

swissuniversities

Euraxess Coordination Board

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Euraxess Switzerland: Goals and Activities 2014-2016

In the international jobs market, the field of research and development is characterised by intense competition, and recruiting the best researchers poses a great challenge. European higher education institutions can secure excellent researchers by providing better working conditions and more efficient supportive structures than the competition. In this regard, the Euraxess Network with its services for researchers represents a major achievement in the European research community.

Mandate of swissuniversities

Switzerland has taken part in the European initiative “Euraxess Researchers in Motion” since 2008. From the outset, the Rectors’ Conference of the Swiss Universities participated in the European activities in close collaboration with EU GrantsAccess of ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich; a national network was also established. In January 2013, in view of the new Higher Education Bill, swissuniversities assumed responsibility for coordinating the initiative and became the official representative of all three types of higher education institutions in this domain.

For the year 2014 as well, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation has commissioned swissuniversities to head the national coordination of Euraxess, granting CHF 120,000 in funding; a long-term collaboration is planned. The close collaboration with EU GrantsAccess has proven successful and will be continued.

To ensure a sense of national continuity and the harmonisation with the defined goals of the European Commission, the Euraxess Coordination Board, which was established by swissuniversities, defines the goals for 2014–2016 and drafts an action plan containing measures to implement the project.

Euraxess – the initiative

Euraxess offers researchers a wide range of information and support services.

Euraxess Services: the national website and personalised advice offered at the universities’ service centres help researchers in questions concerning mobility.

Euraxess Jobs: this website is an independent jobs portal advertising open research positions in Switzerland.

Euraxess Rights: Euraxess Rights is committed to improving the working conditions of researchers (*Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*), to optimising social insurance conditions and to easing entry into Switzerland.

The impact of current events

Switzerland's yes-vote of 9 February 2014 on the immigration initiative has multiple consequences on Euraxess:

The European Commission decided that Switzerland will be treated as a third-party state in Horizon 2020 projects. It is, however, fair to assume that the federal funding initially allocated to becoming an associate member will now be redirected to funding the participation of Swiss researchers on a case-by-case basis. It is currently unclear how the situation will be handled in the case of Euraxess. The limited access to Switzerland (and possible introduction of quotas) imposed on employees from EU member states may have negative repercussions on recruiting researchers at Swiss higher education institutions. Against this backdrop, it is likely that researchers will express a greater need for information; Euraxess advisory services will play a major role in providing this information.

Goals and Activities 2014–2016

1 Continued participation at the European level

Situation:

Switzerland participated in the FP7 project TOP 2, which incorporates all Euraxess activities from the years 2012 to 2014. Through this work, Switzerland established valuable contacts in the area of research management, succeeded in promoting the exchange of knowhow, and furthered the development of good practices. The national network benefitted significantly from the experience and knowledge gained.

Particular highlights include EU GrantsAccess assuming the co-lead of the work package "Capacity Building" in the TOP 2 and the participation of swissuniversities in a call for proposals that enabled members of the Swiss network to embark on study visits throughout Europe. These and other activities made Switzerland an internationally respected and appreciated partner.

Goal:

swissuniversities and EU GrantsAccess work to secure Switzerland's participation in the initiative. This is especially significant in light of the TOP 2 follow-up project, which has already entered the planning phase and is scheduled to be a part of Horizon 2020.

Activities:

- Active participation in the next comprehensive project that includes European Euraxess activities (TOP 3: lead of a work package)
- Common activities in the European network: attending events, participation in meetings, promoting exchange, joint contributions
- Active participation in bids for national networks or for priority themes

2 Expanding the national network activities in both institutional and thematic respect

Situation:

Over the past few years, Swiss universities have expanded their advisory services for researchers by establishing welcome centres. In addition, the universities of applied sciences have begun to signal their interest in the network. Overall, the need for exchange in Switzerland (and Europe) has grown, and existing opportunities have increasingly been taken advantage of. Several universities and universities of applied sciences have worked on implementing the Charter&Code, and the higher education institutions have on the whole been very active in improving the working conditions of researchers. Several measures, including mentoring programmes and dual-career advice, share synergies with the SUC programme “Equal Opportunity for Women and Men at Universities” and the “Programmes doctoraux”.

Goal:

The network continues to be strengthened through joint activities, and it profits from potential synergies with various offices at higher education institutions. Changes in Switzerland’s higher education system are taken into account.

New priorities are set at the European level: Euraxess services are expanded and will include non-mobile researchers (dual-career, gender-specific measures, career development, cooperation with private enterprise, quality assurance in HR management, academic career development). The Coordination Board (and EU GrantsAccess in TOP 3) evaluates the topics in light of their national relevance and how they could potentially be adopted in national priority projects.

Activities:

- Regular meetings
- Organization of national conferences
- Promotion of Euraxess: information about Euraxess for researchers, other staff at higher education institutions, private enterprise and government officials; cooperation with job platforms
- Evaluation of other priority themes
- Collaboration with government officials (particularly regarding the potential introduction of quotas)
- Joint activities in the European network: attending events, promoting exchange, joint contributions
- Mapping the Swiss network
- Activities that can be undertaken when implementing the Charter&Code and the targeted quality assurance in HR management

3 Further development of the website and other communication channels

Situation:

The national Euraxess website www.euraxess.ch contains useful information on mobility for researchers. Since its launch in 2008, the content has been continually updated and some technological improvements have been made. The website, however, no longer meets today’s technology, layout and usability requirements.

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Goal:

The website's content and technology is further developed. Where possible, structure and layout are modernised. Content is expanded to include all Euraxess priority themes. Use of other channels of communication (social media) is evaluated.

Activities:

- Regular maintenance of website
- In agreement with the European Commission, new layouts and structures for the website are developed to meet today's demands (state of the art)
- Evaluation of new channels of communication

Approved by the Executive Board of swissuniversities on the 10th of April 2014.