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Albania – National Data Report on identifying Remaining Mobility Obstacles



Bringing Western Balkan Countries closer to the Innovation Union

-An example of EURAXESS regional collaboration-

WP3 – Identifying Remaining Mobility Obstacles



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Task 3.1 National Report

In line with the 4th Commitment of the Innovation Union, the remaining obstacles hindering mobility for the key actors of knowledge -researchers - must be identified and eliminated in the next few years. Firstly, in order to achieve this, the obstacles that hinder cooperation across borders in Europe must be removed. Thus, WP3 will focus on identifying the remaining obstacles to mobility in the Western Balkan countries and propose corrective actions in the form of recommendations at the national governments. In line with the 4th Commitment of the IU, the following topics will be addressed: quality of doctoral training, attractive employment conditions and gender balance in research careers, mobility across countries and sectors, open recruitment in public research institutions, comparable research career structures, scientific visa and blue card application, and creation of European supplementary pension funds.



Part I - General information on the research stakeholders in Albania

Identification of the number of state and public research institutions

There are 14 public universities with 60 faculties in Albania. There are more than 20 public research institution and 5 "QTTB – Qendrat e Transferimit te Teknologjive Bujqesore"

Identification of the number of universities

There are 44 private universities in Albania.

Identification of the number of private researcher centers

Research in the domain of SSH in the private sector is mainly conducted by small consulting companies which might provide business, financial and accounting services, marketing and public relations, or studies on regional or sector development, etc. In addition, there are several small companies, which provide market and public opinion research. These consulting companies also provide quantitative and qualitative data analysis and methods for the "third parties" such as content analysis, desk research, statistical modeling and analysis, in-depth interviews, focus groups, etc.

Other research performers

The research policies for social sciences and humanities are developed by the Ministry of Education and Science - MES in close co-operation with the Academy of Sciences of Albania (ASA), the Council of Higher Education and Science - CHES and other central institutions, such as the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities - MoLSAEO; the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports - MTCYS; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – MFA; the Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation - ARTI, with the full participation of universities and research institutions.

The National Council for Science and Innovation - NCSI is set up as

an advisory body to the MES and the Council of Ministers on strategies and national programmes, priority policies, and their financial resources.

The Council of Higher Education and Science – CHES is a consultative body of the MES and the Council of Ministers for the development of policies in the field of higher education and science. In accordance with the new structure of the research system.

The Albanian Academy of Science acts through a selected community of scientists organized in sections, and does not administer institutes/research centers any more. The aim of reformation was not to weaken the role of ASA, but rather giving her an important place at the national level, regarding research and education policy advice, in the system of scientific research. The Academy of Science is financed through institutional funding to implement research programmes based on the strategic



priorities established under the bilateral scientific research programmes with counterpart academies.

ARTI finances, through programme funding various research projects of public interest in the framework of the National Programme for Research and Technological Development (NPRTD); bilateral programmes with other countries and other contract research projects in accordance with Government's priorities.

Ministries have their own budget to finance through institutional and contract funding research on the basis of specific programmes



Part II -Research legislative framework in Albania

List all relevant documents regulating issues related to all topics in part III, including but not limited to:

Laws and by-laws

- 1. The 1994 Law on Science and Technological Development (as amended)
- 2. Law "On the Higher Education in the Republic of Albania", No. 9741, date 21.05.2007
- 3. Low "For The Academy of Science of Albania", No. 9655, date 11.12.2006

National strategies or programs

- 1. National Strategy of Science, Technology and Innovation 2009 2015
- 2. National Strategy of Science, Technology and Innovation2016–2020
- 3. Strategy of Business and Investment Development 2013- 2020
- 4. National Programmes of Research and Development "Social Sciences and Albanology"
- 5. National Programmes of Research and Development "Information Systems and Technologies (ICT)"
- 6. National Programmes of Research and Development "Agriculture (veterinary, zoo-technical), Food and Biotechnology"
- 7. National Programmes of Research and Development "Water and Energy"
- 8. National Programmes of Research and Development "Biodiversity and the Environment"
- 9. National Programmes of Research and Development "Health"
- 10. National Programmes of Research and Development "Materials"

