



# Supporting international students & researchers

## Collaborations at local level

EURAXESS TOP IV Regional Training of ESCs  
and ECPs for Capacity Building  
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# UniWeliS - Supporting internationalisation of HE through professionalising services for mobile academic staff

## Why this project

- Support services at HEIs in CE-SE region still mostly focus on students & short-term staff mobility
- Mid & long-term mobility (more than 3 months) of PhD students & academic staff usually falls out of the scope of existing international offices & welcome centres
- Assistance typically still provided in a decentralised manner and on a highly-individualised basis
- Intensifying internationalisation of HE requires more strategic & systematic approach to integration of international staff

## What is our goal

- To increase the quality of assistance provided to incoming PhD students and academics in CE-SE region and contribute to stronger welcoming institutional cultures attracting more international talents.
- This should be achieved through:
  - strategic mapping & planning of feasible institutional services based on specific needs & context,
  - training the staff to provide such services,
  - contributing to professionalisation of services for international PhDs/staff.

**Project partners:** SAIA (SK), ACA (BE), NAWA (PL), UNIS (RS), SU (BG), UNIBA (SK)

„Supporting internationalisation of HE through professionalising services for mobile academic staff“ (UniWeliS)

Project reference number 2020-1-SK01-KA203-078369

# Who are our target groups

## Management

Heads of international offices, research support offices, vice-deans & vice-rectors responsible for these portfolios with a key role in initiating & steering the changes project hopes to achieve

## Support staff

Staff members working in the area of internationalisation & research support, who will implement the suggested measures in their daily work

## Indirect target groups

PhD students & academic staff and various stakeholders dealing with academic mobility gaining access to information & tools they can use in their work

**10 countries of CE-SE region (BG, CZ, HR, HU, RO, RS, PL, SI, SK, MK)**

# How do we want to achieve the goals



## Analysing the current situation

Report on support needs and related training needs



## Designing the service framework

Model welcome service framework incl. online app



## Developing the training scheme

Training scheme for HE managers and support staff (6 training modules)



## Transforming the training to online form

Online training programme for HE managers and support staff



## Training the staff from partner institutions

International administrator / manager training



## Disseminating the outcomes

3 national dissemination training workshops and international dissemination conference

[uniwelis.saia.sk](http://uniwelis.saia.sk)

# Report on support needs & related training needs

- Analysis of the existing barriers and **specific needs of international PhDs & academics**
- Comprehensive analysis of the existing **national and institutional mobility related barriers** faced by local HEIs
- Identification of **training needs of HE support and management staff**
- Key findings and **recommendations** to institutional leaders and policy makers
- **Desk research** (national and institutional approaches to attracting and supporting talent; national strategies and policies, funding schemes; other actions fostering talent attraction)
- Open **survey** for international PhD students and academics
- **Interviews** with higher education administrative and managerial staff

# Summary of key findings – Sample

- **640 valid** responses from **85 countries**

- Respondents from top 20 countries of origin account for 55% of all responses

- EU respondents account for 13% of all responses

- 71% currently mobile vs 29% mobile in the past

- 44% female vs 55% male

- Various fields represented

- Dominated by (full-degree) PhD students / early-stage researchers (69% are mobile to earn a PhD degree)

