**Mobility Office**

- supports students and lecturers involved in exchange programmes
- provides support for overseas students

**Equal Opportunities**

- Mentoring, further education and networking for young female researchers
- Provides support for Dual Career Couples

**International Affairs (ENG)**

- International Marketing Office
- Coordination Centre for the Swiss - South African Joint Research Programme

**Research Office**

- Supports researchers who plan to participate in national collaborative projects
- Manages research fund and coaches SNF Research Professors

**Technology Transfer Office (ENG)**

**Our Website at a glance**

**NEWS**

News, events, publications [more...](#)

**UNIVERSITY**

University portrait and profile, organisational diagram, facts and figures [more...](#)

**STUDYING AT BASEL**

Details and advice on studying at Basel, courses, guidelines, forms [more...](#)

**RESEARCH**

**CONTACT**

University of Basel  
**EURAXESS**  
 Schützenmattstrasse 16  
 CH-4003 Basel  
 Tel.: +41 (0)61 267 12 37  
 Fax: +41 (0)61 267 05 05  
[basel@euraxess.ch](mailto:basel@euraxess.ch)  
<http://euraxess.unibas.ch>

### 2.10.3 Guides: Case study Lugano

Nowadays, an informative website in the form of a guide can be of help in a number of situations that researchers face during relocation. Administrative procedures stay the same, while the information about it has to be repeated by the service centres each time. But, first of all, a handy web guide allows mobile researchers to easily get information on topics such as immigration or accommodation. ESC Lugano's guide provides a good example for this kind of thorough information. Even though the site is extensive, there is no need to click for a long time when looking for a specific topic. The clear navigation menu helps users to be constantly aware of where they are and find where they want to go. Having found the appropriate page, quick and practical hints are offered. If a procedure includes filling in a form or placing an inquiry with a specific person, document links or downloads and contact details of the person in charge are provided. Nevertheless, this service-oriented solution has its pitfalls, as it needs to be regularly updated and editorial checks have to be in operation once in a while. Furthermore, whenever changes occur in the internal service distribution, i.e. *which unit offers what?*, the person responsible for the website has to be notified.

The following screenshot explains the key features (Graph 3).

Graph 3: Website „Ricercatori esterni“, administered by ESC Lugano as on 2010/04/29 (prototype), online: [http://www.usi.ch/en/container\\_visiting\\_scholars.htm](http://www.usi.ch/en/container_visiting_scholars.htm)

The screenshot shows a webpage titled "Visti e permessi di soggiorno" (Visas and permits for residence). The main content area is annotated with numbered circles (1-6) pointing to specific elements:

- 1: Navigation with current location (indicated by a small orange icon in the top right).
- 2: Exhaustive list of categories (indicated by a list of categories on the right side).
- 3: Contact person of specialized unit (indicated by a contact link in the main text).
- 4: Clear instructions (indicated by a sub-section header).
- 5: Link to application form (indicated by a URL link in the main text).
- 6: Further references (indicated by a download link for a guide in the right sidebar).

The right sidebar contains a "RICERCATORI" menu with categories like "INTRODUZIONE", "CHI SIAMO", "ENTRATA IN SVIZZERA", "Visti e permessi", "Contratto di lavoro", "VIVERE IN SVIZZERA", "VITA NEL CAMPUS", "INFORMAZIONI PRATICHE", "LINK UTILI", "DOTTORATO", "SERVIZIO RICERCA USI/SUSPI", "FINANZIAMENTI PER LA RICERCA", "PROGETTI DI RICERCA", "NOTIZIE", and "EVENTI".

