

Science Europe Response to the Call for Evidence on the European Commission Fair Labour Mobility Package

January 2026

The free movement of people, knowledge, and expertise is a core component of an effective and attractive European Research Area (ERA). It is vital that research professionals are provided with opportunities for mobility in an equitable and inclusive manner as a means of gaining expertise, experience, and new skills. Done effectively, this can boost the quality and impact of research across the ERA, contributing to brain circulation, and fostering attractive, inclusive, and diverse working conditions for all research professionals.

Science Europe responds to this Call for Evidence on the European Commission Fair Labour Mobility Package, from the perspective of the public research sector, and in line with positions and priorities developed with its Member Organisations: national public research funding and performing organisations.

It is necessary that the proposed [Fair Labour Mobility Package](#) will be fully aligned with relevant aspects of the eventual ERA Act and any other relevant EU initiatives, such as the Skills Portability Initiative: coherence between these related mechanisms will facilitate the achievement of a borderless ERA for research professionals. It is also necessary that coherence is established with developments and the state-of-the-art in other major research policy movements such as the reform of research assessment and open science, both of which directly influence the mobility and career pathway opportunities of research professionals.

Science Europe is currently developing a series of principles and recommendations for a common career standard across the ERA. The principles will frame a series of recommendations to facilitate mobility of researchers across the countries in ERA. The following guiding principles are proposed for the Fair Labour Mobility Package where it concerns the careers of research professionals:

- Mobility, in all its forms (inter-sectoral, inter-disciplinary, geographical, virtual, etc.), should be promoted wherever beneficial, with a focus on the skills and competencies gained, the research results obtained, and the outcomes achieved through mobility. At the same time, mobility should not be a requirement for career progression, but rather one of multiple paths to obtain the skills and competencies required for a role.
- As recommended in the [2022 Science Europe Position Statement on Strengthening R&I systems across Europe](#), mobility schemes specifically aimed at 'brain circulation' throughout Europe should be further developed and properly funded. These initiatives

should be supported by networking opportunities and infrastructure development and access schemes that can help to boost scientific development in lower resourced economies.

- All research professionals should:

- have access to the widest array of feasible social security provisions according to function and status. A common and coordinated approach to social security provision across the European Research Area would facilitate this.
- be supported and enabled to pursue available career pathways and mobility opportunities based on individual merits without any form of bias (conscious, unconscious, or systemic), discrimination, or unfair treatment. Family and gender impacts are an important concern, and family-oriented mobility conditions (including childcare access, spousal employment support etc.) should be considered.
- be guaranteed freedom of scientific inquiry, academic independence, and working conditions conducive to good research practice, including the right to free movement.

Further, in accordance with its [position](#) towards the proposed ERA Act, Science Europe emphasises the following career-related actions:

- encouraging countries to offer clear pathways to permanent contracts and residence, establishing common minimum social-security benefits for researchers at all stages and promoting the portability of social rights,
- creating an EU-wide automatic recognition system for academic qualifications,
- simplifying visa procedures for non-EU researchers and their families,
- reducing legal barriers to intra-European mobility for non-EU researchers. .

These measures would help foster healthy brain circulation, reduce precarious employment opportunities, and make research careers more attractive across the ERA, thereby improving overall research quality and impact. A coordinated approach to these interventions across both the Fair Labour Mobility Package, the Skills Portability Initiative and the ERA Act would substantially improve the working conditions for talented research professionals across the ERA.

Science Europe is the organisation representing major public organisations that fund and perform excellent, ground-breaking research in Europe. It brings together the expertise of some of the largest and most respected European research organisations to jointly push the frontiers of how scientific research is produced and delivers benefits to society.