- **76% are mobile for at least 12 months**

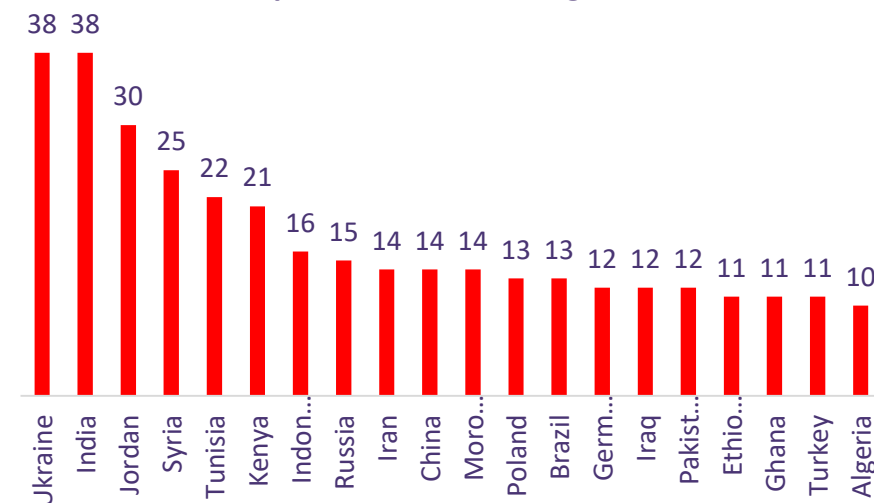
- 80% are ‘solo travelers’ / physical mobility

- Only 10% of self-funded academics, the majority funded (54%) are funded with a host country grant

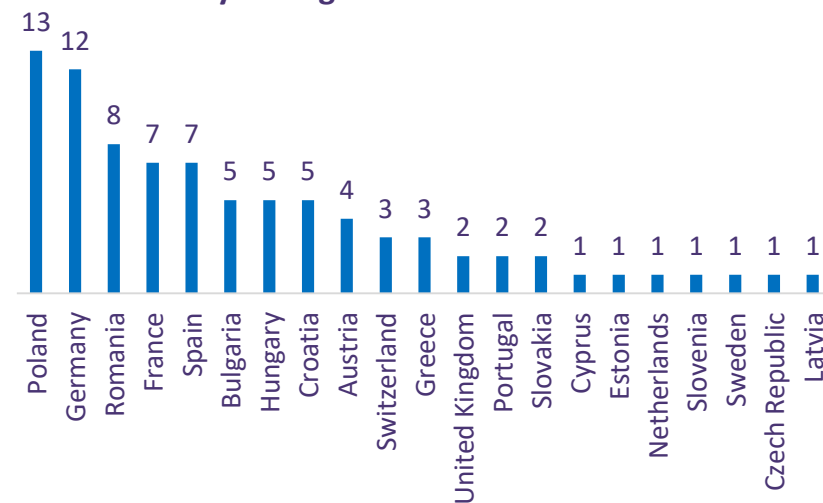
- Highly varied set of institutions and different categories of staff interviewed

- **66 interviews** - varied set of HEIs as for a profile, governance, number of international academics, funding, internationalisation experience)

