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EURAXESS Switzerland: strategic goals 2021-2024

EURAXESS - Initiative and context

The promotion and support of researchers is of great strategic importance to Swiss higher education institutions and research locations. Excellent researchers make a significant contribution to international competitiveness and national innovation strength. This is one of the reasons why Switzerland is a member of EURAXESS, a European initiative that promotes the mobility and careers of researchers. The EURAXESS initiative supports the priorities for strengthening the European Research Area (ERA). The EURAXESS network currently comprises more than 40 countries.

After Switzerland was only partially associated at Horizon 2020 from 2014-2016 following the adoption of the "mass immigration initiative" in 2014, it has been fully associated at the 8th Research Framework Programme again since 2017. Currently, the definitive framework for Horizon Europe, the 9th European Research Framework Programme, which is to run from 2021-2027, is being prepared. In this context, a one-year extension of the current programme is planned for EURAXESS for the time being. It bears the (provisional) title TOP4 Extension.

Exactly how Switzerland's participation in Horizon Europe will take shape is still open. There are various uncertainties. These include the still unclear modalities for associations of third countries such as Switzerland at European level.

EURAXESS offers a wide range of information and support services for researchers.

- The national website and personal counselling at the current 14 Swiss EURAXESS Centres at the higher education institutions provide researchers with information and support on questions relating to mobility, careers and, more generally, working and living in Switzerland. Refugee researchers are supported by the EURAXESS [science4refugees initiative](#).
- EURAXESS maintains a European [database](#) of vacant research positions and research funding opportunities.
- EURAXESS is committed to improving the working and career conditions of researchers ([Charter for & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#)). To this end, the European Commission has issued a Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter and Code). The 40 principles contained therein contain recommendations for employers of researchers and for researchers. They cover a wide range of topics such as freedom of research, supervisory responsibilities, career development and fair systems for the

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assessment of researchers. With the [Human Resources Strategy for Researchers \(HRS4R\)](#), the European Commission has also created an instrument for the systematic implementation of these principles. The majority of Swiss higher education institutions have appointed contact persons for the Charter and Code, and some [Swiss institutions](#) have drawn up an action plan in accordance with the HRS4R.

Funding

Switzerland has been successfully involved in the European initiative "EURAXESS Researchers in Motion" since 2008. Since the beginning, the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities has been involved in the European activities in close cooperation with EU GrantsAccess of ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich and has also established a national network.

For 2020, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) has granted swissuniversities funding of CHF 120,000. The same amount is to be requested from SERI for subsequent years. A multi-year collaboration is intended. The close collaboration with EU GrantsAccess has proved very successful and is to be continued.

Goal

In the interest of national continuity and the simultaneous further development and consolidation of the network, the swissuniversities International Relations Delegation defines the objectives for 2021-2024.

1 Continued active participation at European level

Switzerland has been actively involved in the EURAXESS TOP4 project in recent years. EU GrantsAccess of ETH Zurich is co-work package leader of WP3 "Making European research careers more attractive by developing new services and enhancing the current services of the EURAXESS network". The EURAXESS network is to be further consolidated under Horizon Europe and Switzerland would like to continue participating in EURAXESS. The next planned step for EURAXESS is a TOP4 Extension, which will last approximately one year, from September 2021 to August 2022. The application for this extension is due at the end of October 2020.

Goal:

swissuniversities and EU GrantsAccess continue to participate actively in European initiatives.

Activities (examples):

- Active participation in the TOP-4 Extension and in the follow-up project of TOP4 in Horizon Europe. (It is planned that EU GrantsAccess will again lead a work package on "Novel skills - talent management" in the TOP-4 Extension)
- Participation in projects, e.g. the very successful study visits and mentoring programme
- Participation in activities of the European network (e.g. participation in regional trainings, expert groups and the EURAXESS conferences)

Possible activities could also address developments e.g. in the field of sustainability and mobility or diversity.

