

## SCIENCE COUNCIL OF LITHUANIA RESOLUTION

### Regarding the European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

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Vilnius

The Science Council of Lithuania, having considered the Recommendation of the Commission of the European Communities of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (hereinafter referred to as the Recommendation),

**noted** the following:

1. The Commission of the European Communities pointed out to the European Union Member States the preconditions that are of key importance for the successful implementation of the objective of becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy in the world by 2010 set by the Lisbon European Council and emphasised that researchers working in the area of research and development (R&D) are the cornerstone of advancement in scientific knowledge, technological progress, enhancing the quality of life and ensuring the welfare of European citizens and contributing to Europe's competitiveness.

2. The Commission of the European Communities urged the European Union Member States to be more active in taking measures to make Europe more attractive for those individuals who embark on careers in research, to provide sustainable and more attractive career prospects for researchers in all areas of R&D, to develop a supportive research environment and working conditions, to improve the recruitment methods and career evaluation/appraisal systems as well as social security provisions applicable to researchers.

3. By following the definition provided in the Standard Practice for Surveys on Research and Experimental Development (Frascati Manual, OECD), for the purpose of the Recommendation, the European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, *researchers* are described as professionals engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods and systems, and in the management of the projects concerned. This includes any activities related to fundamental research, applied research, experimental development and transfer of knowledge including innovation and advisory, supervisory and teaching capacities, the management of knowledge and intellectual property rights, the exploitation of research results and scientific journalism.

In Lithuania, some researchers holding a scientific degree and engaged in research are attributed to the category of *scientific researcher*.

4. Every Member State should primarily endeavour to take the necessary measures to address the tasks defined in the Recommendation on the national level. Therefore, it is necessary to start with the structuring of the Lithuanian Research Area as a basis for the accumulation and coordination of activities undertaken by the majority of larger and smaller research groups within the framework of national science programmes. Just like elsewhere in Europe, the situation in Lithuania is threatened by the fact that the number of individuals, especially young people, embarking on careers in research is going down. The profession of researcher is rendered unpopular by small salaries as compared to those of civil servants, the system of fixed-term employment contracts, unstable financing and outdated research infrastructure.

5. The Lithuanian translation of the Recommendation, the European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 75/67 of 22 March 2005 contravenes the English version of the texts concerned.

The Science Council of Lithuania hereby **r e s o l v e s** as follows:

1. With the aim to attain the objective laid down in the Recommendation of the Commission of the European Communities on the European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, defined as making the profession of researcher more attractive, and in order to provide sustainable and more attractive career prospects for researchers in public and private institutions, to **recommend to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania:**

1.1. To supplement the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania with provisions regulating the conditions of concluding and terminating fixed-term or termless employment contracts with researchers, the purpose and consequences of periodic attestation of researchers, the rights and duties of employers to attend to the professional development of researchers, etc. To equalise the rights and duties of researchers working in public and private sectors and thus ensure career continuity for researchers moving between the science and studies and business sectors.

1.2. To revise the provisions laid down in the legislation of the Republic of Lithuania and regulating the terms and conditions of concluding fixed-term employment contracts with researchers. Fixed-term employment contracts with researchers should be signed only in cases when the term of the research project or programme is known in advance. After the third competition for a position or a job with no term defined (e.g. teaching at an institution of higher education) individuals should be employed by signing a termless employment contract providing for a systematic attestation and an opportunity for the employer to terminate the contract in cases when the results of the attestation show a failure of the employed individual to meet the set scientific productivity and position requirements. Nonetheless, in both cases of dismissal (based on attestation results or upon the expiry of a fixed-term employment contract) a researcher should be entitled to a redundancy payment in the size provided for in Article 140 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania.

1.3. To supplement Article 26 of the Law on Profit Tax of the Republic of Lithuania with a provision on the right of corporate entities to deduct from its revenues the amount of expenditure on the professional development of the researchers working for the corporate entity incurred when sending the researchers to foreign or Lithuanian science centres for internship at least once in three years.

1.4. To review the principles of remunerating the researchers for their work and pay the individuals holding the position of researcher in public institutions of science and studies a salary in accordance with the researcher's status in the State. Every institution should define salaries for specific employees in line with the criteria applicable when calculating the resources to be allocated to that particular institution. The size of salaries payable to the researchers involved in research projects or programmes should be defined by respective project managers (project management entities).

