

Workshop 3:

Individual and NGO perspectives: knowledge mobility

Mobility is one of the core ideas behind the functioning of the European Union. It holds the promise of pursuing opportunities in both professional and private sphere wherever they may lead you. As such it is important that the EU upholds its promise and provides frictionless integration and exhaustive support to everyone willing to partake. Particularly in science, international experience is often seen as a key requirement for career progression, but nevertheless scientists still often face many barriers when finding meaningful work abroad.

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) is one of the most successful pan European funding schemes providing the financial means for academics to pursue research opportunities and was meant to be one of the crucial drivers of brain circulation. With over 100,000 researchers already receiving MSCA funds it has been largely successful in creating opportunities, but does it provide a good basis for true brain circulation to occur?

By nature, it operates in the European Research Area which encompasses over 27 different harmonised yet distinct legislative regions. Further, it contains a rich diversity of cultural traditions, which are more or less prone to internationalisation. As an EU programme with an overarching mandate across all member states MSCA could provide further assistance to its alumni at all stages of their mobility process, striving towards a balanced equation in brain circulation. Further, there remains a large legislative space yet unexplored by the European Commission, which could further facilitate a better distribution of equal research opportunities across member states, increasing brain circulation potentials.

Currently, this space largely remains filled by individual hosting institutions providing integration services to the best of their extent and NGOs. NGOs are among the best positioned to offer support in a less prescribed manner. Through soft approaches such as informal networking, knowledge sharing and peer mentoring, we provide a pillar for the research community to acclimatise to a novel environment. With end-to-end support NGOs can also aid in reintegration to researchers back to their home environment as a prolonged stay abroad can mean a break in the professional social network one has built before departure as well as a diminished understanding of the local employment market.

In the proposed workshops the participants will discuss paper submissions from conference attendees sharing their personal experience of a MSCA fellowship. The participants will be split up into small groups, each containing an NGO representative from a member state focusing on facilitating international mobility for researchers or students. The group discussion will be moderated by a skilled facilitator. The discussion will focus on addressing the main issues facing the author with regards to mobility.

The key questions participants will discuss are:

- How to facilitate integration before the mobility experience and upon returning to their home country?
- How to best support scientists during their experience abroad?
- How to best utilise the skills, knowledge, and the intercultural experience gained during their mobility?

The participants will be encouraged to share their personal experience in their capacity as alumni or NGO representatives. The workshop will result in a short resolution, identifying the key problems and proposing meaningful solutions to be enacted by appropriate actors.

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