

European research area: activities within the scope of the EC framework programme 2002-2006

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In January 2000, the Commission adopted a Communication proposing the creation of a European Research Area (ERA). It emphasised, among other things, the need for more abundant and more mobile human resources. Attention was drawn, especially, to making more use of in the future, both at national and at European level, of mobility as an instrument for the transfer of scientific knowledge. This included introducing a European dimension to scientific careers, making Europe more attractive to researchers from the rest of the world. Therefore, this Communication presents a strategy to create a favourable environment for the mobility of researchers in the ERA, in order to develop, attract and retain appropriate human resources in research and to promote innovation. It aims at building up the research competence and excellence within the ERA by launching immediate actions for implementation, creating the dynamics for increased development of the above-mentioned environment and identifying ways of financial support by the different actors involved. Special attention will be devoted to the encouragement of inter-sectoral mobility, i.e. between business and academia and vice-versa. The same applies to interregional mobility in order to avoid a "brain drain" in less developed regions by actively promoting mobility both to and from these regions. In designing its mobility strategy for researchers in the ERA, the present Communication takes into account the approach towards researchers from candidate countries developed in the Commission decision on the negotiating mandates for enlargement, as well as the approach towards third country nationals developed within the Commission's amended proposal for a "Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the posting of workers who are third-country nationals for the provision of cross-border services", and a "Council Directive extending the freedom to provide cross-border services to third-country nationals established within the Community". Lastly, in the framework of the present Communication, the Commission is fully aware of the challenges and opportunities presented in the research area by the forthcoming enlargement of the EU. The candidate countries have undoubtedly an important contribution to make in enhancing excellence and mobility opportunities in Europe, thanks to the quality of their human resources in the field of science and research.