

## Press Release

### **New EMN inform published: Attracting and retaining international researchers**

**How do Member States attract and retain international researchers? The latest inform from the European Migration Network (EMN) provides an overview of the means adopted by Member States to enhance attractiveness for international researchers, as well as main challenges and best practices to admit and retain them.**

*Brussels, 25 April 2022*

Third-country researchers from non-EU countries can provide important expertise to European universities and other research institutions, promoting knowledge circulation across the EU. The Students and Researchers Directive<sup>1</sup> seeks to improve and harmonise legal standards for welcoming and retaining international students and researchers, as well as making the EU a more attractive destination for them. This inform draws on the contributions of 22 Member States<sup>2</sup> and aims to explore challenges and good practices adopted at EU and national level.

While most EU Member States prioritise attracting and retaining international researchers in their policies, the means to do so vary. Member States adopt promotional and informational activities to enhance their attractiveness for international researchers, including leaflets, info days, websites, media campaigns, or missions abroad. The inform also reports bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements between EU Member States and third countries, aiming to provide funding for joint research projects or the creation of networks of academics.

Member States additionally facilitate the application process for international researchers, for instance offering the possibility of fast-track applications, an extension of the maximum period of long-term mobility, as well as financial facilitation and support.

In relation to the admission of international researchers, the inform highlights that several Member States refer to the Students and Researchers Directive, with some also implementing other national or EU employment-focused schemes that admit international researchers as highly qualified workers. In situations not covered by EU law, additional specific research-focussed national schemes are applied.

At national level, several measures are in place to facilitate the retention of international researchers. These include providing support to obtain a residence permit and registering residence with local authorities; support on arrival; induction and orientation. The inform highlights that EU Member States give international researchers the opportunity to obtain a temporary permit for nine months or more for job search or to set up a business once they have completed their research.

Member States face various challenges in attracting and retaining international researchers. These range from bureaucratic hurdles to the country not being considered sufficiently attractive, for example due to limited research infrastructure and lack of financial support.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a severe impact across the EU. For instance, travel restrictions have disrupted the inflow of researchers, and in some cases prevented the implementation of ongoing

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<sup>1</sup> Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing (recast): <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2016/801/oj>, last accessed on 5 April 2022.

<sup>2</sup> AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, HU, HR, IE, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, SK, SI, SE.

projects. In order to address these issues, new measures were introduced, such as more online or hybrid modes of mobility to complement the limited physical mobility of international researchers.

Background:

### **The study**

- Title: “EMN inform on attracting and retaining international researchers”.
- Period covered: The inform reflects the legislation, policies and practices in place in 22 Member States during the period 2018-2020.
- Subject: The challenges and good practices to attract and retain international researchers, and analyses the implementation of the Students and Researchers Directive and relevant national policies, schemes and practices in the EU Member States.

### **The EMN**

The European Migration Network (EMN) is a Europe-wide network consisting of National Contact Points (NCPs) in the EU Member States (except Denmark), and EMN observer members Norway, Georgia and Moldova, providing information on migration and asylum. The EMN was set up in 2008 by the European Commission on behalf of the European Council in order to satisfy the need for a regular exchange of reliable information on migration and asylum related issues on a European level.

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