Top 20 countries of origin

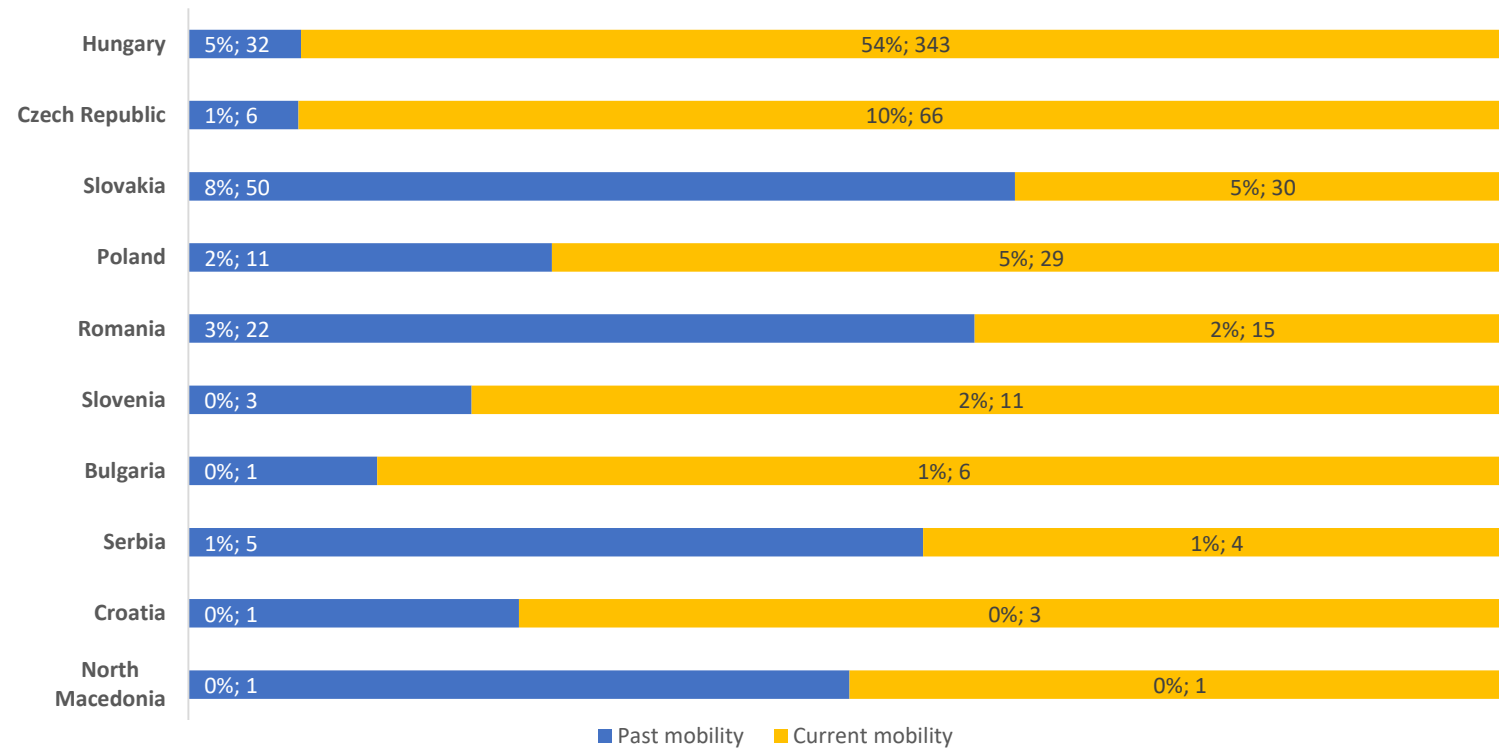


Country of origin: EU + Switzerland + UK



# Host country

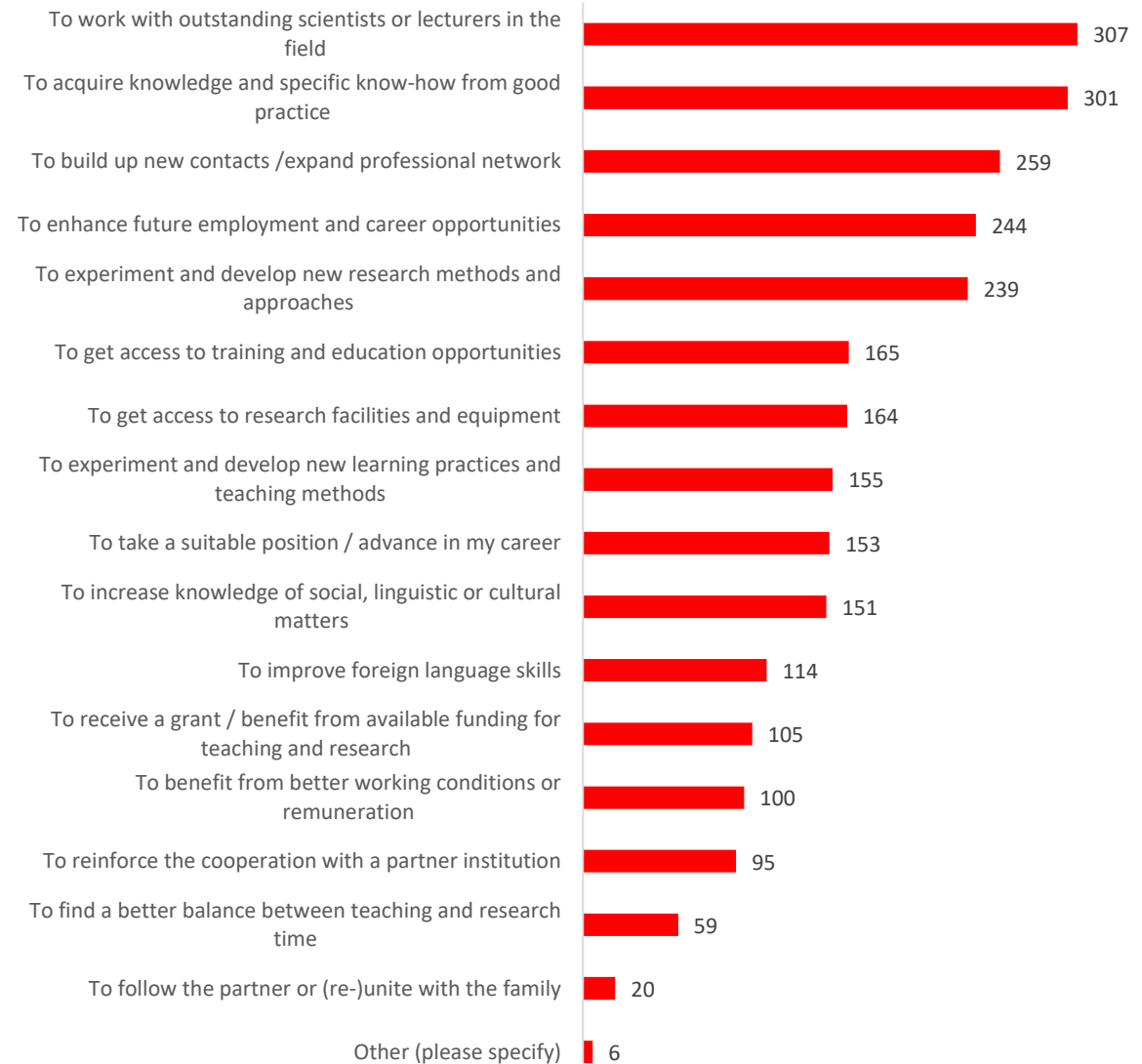
Q2: Please choose the country of your current mobility (study, visit or employment) & Q3: Please choose the country of your longest mobility (study, visit or employment) experience in the past five years on which you would like to report (n=640).



# Motivation & overall satisfaction

- Collaboration and networking are the top pull factors for mobility
- High level of satisfaction with the mobility experience:
  - **67% satisfied or highly satisfied with host country** (20% neutral, 3% unsatisfied)
  - **68% satisfied or highly satisfied with host institution** (18% neutral; 3% unsatisfied)

Q11: What were the most important reasons for selecting your study, host or employment country and institution? Please select top 3 reasons from the list.





# Most needed services

Assistance on what matters do you consider most important?  
Please rank your top 5 choices.

