

## **BREAKOUT SESSION SUMMARY**

### **Mobility, Migration and Career development**

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*15 participants from across Europe, including representatives from young academies across Europe, and ALLEA.*

#### **Main Topics Discussed**

The session evaluated the role of international mobility in research careers, its benefits and obstacles and how academies can support exchange.

#### **Key Findings**

- The participants noted that mobility provides proof of independence, enhances knowledge and skills (such as learning new techniques), trains flexibility and adaptability, contributes to cultural exchange, and exposes researchers to new types of research and research cultures. Of these benefits, the exposure to new perspectives and ideas as well as the opportunity to gain inspiration was deemed the most important. Second ranked was the exchange of ideas and skills across regions. Both aspects strictly require mobility and cannot be achieved without it, especially the latter.
- Funding, family situation, security, safety, uncertainty as well as language and visa barriers were highlighted as obstacles, greatly depending on the home and host country. Among those, personal factors (partner, children, care work, etc.) and funding amount, set up, availability and competition were the most important. Surprisingly, participants were somewhat pessimistic as to the degree that academies can mitigate any of these factors, with institutional regulations being an exception.
- While there was dissent as to whether it should be a requirement for an academic career, there was a strong consensus that academic mobility needs to be facilitated. Despite benefits being obvious, pressures from institutions and society, associated costs and added workload deter individuals from making use of existing opportunities. Gender differences were acknowledged to be persistent.

#### **Outcomes and Follow-up actions**

- A wide-spread change in academic culture is considered necessary, including promotion of risk taking / courage, appreciation of mobility, associated skills and experiences as well as non-linear career paths (both from institutions and PIs). Expectations of “flexicurity” (maximum flexibility with full security) were considered to be unrealistic and perhaps even part of the problem.
- On a practical level, increased transparency in funding schemes and national regulations, protected time for mobility, structured institutional support both during the application and exchange period, and diversity of programs (e.g., for researchers with family, for repeated short stays, or for local exchange within adjacent disciplines) were identified as areas for improvement. Being a good host country with structured support in English (or additional languages) is considered a competitive advantage.
- Besides pushing for such changes at the institutional and national levels and being part of a change in culture, academies can serve as disseminators of information.
- In some countries, one week exchanges within adjacent disciplines are possible and encouraged to facilitate exchange between disciplines, institutions and regions. The “Beginner’s Guide to Swedish Academia” is an example for a publication aiming to increase transparency for international scholars.

This workshop and report may serve as a basis for further investigation, and could lead to a joint statement on the state of research exchange / mobility, highlighting its benefits and obstacles, and making concrete suggestions on how to facilitate mobility and exchange going forward.