



Project acronym: SEE-ERA-NET

Project full title: Southeast European ERA-NET

Contract no.: ERAC-CT-2004-515805

WP 6 - Implementation of a Pilot Regional RTD Programme

**D 6.3 Recommendations for stand-alone measures in the field of mobility
with the Western Balkan Countries**

Due date of deliverable: March 2009

Actual date of submitting: June 2009

**Start date of project: 1 September 2004
months**

Duration: 60

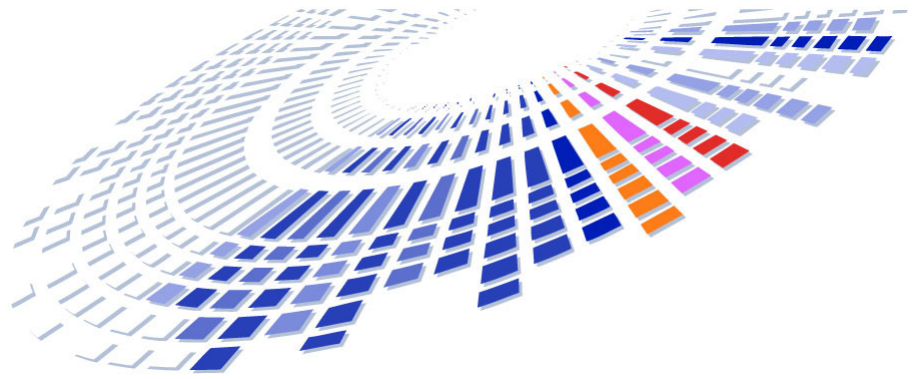
Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Framework Programme (2002-2006)

Dissemination Level

PU	Public	PU
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

WP 06

D 6.3



seeera **net** **repsee** **REGIONAL PROGRAMME
FOR COOPERATION
WITH SOUTHEAST EUROPE**
WWW.SEE-ERA.NET

D 6.3. Recommendations for stand-alone measures in the field of mobility with the Western Balkan Countries

Recommendations for stand-alone measures in the field of mobility with the Western Balkan Countries

Introduction and Background

The European Project SEE-ERA.NET is a networking project financed by the European Commission under the 6th Framework Programme for Research and Technology development. It is aimed at integrating EU Member States and Southeast European countries in the European Research Area by coordinating and supporting RTD activities conducted at bilateral level. Work Package 6 of the project is dedicated to a **Regional Programme for Cooperation with South-East Europe (ReP-SEE)**. It consists of four pillars, one of them, the third, being the **Young Scientist Programme**, to foster the individual mobility of young scientists – men and women – between their home institutions and host institutions in the Western Balkan Countries (WBC).

There are two important papers developed by the Project under Work Package 4 - *Discussion and Identification of Strategic Activities*, which initiated the background picture for these recommendations, namely:

- **SEE-ERA.NET White Paper**, which offers strategic recommendations for further activities of the SEE-ERA.NET consortium together with other major stakeholders throughout Europe. Under the Chapter IV – *Meeting the Challenges: Approaches to future cooperation*, Objective 3: *Improving human capacity building and international mobility* it is stated that “human potential should be viewed as a major potential asset and prioritised as such in the intensification of S&T cooperation with the Western Balkan countries” (D 4.1);
- **SEE-ERA.NET Joint Action Plan**, which offers concrete implementation scenarios for further activities of both the SEE-ERA.NET consortium and other major stakeholders throughout Europe (D 4.2). The four pillars of the Regional Programme for Cooperation with South-East Europe (ReP-SEE), as described by the Joint Action Plan, are:

First pillar: **Joint Call for European research projects**

Second pillar: **Accompanying Measures** in order to facilitate joint research

Third pillar: **Young Scientist Programme** to foster the individual mobility of young scientists – men and women – between their home institutions and host institutions in the Western Balkan countries

Fourth pillar: **Innovation Programme** with the aim of linking SMEs, technology/innovation centres and other innovation structures in the Western Balkan countries to existing thematic innovation networks/clusters in the EU partner countries.

As the latest developments of SEE-ERA.NET have shown, there is a considerable number of mobility programmes running at European level, many of these are also open for and extended in the Western Balkans Countries, yet the participation from this targeted region has been found low, and a series of circumstances has been identified.