The bottom right corner features a legend box with the following items:

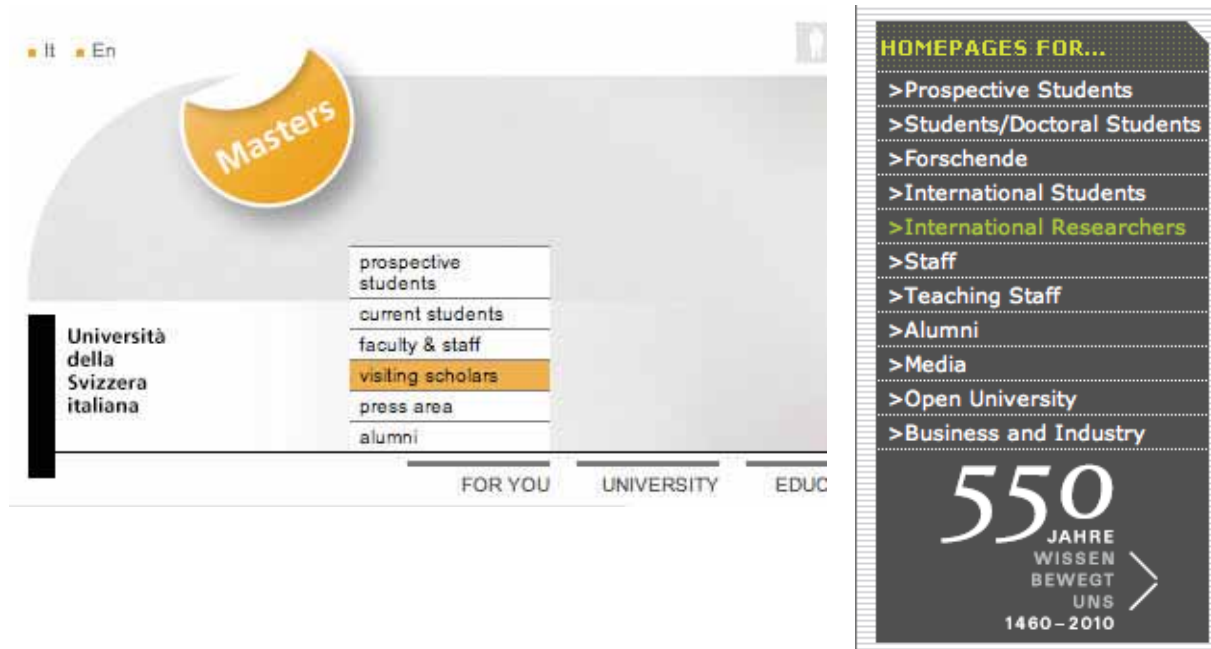
- 1 Navigation with current location
- 2 Exhaustive list of categories
- 3 Contact person of specialized unit
- 4 Clear instructions
- 5 Link to application form
- 6 Further references

### 2.10.4 Accessibility: Access for different target groups

Regardless of whether a Euraxess Service Centre has decided on a website in the form of a portal or a guide, a very useful method for promoting self-contained websites is the *access for different target groups*. This concept comprises web pages which are collectively directed to a certain target group, e.g. "international researchers". On the homepage of the university, for example, users find labelled links such as "For researchers" or "Starting your career?" which constitute an entry point leading to pages tailored to specific needs. The direct link from the homepage to those pages facilitates the accessibility of a whole section dedicated to a selected user group.

The *access for different target groups* manifests the rationale of aligning the website contents according to users' interests. In reality, however, the content is often structured according to the tasks of the various specialised offices. This is especially true for universities, as their institutional structures have developed over the course of time.

Graph 4: *Access for different target groups* on university homepages (left: Lugano, www.usi, right: Basel, www.unibas.ch; as on 2010/05/03)



Both ESC Basel and ESC Lugano – the good examples in the preceding chapters – provide *access for different target groups* on the university's homepage (see Graph 4). ESC Lausanne also put up one, but on the subordinate IRO website. Universities in Fribourg, Geneva, Bern and Zurich simply link to the ESCs' websites from the homepages of the specialised departments.<sup>36</sup> Depending on the complexity of the university's homepage and the status of the specialised department, this can lead to a click path of 2-5 pages starting from the university's homepage (i.e. a user takes two to five clicks to reach his/her aim). This can result in losing potential visitors.

Besides links or *access for different target groups*, other measures help to improve the accessibility of ESCs' websites and, in any case, a search engine optimisation should be considered. Simple alias URLs help to communicate the website's location in print, phone or personal communication, e.g. the ESC Bern's guide can be accessed at [www.welcomecenter.unibe.ch](http://www.welcomecenter.unibe.ch). Finally, in the case of the ESCs, the website of the bridgehead organisation CRUS, i.e. Euraxess Switzerland ([www.euraxess.ch](http://www.euraxess.ch)) makes all ESCs' websites available, both in the form of link lists and via interactive maps.

