

Position paper for the panel discussion:

Addressing political challenges of MSCA to foster balanced mobility flows in Europe

The *2021 MSCA Presidency Conference* will be the first conference after the adoption of the New ERA Communication and the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2021-2022 for MSCA. It will highlight the unbalanced brain circulation that “*still represents a major challenge in and for the Member States and contributes to the research and innovation divide within the EU*”[\[1\]](#). This issue concerns the process of further development of the New ERA and MSCA.

Overcoming the fragmentation of the EU research and innovation system in terms of more balanced mobility flows of MSCA researchers is the issue that should be discussed in more detail with all MSCA stakeholders to make brain circulation a reality.

The Slovenian MSCA Presidency Conference 2021 aims to contribute to the achievement of the flagship of the New ERA, namely to build a common scientific and technological area for the EU and to create a single market for research and innovation, to foster the free movement of researchers, scientific knowledge and innovation, and to encourage a more competitive European industry. Given that free movement is one of the fundamental principles of the EU, we have rightly focused in the past on enabling and enhancing the mobility of researchers and students, and we will continue to do so, in particular through MSCA and other European programmes and initiatives.

However, to fully exploit the knowledge potential and compete on a level playing field with our global partners, additional focus and efforts should be made to introduce and use support mechanisms for the return and reintegration of a certain part of our talents to the country of origin. Therefore, the *2021 MSCA Presidency Conference* will focus on the return and reintegration processes of MSCA researchers to the country of origin after the completion of an MSCA fellowship.

According to the *Council Conclusion on the Deepening the European Research Area: Providing researchers with attractive and sustainable careers and working conditions and making brain circulation a reality*[\[2\]](#), we will organise this conference to encourage all MSCA stakeholders to improve the quality of research and innovation systems with

appropriate framework conditions, including sufficient R&D investments and implementation of reforms as needed. We will focus the discussions on the importance of the additional Member States measures' aiming at creating targeted training and career opportunities for the researchers, improving working conditions and environment, supporting investments in human capital, science and technology infrastructures to attract researchers back after their fellowships.

The overall objective of the conference will be to discuss and elaborate the multidimensional MSCA talent circulation among various MSCA stakeholders, including researchers, about the diversity of mobility flows and the different aspects, effects of MSCA return mobility, and reintegration processes in the country of origins to achieve well-balanced mobility flows. The conference will address the issue of return migration and reintegration processes of MSCA researchers after the completion of their scholarships to countries of origin as a challenge to multidimensional intra-European mobility flows of researchers. There are many forms of mobility flows and reintegration policies that are not necessary to be focused on physical movement from one country to another. Therefore, at the conference, we will try to highlight in particular the impacts of MSCA researchers on their countries of origin and the design of different forms and levels of mobility flows and reintegration processes of researchers between countries of origin and host countries. We believe that only balanced input and output mobility flows can establish a more balanced talent circulation within the EU, with reintegration processes playing an important role. In this context, Slovenian Presidency would like to demonstrate the importance and impact of MSCA in achieving the goals and priorities of the New ERA as the main goal of the MSCA conference.

The **first objective** is to raise awareness of the importance of the return mobility and reintegration processes to foster the balanced mobility flows of MSCA researchers. Return migration and reintegration processes are focused on the measures of the country of origin to enable outgoing students or researchers to return and continue their research careers at the home, in their country of origin, or establish long-term cooperation between institutions of the country of origin with an outgoing researcher abroad, which can take various forms.

The **second objective** is to show examples of existing good practices as well as barriers, instruments, and policies to promote the return migration and reintegration processes of MSCA fellows after the end of the project, their research careers, knowledge, and skills into their country of origin.

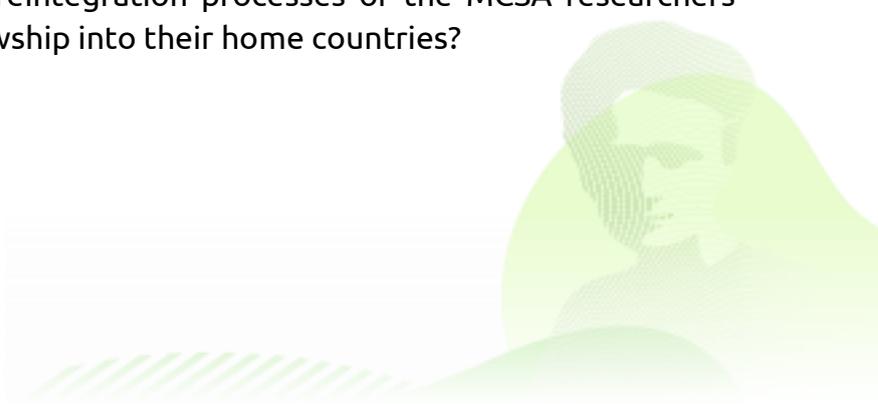
The **third objective** is to make recommendations for the implementation of MSCA return migration and reintegration instruments and policies at the EU, Member State, research organization and individual level. The conference will seek to develop a set of instruments as good practices to promote balanced mobility flows of MSCA researchers in Europe.

To provide more possibilities for a successful return migration and reintegration processes of former MSCA fellows into the countries of their origin, we need a more focused discussion on a conceptual orientation that would foster multidimensional and the same time balanced mobility flows. For this reason, we need to introduce some evidence-based policies and learn from our diverse and different experiences and try to improve and design new policy tools, instruments and processes for different stakeholders. Bidirectional mobility flows must be encouraged and must be transparent. We need policies and instruments to promote both mobility flows because only balanced mobility flows enable talent circulation in the true sense of the word.

We aim to show that more thoroughly designed return mobility and reintegration policies could establish more balanced mobility flows between different knowledge centres and sectors in all parts of Europe.

The key questions for the panellist will be:

- What can the European Union, the Member States and the academic community do concerning MSCA to make the talent flows in the EU more balanced?
- What is the role of the return migration and reintegration processes of the MSCA researchers after the end of their fellowship into their home countries?
- Do we need to create additional instruments on a different level to encourage the return migration and reintegration processes of the MSCA researchers after the end of their fellowship into their home countries?



[1] Council of the European Union, Council Conclusions on the New European Research Area, Brussels, 1. December 2020, 13567/20, p. 19

[2] Council of the European Union, Council Conclusions on the Deepening the European Research Area: Providing researchers with attractive and sustainable careers and working conditions and making brain circulation a reality, 28.5.2021, 9138/21