2. **To recognise the expediency** of giving priority to those applications for the European Union's Structural Funds for 2007-2013 meant to support the creation and development of R&D infrastructure that would allow to establish strong internationally recognised centres of excellence. Only when such centres are established it will become possible to address the issue of researchers' mobility, invite foreign researchers to come and work in Lithuania, guarantee attractive working conditions for the Lithuanian researchers that gained experience abroad, enhance the scientific knowledge of researchers working in the private sector and employ the most talented researchers of Lithuania.

3. **To propose to the Ministry of Education and Science:**

3.1. To develop programme- and subject-based (targeted) financing of research in line with the principles laid down by the Science Council of Lithuania in its Resolution No VI – 10 of 30 May 2004 „Regarding Proposals on the Implementation of Recommendations Laid Down in 2003 World Bank Report „Lithuania Aiming for a Knowledge Economy“, which include the proposal to allocate at least 30 per cent of the resources the State plans to spend on R&D to finance the research projects that are pre-assessed by external experts and proposed by the institutions of science and studies. Such external expertise would allow to give priority to the research that would contribute to the development of knowledge economy and help solve the most relevant problems faced by the society in the most efficient manner.

3.2. To assess the qualification of researchers and achievements of science institutions by considering more aspects than the number of publications in international science journals alone and abandon the practice of regulating the minimum scientific productivity requirements applicable to researchers by way of Government resolutions. If institutions of science and studies are allocated budgetary resources based on clear and predetermined principles and criteria, the institutions themselves will set the requirements applicable to their employees that would ensure competitive financing of the institutions concerned. The requirements applicable to the researchers the professional activities of which are financed out of research projects or programmes financed by way of competition should be defined by the project managers (project management entities) that hire the researchers for the implementation of the said projects.

3.3. To consider the possibility of appointing an official authorised to resolve the disputes arising between researchers and their employers (institutions) and deal with appeals against the results of assessment of researchers' professional performance and qualification in public and private institutions.

3.4. To discuss the measures that would help encourage more young people to embark on careers in research. Such measures could include systematic meetings of researchers with school communities, science days in cities and regions, enhancement of the principles of remuneration of researchers for their work, public award of incentives for researchers, wider dissemination of research results with the help of mass media, etc.

3.5. To consider the possibility of abandoning the practice of submitting some of the reports, copies of publications and other types of information material currently to be submitted by institutions of science and studies and thus reduce the scope of non-productive work performed by researchers. The first step could be to adopt a provision saying that the results of scientific activities undertaken by above institutions should be assessed in detail every two or three years instead of the current annual assessment. In between these assessments, every institution should continue to receive the same indexed financing as allocated based on its scientific productivity, while assessment criteria should be approved at the beginning of a respective assessment period.

**4. To recommend to the Ministry of Education and Science** to consider the possibility of using part of the support provided by the Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation for the purpose of giving the early-stage researchers the final boost they need to reach professional independence and for promoting the researchers' mobility:

4.1. To award fellowships (including a set salary and social insurance costs) to individuals embarking on the researcher's career (including scientists probationers that are graduates of PhD studies) by way of competition for a period of up to two years in cases when an institution of science and studies or an economic entity offers them an R&D task and adequate working conditions.

4.2. By way of competition, to allocate support to the researchers that made presentations at international conferences abroad, to support internships of researchers in foreign science centres and to provide support to the institutions taking foreign researchers and researchers working in the private sector on an internship.

5. To recognise the expediency of enhancing the content of vacancy announcements for researchers published on the website of the Science Council of Lithuania by providing institutions with an opportunity to publish more information about the type of job offered, remuneration terms, preferred professional experience of prospective candidates, professional development opportunities. To provide the institutions willing to announce an international competition for a position of researcher to do so by placing their vacancy announcements on the European Researcher's Mobility Portal at <http://europa.eu.int/eracareers>.

**6. To propose to the institutions of science and studies:**

6.1. To analyse the implementation of the key principles and requirements laid down in the European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers as well as obstacles impeding the said implementation and submit the conclusions of such analysis and respective recommendations on the improvement of the situation to the Science Council of Lithuania by 31 October 2006.

6.2. To publish advance announcements about seminars to be held by a respective institution for prospective candidates before hiring them in order to enhance the transparency of the contracting process.

7. To recognise the expediency of having the rights and duties of non-governmental organisations of researchers and scientific societies as well as opportunities for them to receive state support for their activities better defined in the legislation of the Republic of Lithuania.

Chairman of the Science Council of Lithuania

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