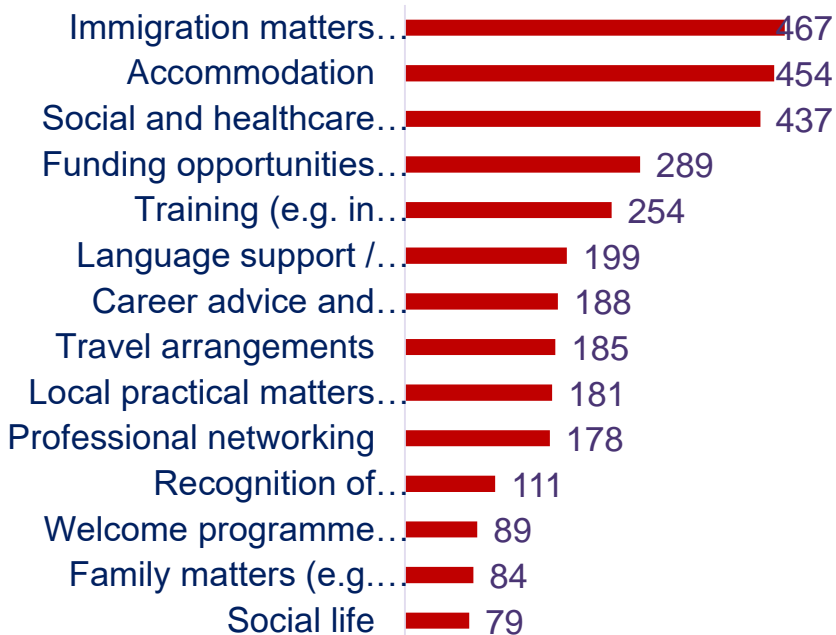


Table 5. Key matters for support by different groups of researchers

N	First Stage Researcher	Recognised Researcher	Established Researcher	Leading Researcher
1	Immigration matters	Immigration matters	Accommodation	Accommodation
2	Social and healthcare insurance	Social and healthcare insurance	Immigration matters	Social and healthcare insurance
3	Accommodation	Accommodation	Social and healthcare insurance	Funding opportunities
4	Funding opportunities	Funding opportunities	Funding opportunities	Professional networking
5	Training in teaching and research	Language support / translation	Language support	Immigration matters
6	Career advice and guidance	Local practical matters	Travel arrangements	Training in teaching and research
7	Travel arrangements	Training in teaching and research	Local practical matters	Recognition of qualifications
8	Language support / translation	Career advice and guidance	Training in teaching and research	Travel arrangements
9	Professional networking	Professional networking	Professional networking	Career advice and guidance
10	Local practical matters	Family matters	Family matters	Social life
11	Recognition of qualifications	Travel arrangements	Welcome programme	Local practical matters
12	Welcome programme	Social life	Career advice and guidance	Language support / translation
13	Family matters	Welcome programme	Recognition of qualifications	Family matters
14	Social life	Recognition of qualifications	Social life	Welcome programme

# Satisfaction with institutional services

- Most information guidance and support is offered **prior to** (71% (PhDs)& 46% (academics)) and **during mobility** (62% & 60%), but less upon departure (25% & 21%), with limited structured activities (e.g., alumni) for various groups.