In order to find new solutions for developing and promoting the young scientist mobility pillar we have to have a clear picture of the Young Scientists mobility state of art in the region:

- the brain drain and brain waste of highly skilled young scientists seems to be one of the main problems in SEE countries, because many of the potential researchers are discouraged in pursuing their mobile research career by various administrative hurdles, lack of information and slow procedure for receiving the financial incentives. Also, the WBCs make no exception from the rest of Europe when it comes to brain drain phenomena, meaning that the best researchers are attracted by the research systems of Europe's world competitors, like the United States or Japan.
- even if the number of initiatives dedicated to scientists mobility developed within WBCs are significantly increased the lack of transparency, small scale and fragmented information may affect the visibility of the national and regional mobility programmes;
- aspects like training, capacity building, sustainability and regional cooperation are often lacking.

These are the findings of a study carried out under Work Package 6, object of Deliverable 6.2: ***Study on the mobility needs and career development opportunities in South East Europe***, a document which provided additional background for these recommendations.

Policy context

The European Commission acknowledges that one of the main competitive edges in science and technology is the quantity and quality of its human resources. Through its framework programmes for research and technology development, the Commission repeatedly pursued the impact that the mobility of researchers across Europe would have on the development and consolidation of the European Research Area (ERA). The overall strategic objective is to make Europe more attractive for researchers, to encourage European researchers to stay in Europe and to attract to Europe the best researchers from the entire world. A long series of papers sustain this objective, to mention only few:

- Communication from the Commission COM(2001) 331: A Mobility Strategy for the European Research Area;
- Council Resolution concerning the reinforcement of the mobility strategy within the European Research Area (ERA) (2001/C 367/01);
- Council Resolution 14636/03 on the profession and the career of researchers within

the European Research Area (ERA);

- Communication from the Commission COM(2003) 436: Researchers in the European Research Area: one profession, multiple careers
- Communication from the Commission COM(2007) 161: Green Paper – The European Research Area: New Perspectives;
- Communication from the Commission COM (2007) 773: Mobility, an instrument for more and better jobs: The European Job Mobility Action Plan (2007-2010);
- Council conclusions on the first steps towards the realisation of the European Research Area Vision 2020, 10615/09 of 4 June 2009.

Also, the EU policies for RTD have always been taken into account the cooperation with the WBCs, considering their continuously changing status, from third countries to Associate and Candidate countries to EU. Therefore, mobility aspects concerning the WBCs are also mentioned in a series of documents.

Approach

The recommendations are based on two important workshops held in Bad Neuenahr, Germany, (May 2008) and in Timisoara, Romania, (April 2009), both addressing the **ReP-SEE Young Scientist Programme**. Team members of the SEE-ERA.NET project with the help of the invited experts had the mission to set up the components and features of a new regional programme for the mobility of young scientist. The mobility workshop held in Timisoara had a specific working method, besides the presentations and open discussions, the setting up of two working groups: *Working group 1: Designing the core elements of the Rep-SEE Young Scientists Programme* and *Working group 2: Identifying stand-alone measures to support the mobility of Young Scientists in and with SEE*. The debates had as specific objectives:

- to analyze the fragmentation phenomenon in terms of objectives, evaluation methods and working conditions of the national and regional trans-national mobility Programmes, focusing on the WBCs;
- identify synergies in terms of trans-national mobility between the national and regional level actions in the SEE countries and those existent at European level;
- to discuss the opportunity and the concept of a SEE-ERA.NET Young Scientist Programme as an option to develop the ReP-SEE Young Scientist Pillar.

During the debates, the following aspects have been taken into consideration:

- new opportunities in terms of trans-national mobility schemes presently available for the researchers in the WBCs and the new status of the targeted countries which became Associated Countries to FP7;
- the extent and the complexity of the awareness raising among the scientific communities in WBCs with regard to mobility opportunities;

- information available and facilities for obtaining the information in due time – one stop information point instead of information scattered across several sources.

The general conclusions can be summarised as follows: after two SEE-ERA.NET workshops held on mobility, the observation is that the setting-up of a specific mobility programme for the WBC, for the time being is not of the highest priority for the WBC. For the near future, the implementation of “stand-alone measures” seems currently to be more appropriate. Therefore, it was agreed to prepare “Recommendations for stand-alone measures in the field of mobility with the Western Balkan Countries” rather than setting up a mobility programme.