Institutional regulations

- 1. The Council for Higher Education and Science (CHES)(advisory body to MoES)
- 2. National Council of STI

International agreements

- 1. Bilateral Agreement between Albania and Turkey
- 2. Bilateral Agreement between Albania and Italy
- 3. Bilateral Agreement between Albania and Greece
- 4. Bilateral Agreement between Albania and Kosovo
- 5. Bilateral Agreement between Albania and Montenegro
- 6. Bilateral Agreement between Albania and Austria
- 7. Bilateral Agreement between Albania and Slovenia



Part III - Policy framework

The following are the issues we need to research broken down by topics. The questions are there to help with extracting the most relevant information when reading the abovementioned documents.

Quality of doctoral training

Organization of doctoral studies at institutional level

Based on the "Low on Higher Education in the Republic of Albania" No. 9741, date 21.05.2007 the doctoral study programs are study programs of third cycle of studies with academic character, that have in their base scientific research in line with the Bologna process. In the doctoral programs are accepted only the candidate that have a "Master of Science" degree. This study programs are organized in Doctoral Schools in duration of 3 years that include 60 credits of organized learning courses. In based of the results of the courses the Institution of Higher Education decide the criteria to classify the doctoral candidates if they have the right to proceed with their research project and to prepare their doctoral thesis. The candidates that didn't meet the criteria are not classified to proceed to their doctoral thesis but obtain a certificate in which are described the modules with credits and their evaluation.

Evaluation of the principles for recruitment and selection of doctoral candidates

Have the right to apply in third cycle of studies the candidates that have completed 2nd cycle of studies and gained a "Master in Science" title or an equivalent diploma. The admissions to a doctoral program are defined in the Statute of the Institution of Higher Education (faculty-level).

What kind of supervision is envisioned? Is there a system of evaluation and appraisal?

Every doctoral has one mentor that has to be of that discipline of the doctoral study, with Professor, Associated Professor or PhD grade. The mentors that have Professor Grade employed fulltime at the faculty are limited to mentor maximum of five doctoral candidates. The mentors that have Associated Professor or PhD grade employed fulltime at the faculty are limited to mentor two doctoral candidates. The mentors that have Professor Grade employed part time at the faculty can mentor only one doctoral candidate.



Is there a system for monitoring and assessment?

Mentor takes full responsibility for the monitoring and the assessment of the student's work during the doctoral studies.

Network of doctoral studies (Joint programs, international agreements for collaboration, mobility, exchange programs)

Universities in Albania are signatories of many international agreements for collaboration and mobility. Albanian universities participate in many TEMPUS projects, Erasmus Mundus and other exchange programmes.

Status of PhD students (Examples: fellow, researcher, junior assistant) which criteria is used to define the status?

The doctoral candidates have the status of students according to the Low on Higher Education. Institutions of higher education have the right to employment, on a temporary contract, the students in process of conducting studies and preparing doctoral dissertation for the scientific degree "Doctor". They support the mentor professor in the teaching process and during this period they are treated as "Lecturer".

Attractive employment conditions

In which manner this issue is regulated in the country? Example: collective agreement, law, by-law, internal acts of faculties/institutes.

The manner is regulated by the country in the Code of Work of the Republic of Albania, law 7961 date 12.07.1995

Remuneration, insurance, reimbursement (salary, holidays, insurance)

These points are prescribed in the Albanian Law on Social Securities nr. 7703 date 11.05.1993

Training and development

Intersectional Strategies on Public Administration Reform

Balance between work and life (Flexible working hours, leave hours, parental care, maternity leave, long-term paid leave) Law nr.8549 date 11.11.1999

Health and safety at work The Albanian Law on Health Insurances Law 04/L-065 date November 2011

Gender balance (equal rights, opportunities) and non-discrimination

Law on Gender Equality in Society, 2008



Are there any national strategies for gender equality?

National Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violences 2011

Is there a possibility to be part of the decision-making bodies?

Yes there exists the possibility of becoming part of the decision-making bodies.

Intellectual property rights and co-authorship

National Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Strategy 2010 – 2015

Mobility across counties and sectors

International and national (incl. inter-sectoral) research collaboration (agreements, joint programs, study stays)

Universities in Albania have signed many national and international agreements. Albanian universities are participants in many TEMPUS projects, Erasmus Mundus and other exchange programmes.