<sup>36</sup> Missing cases include Lucerne, St. Gallen and Neuchâtel. The University of Lucerne is currently rebuilding the virtual help facilities for employees (including international researchers). Furthermore, the universities of Neuchâtel and St. Gallen are re-conceptualizing their welcome structures; with Neuchâtel having a Welcome Centre with a website for researchers in autumn 2010.

### 3 Summary

Having finished the review of the situation at the ESCs, we would like to look back on the various points in turn.

ESCs provide their proximity services to researchers at ten Swiss universities and, to a lesser extent, through CRUS (mainly Euraxess national website and scholarships inquiries). Within the universities, either staff at the Euresearch regional offices or IROs take charge of information and advice services. Connections between ESCs and equality offices as well as C&C supporters will especially benefit from synergies by adopting approaches common in human resource departments. DCC programmes act to facilitate new services and can shed light on the interrelationship between the needs of various groups, regardless of whether mobile researcher, early-stage researcher, guest lecturer or partner of the above. Being designated to advance HR values within the university, the C&C supporters are in some cases (too) little connected to ESCs, while, in other cases, both roles are taken on by one person. One major finding is that Euraxess is seen as a label by the hosting institutions and not perceived as an office's unique identity. This perception is strengthened by the varying means of financial support among the universities where HR allocation to Euraxess services is accepted but not mandated.

Information and advice on behalf of mobile researchers is the main domain of the ESCs. A short survey has made clear that researchers' concerns are unevenly distributed among the range of topics prescribed by the Declaration of Commitment. Initiatives by the DG Research of the European Commission aim at informing researchers about social security and pension rights because their current design is seen as a disadvantage in a researcher's career. However, those questions are not popular among researchers, according to the results of the survey. In addition, the information interesting for researchers is spread among various specialised offices. Analogous to organisational integration, the ESCs are one of many players when delivering services within the range of Euraxess topics. It is therefore decisive that the entire support mechanism for information-seeking researchers is logically structured and that cross-references are made between the specialised units. In another survey, the heterogeneous notions concerning who the target groups really are became apparent. This also influences the choice of the specific mode of communication to address them. All ESCs take care of incoming researchers not yet at an institution, while a few ESCs even include mobile researchers who have only made random contact with the university. In addition, access to online information is essential for researchers. ESCs' appearance also differed in this aspect. Portals and guides are good designs for the sort of wide-range information that has been prepared to satisfy researchers' requests. In any case, a specialised *access for different target groups* improves accessibility and visibility.

The following table shows the various aspects and their key characteristics again.

Tab 7: Cursory overview of chapters with key characteristics

| <b>Organisation</b>             |                            |   |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| no.                             | chapter                    | key characteristics   |
| 2.1                             | Organisational integration | International relations or Euresearch offices as assigned units   |
| 2.2                             | Link to equality office    | Dual career couples programmes as facilitators  |
| 2.3                             | Link to C&C supporter      | Two different roles – better carried out by one person than two persons                                   |
| 2.4                             | Self-perception            | Euraxess as label   |
| 2.5                             | Financing                  | Allocations from universities to Service Centres: 0,2 full-time equivalents on average                    |
| <b>Services</b>                 |                            |   |
| 2.6                             | Support structure          | Direct support to researchers as core mission   |
| <b>Provision of information</b> |                            |   |
| 2.7                             | What?                      | Demands differ from Declaration of Commitment   |
| 2.8                             | How?                       | Other university units also equipped with Euraxess services, heterogeneous use of communication channels  |
| 2.9                             | To whom?                   | Different foci on which phases researchers should get help in   |
| 2.10                            | On the web?                | Portals and guides, use of <i>access for different target groups</i> for the sake of better accessibility |

## 4 Outlook

The Euraxess initiative has already come a long way. The DG Research of the European Commission comprehensively promotes incentives for stakeholders to get involved in the strategic development of Euraxess. By making use of working group activities and project funding via non-competitive calls, the Directorate General aims at reinforcing Euraxess as a means to serve various policies for implementation, e.g. the “European Partnership for Researchers”. The European Commission joined forces with member states and associated countries in this initiative to achieve an open, competitive labour market for researchers in Europe. The initiative emphasises the need to enhance the mobility of researchers – be it across fields, sectors or countries. Within the development of globalised academia and, beyond that, of an ever-growing knowledge-based economy, it is crucial that there will be a sufficient number of quality researchers in Europe. An interest in taking better care of their needs has been acknowledged. Euraxess is seen here as a vehicle to improve the career prospects and working conditions of European researchers.