## High level of satisfaction

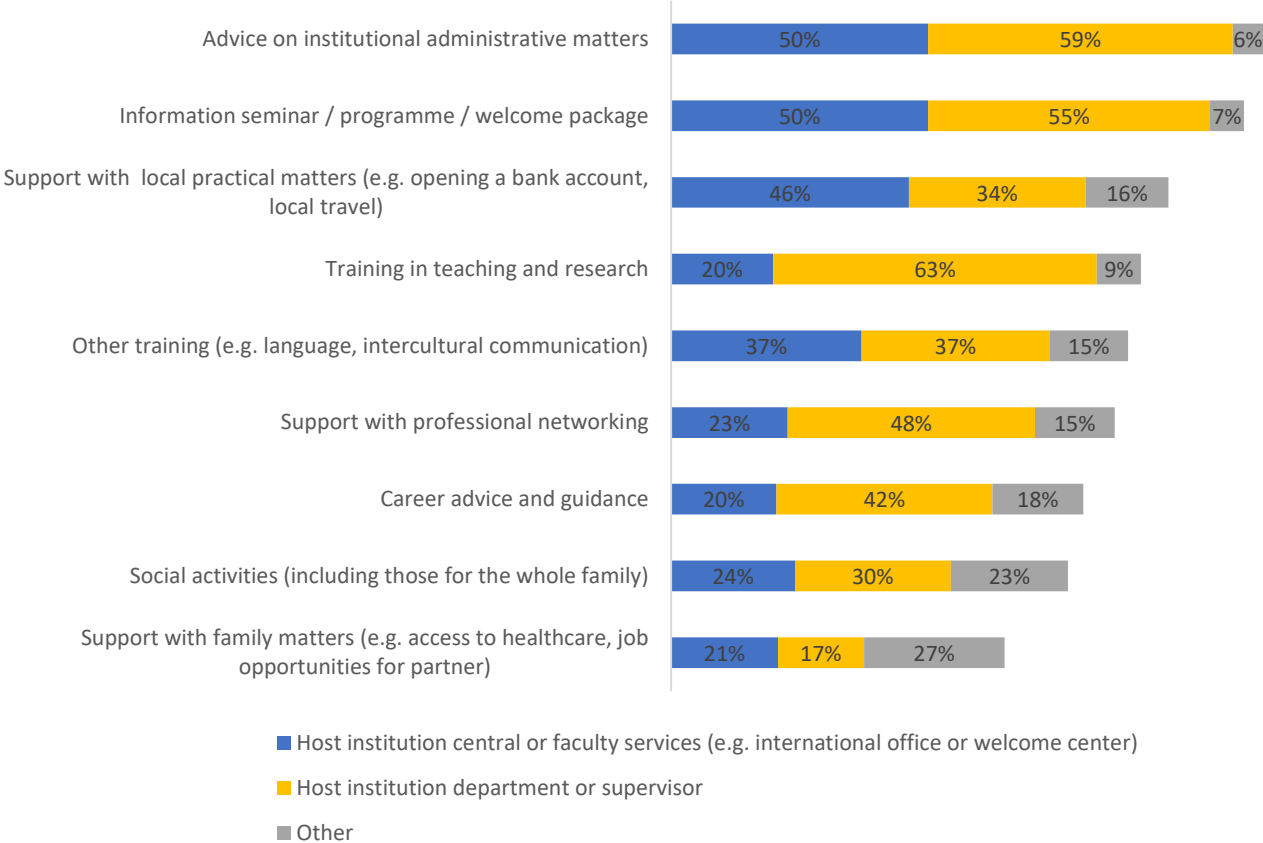
All universities offer 'most needed' assistance on **immigration** (with support at host country level), **accommodation** and **insurance**, with higher levels of satisfaction on immigration and insurance and mixed feedback on accommodation (top challenges reported).

## Lower level of satisfaction/more limited support

- **National labour regulations**, with lower levels of satisfaction (HR layer)
- Support on **funding opportunities** (highly ranked by the respondents), mostly offered at host country level prior to mobility
- Lower levels of satisfaction with **professional support** upon departure, mostly offered ad hoc
- Lower levels of satisfaction with info guidance & support on **family matters** and social life
- Lower levels of satisfaction with **language** support prior to mobility and language training during mobility (top challenge for the respondents)

# Support received at various level prior to mobility

Q17: What kind of support (personalised assistance) have you received during your mobility (stay, visit or employment) and at which level? (n=640; multiple choice)



# Common external partners

- Embassies
- Municipalities (e.g. partnerships for social housing, branding & visibility)
- \*Police stations
- \*Tax offices
- \*Banks
- Nostrification bodies
- \*International schools & kindergarten
- Real estate agencies
- Funders (e.g. SAIA, NAWA, DZS, Fulbright)
- EURAXESS network

\* *Partnerships based on personal contacts & hierarchy-based problem-solving*

# Institutional state of play - challenges

- **Bottlenecks:** Lack of **strategic approach** to long-term staff mobility, talent attraction and retention, with stronger links to overall institutional goals/Lack of clarity / prioritisation / formal agreement / standardized processes for **non-essential services**
- Internationalisation strategies tend to **prioritize students mobility** and miss on links to staff mobility.
- Lack of **coordination** (and sometimes trust) between various internal support structures
- **Ad hoc collaboration** with the external partners and lack of business models
- Staff overload at all levels
- **Limited tracking** and comprehensive data on international academics
- Pandemic related challenges

