

MSCA 2020.HR Presidency Conference
19th June 2020:

MSCA IMPACT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Panel Session I:

Achieve a fair and balanced brain circulation

How to achieve a fair and balanced brain circulation?

Identify

- **push & pull factors** not only for participating in MSCA at large, but for high-skilled migration and EU-internal “liquid mobility” (example: academic mobility)

in order to suggest and discuss adequate

- **national policies** to facilitate free circulation

Shared challenges:

- **Aging societies** in Europe all need to retain and gain a young, well-educated, skilled labour force to maintain productivity and competitiveness

=> are European Union members equal partners or unequal competitors?

A small nation *"is one whose very existence may be put in question at any moment; a small nation can disappear and it knows it."*

(Milan Kundera)

Shared challenges:

- **cohesion pressure** due to growing disparities – rural / urban, centre/ (-semi) periphery - widening social cleavages and development gaps within societies and between European regions => **raising populism / EU scepticism**

“Thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe finds itself threatened by a new divide.”

(Ivan Krastev, Die ZEIT, 6. November, 46/2019)

*Academic and high-skilled labour mobility is considered part of the problem (brain drain): how can it become part of the solution (**brain circulation**) and a triple win in the European Research Area?*

=> **Need for coordinated policy responses**

The losses and benefits of high-skilled migration, esp. post-EU accession „liquid mobility” and of remigration / return have to be assessed on **individual and societal levels** in host & home countries, the **push & pull factors** identified.

Individual

- bases mobility decisions on a transnational comparison of chances & risks
- considers a multitude of aspects critical for quality of life in different places
- takes risks and builds up resilience against risk
- is a self-responsible, socially embedded, pro-active actor looking to accumulate economic, social and cultural capital (more than “homo oeconomicus” or “homo academicus”)
- potential agent of change and bridge builder

Societal

Institutional & economic conditions: career advancement prospects, salaries / income levels, contracting terms & length, social security, access to labour market in and beyond academia, residency permits, transferability of academic degrees, research infrastructure, pro-immigration policies

Social & cultural conditions: transparency of recruiting, reliability of services, non-corruption, non-discrimination, good governance; research infrastructure and spirit, work ethics / atmosphere; societal openness and cultural diversity; educational infrastructure for children

National policies need to respond to both individual and societal levels in order to efficiently tackle the push and boost the pull factors in a collaborative effort across sectors.

National policies need to further

- be geared towards selective immigration and return
- create frameworks to support employers retaining contact with previous work-force, employees to resettle in previous jobs
- incentivize philanthropy and third sources funding for academic work
- stir public debate about the value of science & humanities for welfare and development
- address migration scepticism both as home (*too many leaving*) and host society (*too many incoming*)

Enhance internationalisation!

of national academic environments



- remove legal and institutional barriers
- provide information on legal regulations (work and residency permits, visa extension, eligibility for social benefits etc.)
- ensure transparency of legal pathways
- extend the offer of university programs / courses in English language, local culture & language courses
- support alumni networking
- incentivise transnational mobility for academic career advancement

Recognize social capital!

as driver / supporter of mobility



- link researchers with employers beyond academia
- inform about labour needs and vacant positions, especially in SMEs
- welcome transfer of new values and perspectives
- explore and strategize with diaspora networks and agencies
- promote competitive advantages as target society
- reach out to individuals and communities interested in culture and society of your country; i.e. target graduates from language courses

Is leaving easier than returning?

why return fails or succeeds



- obstacles to return (closed local networks, lack of social capital etc.)
- successful re-integration and contribution to regional development
- return framed as home-coming: emotional attachment is crucial for contributing to local / regional development
- best-practice examples of return / remigration policy programs and initiatives => need for PR and outreach strategies to potential target groups

COVID 19 and beyond:

- In what environment do we promote brain circulation?
- Are the four freedoms going to be reinstated (precondition for “liquid migration”, facilitating transnational lifestyles) – or compromised?
- Is migration & mobility going to be increasingly considered a threat and thus fuelling socio-cultural polarization?
- Will we see more conflict around socio-cultural diversity?
- Will actions of positive discrimination in favour of incoming researchers be supported in the future?