However, the crucial link for implementing transnational ideas is between the national and the regional level, including the universities as main actors. This research project has revealed that the mission of Euraxess Services is little known in Swiss universities even six years after founding the network and two years after launching its new name. The people working at the Euraxess Service Centres, however, show strong commitment to the core idea of assisting mobile researchers, despite the fact that the duties and available human resources on behalf of Euraxess have not been assigned in detail, but only accepted by the heads of the universities. Further steps could include mandating the existing ESCs and defining a clear list of tasks – similar to the Euraxess Declaration of Commitment, but adapted – and providing the necessary resources.

Besides the question of a stronger commitment to the ESCs, it is worth adopting a different perspective when considering the services provided for mobile researchers. Instead of looking at the state of implementation of Euraxess Services in Switzerland, we could include all university initiatives having the same intention as Euraxess into the deliberation. Slowly but surely, researchers’ welcome centres are emerging at different universities and it has become clear that Swiss universities are aware of addressing the needs of mobile researchers. However, this leads to activities independent from the Euraxess initiative. If we dared to open the view on what Euraxess could be, we would discuss how these reception services could be included. How can active persons or units at a university be involved and not only the holders of the Euraxess label? If we go further, we come to the possible question of how the Euraxess label could support and bundle these various initiatives.<sup>37</sup>

If giving clear instructions to the ESCs can strengthen the Euraxess Services, this step already offers an opportunity for further development. A more comprehensive view, including welcoming initiatives at the universities, could lead to a synthesis of already existing connections and take advantage of the organic structures at universities in Switzerland.

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<sup>37</sup> A good example of how to display the Euraxess Services topics within one university is shown in Graph 1.

## List of abbreviations / Glossary

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| BHO                             | Bridgehead organisation ( <i>intermediary body within Euraxess network between DG Research and ESCs. In Switzerland: CRUS</i> )   |
| Charter & Code / C&C            | The European Charter for Researchers & The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers ( <i>key policy documents of the EC strategy for enhancing the careers of researchers</i> )   |
| CRUS                            | Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities   |
| DCC programme                   | Dual career couples programme (support for the high-qualified partner of a career-oriented academic)  |
| DG Research                     | Directorate General Research of the European Commission   |
| EC                              | European Commission   |
| ESC                             | Euraxess Service Centre   |
| Equality office                 | <i>Office within each university that is in charge of gender equality</i>   |
| ERA                             | European Research Area  |
| ERA-MORE                        | European Network of Mobility Centres ( <i>predecessor of Euraxess Services Network</i> )  |
| ERMP                            | European Research Mobility Portal ( <i>predecessor of Euraxess Jobs Portal</i> )  |
| FP 7                            | (Research) Framework Programme 7 of the European Union  |
| HR                              | Human Resources   |
| IPR                             | Intellectual Property Rights  |
| IR office / IRO                 | International relations office  |
| Sciex / Sciex-NMS <sup>ch</sup> | Scientific Exchange Programme between Switzerland and the New Member States of the European Union ( <i>enables research stays in Switzerland during the period 2009-2016, financed by the Swiss Contribution to the New Member States of the European Union of 2004</i> ) |
| SER                             | Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research  |
| SNMC                            | Swiss Network of Mobility Centres ( <i>FP 7 two-year project that funds Euraxess start-up phase. Coordinating body: CRUS, coordinator: Johanna Ziberi</i> )   |

