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EURAXESS Switzerland: Strategic Goals and Activities 2017–2020

Research and development are among the world's most competitive working environments and recruiting the best researchers presents a major challenge. European higher education institutions can recruit excellent researchers by offering better career opportunities, better working conditions, and more efficient support structures than institutions elsewhere. In this regard, the EURAXESS Network and its services for researchers represent an indispensable achievement of the European research community.

The EURAXESS Initiative

EURAXESS offers researchers wide-ranging information and support services.

- The national website and the personal advice offered at the various higher education EURAXESS Centres provide researchers with information and support on key issues such as mobility and career planning.
- The initiative provides researchers with access to European databases listing research job vacancies and funding opportunities, offering help with finding cooperation partners, and including a lot of other useful information and support.
- EURAXESS is committed to improving the working conditions and career prospects of researchers ([Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#)).

Mandate

Switzerland has successfully participated in the European initiative “EURAXESS Researchers in Motion” since 2008. From the outset, the Rectors’ Conference of Swiss Higher Education Institutions has cooperated closely on European activities with EU GrantsAccess, the joint information and advice centre of the ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich; a national network has also been established.

For the year 2017 as well, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) has commissioned swissuniversities to manage the national coordination of EURAXESS, granting CHF 115'000 in funding. Close cooperation with EU GrantsAccess has proven successful and will be continued.

To ensure a sense of national continuity and alignment with the goals of the European Commission, the swissuniversities Delegation for International Relations has defined the following goals for 2017–2020:

1 Continued active involvement at the European level

Situation:

After its partial association until the end of 2016, Switzerland is now fully re-associated with Horizon 2020. Switzerland continued to participate in European EURAXESS activities also during its partial association. Switzerland continues to actively participate in the network through (1) EU GrantsAccess heading the work package "Career Management and Professional Development for EURAXESS" in the TOP3¹ Project and (2) the participation of swissuniversities in the call for projects. This involvement will further strengthen exchange between the Swiss network and Europe. Swiss participation in TOP4, the follow-up project aimed at pooling all EURAXESS activities across national borders, is also envisaged.

Goal:

swissuniversities and EU GrantsAccess will contribute actively to European initiatives.

Activities:

- Active participation in TOP3 and its follow-up project TOP4
- Joint activities in the European network
- Active participation in calls for projects

2 Cooperation with and establishment of career development services

Situation:

The TOP3 project aims to provide more services for non-mobile researchers through EURAXESS. One focus is to establish services contributing to the career development of researchers. An initial survey in Switzerland shows that such services already exist decentrally in some higher education institutions (partly funded by national instruments).

Goal:

To ensure cooperation between existing career development services and EURAXESS. To consider establishing such services where none exist to date.

Possible activities:

- Reflex- and TOP3 activities
- Devise a process for cooperating with existing career development services, and for establishing such services
- Contact and inform the corresponding units and offices
- ...

3 Continued commitment to national networking- and promotional activities

In recent years, Swiss higher education institutions have further expanded their services for researchers. All universities and one university of applied sciences are part of the EURAXESS Network (as at February 2017). The majority of universities of applied sciences have appointed EURAXESS contacts, who have since participated at national and international events and engaged in networking.

In general, Swiss higher education institutions have endeavoured to improve the working conditions, career opportunities, and equal opportunities of female and male researchers.

¹ Making European research careers more attractive by developing new services and enhancing the current services of the EURAXESS network – EURAXESS TOPIII

Goals:

To continue strengthening the network through joint activities and through providing information. To ensure that researchers and higher education institutions are aware of the national EURAXESS website as a national source of information.

Activities:

- Regular working meetings
- Organise national events
- Continue pursuing focal topics of the European Commission (e.g., cooperation with business and industry, dual career advice, and career development services) and bring these issues into the network
- Joint activities in the European network
- Promote EURAXESS
- Cooperate with government bodies and authorities
- Map the Swiss network

4 Promote the implementation of the Charter & Code

Situation:

The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter & Code) was enacted in 2005 by the EU as a human resources instrument in the research sector. The Charter & Code contains 40 principles, which define the role, responsibilities, and rights of researchers and their employers. All Swiss universities, the institutions within the ETH domain, some universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education, and other institutions have signed the Charter & Code. The European Commission has devised a multi-stage strategy to ensure the effective implementation of the Charter & Code ([Human Resources Strategy for Researchers](#)). The strategy has so far been implemented by four Swiss higher education institutions (as at February 2017).

Goal:

To ensure that Swiss higher education institutions increasingly implement the Charter & Code as an (additional) human resources management tool through the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers.

Activity:

- Purposefully promote the implementation of the Charter & Code through promoting and supporting the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers and through running dedicated workshops.