2 Further development and strengthening of career development services, including stronger cross-network exchange

The European Commission would like to anchor career development services more firmly in the EURAXESS portfolio, which is why this topic should also be focused on more strongly within the Swiss network. Swiss universities already offer numerous and very diverse services for the career development of researchers, but some of these are decentralised. The Welcome Services of the universities only partially offer services in the area of career promotion and development.

At national level, the Swiss Academic Dual Career Network was founded by swissuniversities in 2019. The aim of this network is to promote and strengthen each other in order to support DC couples. The network already exchanges information on vacancies with the EURAXESS network, among others, and could be further involved in the area of career development. Other networks (Transferable Skills Network, Career Services Network Switzerland) could also be contacted in this regard.

Goal:

The focus on career development should be clearly anchored and strengthened within the EURAXESS Switzerland network with responsible contact persons. Cooperation between existing services and projects for career development at the higher education institutions and EURAXESS Welcome Centres should be further developed and contacts with other networks in this area deepened where possible. Where career development services do not yet exist, the establishment of such services will be examined. Such services represent added value not only for researchers but also for higher education institutions. With career development services, they can position themselves as attractive research locations and employers in the competition for the best researchers.

Activities (examples):

- Activities in the framework of the TOP-4 Extension
- Continuous update of the mapping to Career Development Services
- Kick-Off Event for the 'Contact Persons Career Development'
- Exchange of best practices on career development in specific meetings of career development contact persons
- Regular exchange and creation of synergies with the S-ADC network of swissuniversities through participation in its meetings and mutual professional support

3 Continuation of national networking and promotion activities with a stronger focus on virtual channels

There are currently 14 EURAXESS centres in Switzerland in 11 cities. All universities and two universities of applied sciences are members of the Swiss network. In addition, further universities of applied sciences have appointed EURAXESS contact persons. The network has thus grown further compared to the previous period.

In recent years, universities have expanded and diversified their offers for researchers. They have worked to improve career and working conditions and equal opportunities for women and men, while also addressing other dimensions of diversity and inequality of opportunity. The EURAXESS Switzerland portal has been constantly updated and developed in many areas over the past few years. The performance statistics of the portal are positive. Social media were used more intensively with the existing Facebook channel and the newly created LinkedIn page. On the latter page, the first campaigns on the topic of "jobs for researchers" were carried out. A so-called "Colab" was also recently opened for the Swiss network. This is a new tool on the EURAXESS extranet, a kind of virtual space for collaboration and communication. Not least in view of the current COVID 19 pandemic, forms of virtual exchange are gaining in importance.

Goal:

The network is to be further strengthened through joint activities and a regular exchange of information. In doing so, greater attention is to be paid to both established forms of exchange and new forms (social media, Colab). The promotion and visibility of EURAXESS Switzerland should thus be diversified and increased. The Swiss EURAXESS portal will be further developed and further consolidated and promoted, especially for job offers. It will serve as an important information channel for researchers and higher education institutions.

Activities (examples):

- Regular working meetings
- Promotion of EURAXESS
- Joint activities for and with the European network, e.g. on the topic of diversity at higher education institutions or talent promotion (target group PostDocs)
- Organisation of national events on specific topics and exchange of best practices on these (e.g. topic of interculturality)

4 Further promotion of the implementation of the Charter & Code

The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter & Code) was adopted by the EU in 2005 as a human resources instrument for the research sector. It contains 40 principles that define the roles, responsibilities and rights of researchers and their employers. Currently 30 Swiss universities and other research institutions have signed the [Charter & Code](#). This is a welcome development. The European Commission has also developed a multi-level strategy to implement the Charter & Code ([Human Resources Strategy for Researchers](#)), which has so far been implemented by five Swiss institutions. Further promotion in this area could continue the positive development and underline the continuing importance of the Charter & Code. To this end, the higher education institutions themselves should also be more involved.

Goal:

The Charter & Code should continue to be implemented by Swiss higher education institutions as a (complementary) human resources management tool through the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers. If possible, other institutions should be persuaded to sign the Charter & Code.

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Activity (example):

- Further promote the implementation of the Charter & Code by promoting it (e.g. through a seminar or an exchange between higher education institutions)