Objective

This set of recommendation for stand-alone measures aim to break up the isolation of research communities in Southeast Europe through regional approaches – such as awareness raising on important intra-European mobility opportunities for researchers, having as specific objectives:

- making more visible the mobility programmes for Young Scientists functioning in and for the WBCs;
- better structuring and continuously updating the information sources on mobility opportunities, as basis for raising awareness in the region;
- enhancing the participation of young scientists in the existing mobility programmes in and for the WBCs.

These recommendations do not aim to substitute or hollow-out other RTD initiatives with Southeast Europe, but to support the existing efforts in the region towards mobility of researchers. They comply with the general objective of the SEE-ERA.NET project to integrate EU Member States and WBCs in the European Research Area by linking research activities within existing national, bilateral and regional RTD programmes.

They also comply with one of the long-lasting EU objectives for RTD, that of strengthening, quantitatively and qualitatively, the human potential in research and technology in Europe (see documents mentioned in **Policy context**). This aspect is again reloaded in the ERA Green Paper (Brussels, 4.4.2007 COM(2007) 161 final), as the first of the key principles to further develop ERA: “**An adequate flow of competent researchers** - (...) *There should be full opening of academic research positions and national research programmes across Europe, with a strong drive to recruit researchers internationally, and easy movement between disciplines and between the public and private sectors – such mobility becoming a standard feature of a successful research career*” (see page 8).

Recommendations for stand-alone measures

The stand-alone measures are mainly focused on the dissemination of information about existing mobility programs, as information is not always easily accessible, and the best possible ways to channel it in a systematic manner to the target countries in the region.

- 1) **Create and update a centralised source document (e.g. Mobility Info for WBCs)** with relevant information on new programmes, funding schemes, initiatives, networks or projects active in the region.

How: publication on the websites of ministries of education, research and innovation and related management agencies in the WBCs, on EURAXESS portal, Humboldt Foundation, DAAD, Marie Curie website and others, as they are identified.

Who: Western Balkan countries with EU Member States

- 2) Set-up of a **regional newsletter**, regularly published and containing information about mobility issues in the WBC, i.e. introduction of new schemes, latest developments, reviews of first-hand experiences, etc;

How: same procedure as for the source document, plus the dissemination made by National Contact Points of the WBCs.

Who: the newsletter could be the contribution of the WBCs, EU Member States, WBC-INCO.NET, and the Steering Platform for research of the WBCs.

- 3) Better **use of the national contact point networks** already in place in the WBCs for dissemination purpose at regional level of all the identified opportunities for the development of researchers' career in the South Eastern Europe comprised in the above table.

Who: Western Balkan countries with EU Member States

- 4) Constant **update of the SEE-ERA.NET/WBC-INCO.NET Scholarship database**¹. This database allows young scientists to search specifically according to their needs. Search options like grants offered for residents of a specific country or specific disciplines are possible. This makes the database extremely user-friendly and easy to handle. The information text on the scholarships on offer is short and concise and contains only the most relevant information (eligibility criteria, deadlines, countries, thematic areas).

Who: King Baudoin Foundation

- 5) Encourage **contact trips for young researchers** consisting of **a)** grants to attend conferences (precondition: contribution such as a presentation or paper), summer schools for PhD candidates, workshops, etc. **b)** (in connection with the attendance of the conference) a visit to the respective partner

¹ To be handed over to the King Baudoin Foundation.

institute, where the conference takes place in order to establish scientific contacts. The application should contain a schedule of the planned talks to scientists/staff from the guest institution.

Who: Western Balkan countries with EU Member States.

- 6) **Awareness-raising events on existing mobility opportunities targeted to the region and training sessions** to tackle the low awareness level in the region on mobility programmes, lack of institutional structures dealing **with** mobility and obstacles in national legal systems when it comes to employing researchers from abroad. They should be addressed accordingly, however, since some of these measures overlap with other national and transnational initiatives and projects, a synergy and/or complementarities with other such actions should be taken into considerations when initiating such accompanying measure.

Who: Western Balkan countries with EU Member States