## List of interviews (ordered alphabetical by institution's location)

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>BASEL</b>    | <p>University of Basel, Euresearch office<br/>           Kurt <b>Kamber</b>, Eve <b>Silfverberg</b><br/>           Interview on March 12, 2010<br/> <a href="http://euresearch.unibas.ch/">http://euresearch.unibas.ch/</a> (contact)<br/> <a href="http://www.unibas.ch/international-researchers">http://www.unibas.ch/international-researchers</a> (Euraxess website)</p>  |
| <b>BERN</b>     | <p>University of Bern, International Office, Welcome Center<br/>           Jasmin <b>Fallahi</b><br/>           Interview on February 25, 2010<br/> <a href="http://www.welcomecenter.unibe.ch">http://www.welcomecenter.unibe.ch</a> (contact and Euraxess website)</p>   |
| <b>FRIBOURG</b> | <p>University of Fribourg, Research Promotion Service / Euresearch office<br/>           Doris <b>Kolly</b><br/>           Interview on February 23, 2010<br/> <a href="http://www.unifr.ch/recherche">http://www.unifr.ch/recherche</a> (contact)<br/> <a href="http://www.unifr.ch/international/en/EURAXESS">http://www.unifr.ch/international/en/EURAXESS</a> (Euraxess website)</p>   |
| <b>LAUSANNE</b> | <p>University of Lausanne, International Relations<br/>           Matthias <b>Buess</b>, Dorette <b>Weissbrodt</b><br/>           Interview on February 12, 2010<br/> <a href="http://www.unil.ch/eracareer">http://www.unil.ch/eracareer</a> (contact and Euraxess website)</p>   |
| <b>LUCERNE</b>  | <p>University of Lucerne, International Relations Office<br/>           Chantal <b>Voegeli</b>, Simone <b>Sprecher</b> (Gender Equality office)<br/>           Interview on March 9, 2010<br/> <a href="http://www.unilu.ch/eng/international-relations-office_342861.html">http://www.unilu.ch/eng/international-relations-office_342861.html</a> (contact)<br/> <a href="http://www.unilu.ch/eng/euraxess_359259.html">http://www.unilu.ch/eng/euraxess_359259.html</a> (Euraxess website)</p> |
| <b>LUGANO</b>   | <p>University of Lugano, International Relations and Study-abroad Office<br/>           Arianna <b>Imberti Dosi</b>, Benedetto <b>Lepori</b> (Research Service USI/SUPSI)<br/>           Interview on March 30, 2010<br/> <a href="http://www.relint.usi.ch/en">http://www.relint.usi.ch/en</a> (contact)<br/> <a href="http://www.usi.ch/en/container_visiting_scholars.htm">http://www.usi.ch/en/container_visiting_scholars.htm</a> (Euraxess website)</p>                                    |
| <b>ZURICH</b>   | <p>Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich /<br/>           University of Zurich, Euresearch office<br/>           Sibylle <b>Hodel</b><br/>           Interview on February 11, 2010<br/> <a href="http://www.euresearch.ethz.ch/euraxess">http://www.euresearch.ethz.ch/euraxess</a> (contact and Euraxess website)</p>   |

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## Further references (ordered alphabetical by person's name)

- Kitty Fehringer, European Commission, DG Research
- Yasmine Inauen, University of Zurich
- Stefanie Kahmen, University of Zurich
- Sofia Karakostas, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich
- Rolf Klappert, University of Neuchâtel
- Olivier Küttel, Euresearch Head Office
- Hans-Joachim Knopf, University of St. Gallen
- Sonja Merwar, Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research
- Gabriela Obexer-Ruff, Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities
- Alex Waehry, University of Geneva
- Johanna Ziberi, Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities

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More information about Euraxess in Switzerland at  
<http://www.crus.ch/die-crus/koordiniert-harmonisiert/euraxess-for-staff.html> (last visited on May 20, 2010)



Information for mobile researchers at [www.euraxess.ch](http://www.euraxess.ch)









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Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA  
**State Secretariat for Education and Research SER**  
Multilateral Research Cooperation

Hallwylstrasse 4  
CH-3003 Bern  
T +41 31 323 52 78  
F +41 31 322 78 54  
[europrogram@sbf.admin.ch](mailto:europrogram@sbf.admin.ch)  
[www.sbf.admin.ch](http://www.sbf.admin.ch)