# Key skills and desired training

Top 5 skills, attitude, and knowledge required	Top 5 desired blocks of training
Empathy & flexibility	Management training (time, stress, conflict resolution)
Internal and external knowledge of higher education	Intercultural training
Communication & intercultural skills	'Attitude to service' & soft skills (e.g. communication)
Language skills (esp. English)	Language training
Creative problem-solving	Welcome services and orientation
Digital skills	Community building (e.g. alumni networks)
	Marketing (e.g. raising attraction) & business models
	Data collection & analysis

# EURAXESS TOPIII: Guide on mobilising local resources to remove mobility obstacles

## Why to cooperate

- Better and more comprehensive service – fastforwarding the procedure for international researchers
- Share and save resources – networking can save the budget
- Critical mass
- Knowledge exchange and new ideas
- Visibility – raises awareness and reaches political attention

## How you could cooperate

- Exchange of experience (formal/informal)
- Pool of experts (local authorities, local departments of governmental bodies in mobility-related areas)
- Several services in one place
- Joint “Welcome centre” of 2/several HEIs
- Invitation of local researchers to welcome events

# Who to collaborate with

- Other universities and higher education institutions, interregional consortium composed of universities
- Research organisations and technological centres
- City council, municipality
- Local authorities (immigration office, police office, tax authorities, state office, embassies, consulates, vehicle registration authority)
- Local departments of government bodies (Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs)
- Local companies, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), business partners
- Local chamber of commerce, confederation of employers
- Alumni, PhD, PostDoc or scientific associations
- Student networks (Erasmus Student Network, AEEGE, AEISEC)
- Other networks – on the national, European or international level – e. g. Eures, EEN
- Private organisations (language schools, banks)
- Further training institutions (e.g. school for continuing non-credit education)
- Non-profit organisations – societies and associations (e. g. cultural centres)
- Museums, leisure facilities, sports unions, etc.
- Expat centres
- Local schools
- Local society



## Areas of collaboration

- Administrative assistance
- Accommodation
- Language learning
- Social integration – events and activities for researchers and their families
- Career support for researchers and their spouses
- Networking and knowledge sharing (networking of support staff, working groups, trainings, joint” Welcome centre”)

# Good Examples

Area	No of GE	Institution/Provider
Accommodation	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">International House Copenhagen   International House Copenhagen (kk.dk)</a>; DK</li><li>• OeAD Guesthouses, Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Leoben, Salzburg, Vienna, AT <a href="#">oeadstudenthousing.at - OeAD student housing</a></li></ul>
Language learning	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Norwegian language courses in Oslo, Norway</li><li>• Czech language courses offered by EURAXESS Czech Republic</li><li>• Café Lingua – a free and open international language exchange event, Helsinki, FI</li><li>• Network Welcome Centre – involve university staff / lecturers in welcoming activities (e.g. in linguistics), Leipzig, GE</li><li>• Languages and cultural exchange: International culture centre Kotopo, Lyon, FR</li><li>• “Intercultural coffee hour” – a collaboration between the University of Tuebingen and the further education college (VHS, Volkshochschule), Tuenbingen, GE</li></ul>

Area		Provider
Social integration – events and activities for researchers and their families	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Espace Ulys, Lyon-Saint-Étienne, FR</li> <li>• Experiencing Finland, University of Helsinki and Aalto University, FI</li> <li>• Biannual reception of the Mayor of Cologne for International Scholars, Cologne, GE</li> <li>• Welcome to Zurich – offered by the City council of Zurich, CH</li> <li>• A guide to the Swiss, CH</li> <li>• Meet &amp; Greet, Maastricht, NL</li> <li>• Stammtisch”, Graz, Austria</li> <li>• International Stammtisch”, Braunschweig, GE</li> <li>• International Stammtisch”, Cologne, GE</li> <li>• “Social hour – Guest services” Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron, Hamburg, GE</li> <li>• GO:Science – Social activities with the municipality, Chalmers University of Technology and the University of Gothenburg, SE</li> <li>• Tartu – Rich in Cultures, EE</li> <li>• Independence Day Reception, Tampere, FI</li> </ul>

Area	No	Provider
Networking of administrative staff, working groups, trainings and “A joint welcome centre”	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network btw Leipzig University, 2 Max Planck institutes, other HEIs, City of Leipzig</li> <li>• Mobility working group for all contact points and researchers, Barcelona, ES</li> <li>• Informal meetings of researchers with HR representatives, Zurich, CH</li> <li>• Informal session “Who will pay my pension”, Goethe University, Frankfurt, GE</li> <li>• Joint trainings for administrative staff of scientific organisations, Split, HR</li> <li>• Dual Career Centre Workshops, Geneva, CH</li> <li>• “A Joint Welcome Center for two organisations”, Geneva, CH</li> <li>• Periodic meetings of Dutch universities representatives with with an account manager of Dutch Immigrations</li> <li>• Table of International Mobility, Trento, IT</li> </ul>

Area	No	Provider
Research-related activities	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research seminars for all faculties of the Barcelona area Barcelona, ES</li> <li>• Le Studium events, Orleans, FR</li> <li>• Marie Skłodowska-Curie Corner at the European Researchers' Night Madrid, ES</li> <li>• Activities of EURAXESS Sc, Trieste for whole e Friuli Venezia Giulia region</li> </ul>
Job-related cooperation with companies and business partners / entrepreneurship	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internationalise With Us, Aarhus University Aarhus, NL,</li> <li>• «Meet and Greet» – Research &amp; Business, University of Liège, BE</li> <li>• Forum Liège creative, Université de Liège, BE</li> <li>• Working in Finland, Helsinki</li> </ul>

### Examples of existing networks for internationals as potential cooperation partners

Network	URL
International dual career network (IDCN)	<a href="#">IDCN - Home</a>
Stockholm's international spouse network: Stockholm Academic Forum	<a href="http://www.stockholmacademicnetwork.se">www.stockholmacademicnetwork.se</a>
Club International (CINT)	<a href="http://www.cint.at">www.cint.at</a>
Working Woman Network Grenoble	<a href="http://wwng.net/">http://wwng.net/</a>

What	Who collaborates	Services	Funding
<p>Dresden concept - a science and culture network</p> <p><a href="#">DRESDEN-concept - Exzellenz aus Wissenschaft und Kultur</a></p>	<p>Alliance of 28 research and cultural institutions</p>	<p>Comprehensive portfolio</p>	<p>University budget</p>
<p>International House Copenhagen</p> <p><a href="#">International House Copenhagen   International House Copenhagen (kk.dk)</a></p>	<p>Municipality of Copenhagen, University of Copenhagen, private initiatives focusing on international employees and their spouses.</p>	<p>Residence permit, job centre, accommodation, social events</p>	<p>All partners fund their activities through their own budget</p>
<p>Bizkaia Talent Collaboration - to attract, connect and retain talents</p> <p><a href="#">Bizkaia Talent</a></p>	<p>Non-profit associative initiative promoted by the Provincial Government of Bizkaia in collaboration with a group of universities and major companies</p>	<p>International networking seminars, relocation assistance, Dual Career Centre, Financial Aid Programme, professional support services, fairs and events</p>	<p>Provincial Government of Bizkaia</p>
<p>EURAXESS Service Centre Brno Support for international researchers in the South Moravian Region</p> <p><a href="https://www.jcmm.cz/en">https://www.jcmm.cz/en</a></p>	<p>4 HEIs/research institutions and South Moravian Region</p>	<p>Visa &amp; residence permit, accommodation, banking, health insurance, medical care, children &amp; family, Czech culture and language, social events</p>	<p>Czech Ministry of Education (program INTER-EXCELLENCE)</p>

Thank you for your attention

[uniwelis.saia.sk](http://uniwelis.saia.sk)

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Credit for charts& analysis of survey/interviews findings:  
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