Percentage of mobility and participation in EU educational programs

As mentioned above, Albania is participating in various EU educational and research programmes. Within TEMPUS and Erasmus Mundus programmes, there is some evident mobility (not too high though). Regarding the FP7 PEOPLE programme the situation is not good, there were applicants but almost no winners. As for the Marie Curie programme, we have applicants and winners, but again the number is not significant.

Possibility of international cooperation

Albania has many opportunities to cooperate in international programmes. But more emphasis should be put on the young population rather than on the old generation (due to their lack of willingness to participate in these programmes). This because the older generation lacks the foreign languages and computer skills, a must for international cooperation.

Recognition of mobility

In Albania, mobility is generally recognized as an individual benefit. It is also evaluated as an asset when applying for employment.

Open recruitment in public research institutions

In which way researchers are recruited in institutions? Example: public call, internal call.

In public university or research institution the employment criteria are defined in the statute of the institution. The candidates competed in base of public competitions in the main units of HEI. In the statute of the HIE are defined transparent procedures for



selection of the winning candidate who meets the published requirements and response better to the job description.

For "emerimin" of the academic staff, the leader of the main unit send to the authority leading of the institution the candidate ranked first in the classification made by the ad hoc commission of public "konkursit public". The authority leading of the institution "lidh" an employment contract with the selected candidate based on the Labor Code of the Republic of Albania.

Recruitment procedure: duration, requirements, organization, selection

The institution opens a public announcement that is active for 30 days. After that is the ad-hoc commission that evaluate the candidates and declare the first classified for this position. After that the evaluation is made available to the public for a period of 30 days for complaints.

Entry and admission standards

Entry and admission standards are decided case by case, depending on the position offered, vacant positions, replacement, etc. The position itself demands a number of requirements, on which additional may be requested, if it is needed.

In which way transparency is insured?

The transparence is ensured by a public announcement for the vacant position in the web page of the institution and at least 2 newspapers. The evaluations of the ad-hoc commission are in base of merit-based selection and these results are public.

Implementation of Charter and Code

At this moment there are no Albania Institution that have endorsed and signed the Charter and Code.

Comparable research career structures

Status of researchers and recognition of profession Law nr.864 date 05.12.2007

Is there a division of research career into stages? (For example: PhD candidate, Post-Doc, early-stage, established researcher) Law nr. 786 Date 17.12.1998

What are the possible working positions for researchers in faculties, institutes? They are offered pedagogue positions but they can as well exercise another job at the same time.

Division is made on which criteria? Example: education, experience etc. Law nr. 952 date 12.12.2012



Scientific visa and blue card application

Assessment and implementation of the scientific visa directive

There is no scientific visa that Albania delivers to researchers. The researchers will be under the regime of Visa for employment purposes (professional, commercial), Visa Type C.2.5 The Blue Card is an approved EU-wide work permit (Council Directive 2009/50/EC) allowing high-skilled non-EU citizens to work and live in any country within the European Union. As Albania is not yet part of the EU, the implementation of the Blue Card is not possible as far as we are not within EU.

If the Directive is not implemented, are there any other measures that simplify the procedure for obtaining visa for researchers?

In general, Albania proceed with simple procedures concerning the visas, the time it takes to have the answer is quite quick.



Part IV - Conclusions from the Questionnaires on Remaining Mobility Obstacles in Albania

In line with this study, three questionnaires were conducted, with three target groups identified: Academia, Industry and Policy Makers. Three different questionnaires were disseminated from each target groups respectively. The questionnaires aimed at academia and industries were disseminated through Google drive to researchers and institutions accordingly. A second reminder was sent out as well. The questionnaires to Policy Makers were conducted through interviews. The target was set to 3 interviews conducted with relevant policy makers. The questionnaire was limited to 11 questions and the questions were all open-ended. These are the main results/conclusions from the aforementioned questionnaires.

Conclusions from the Questionnaire on Remaining Mobility Obstacles in Albania: Academia

A total of 80 responses have been received during the survey. To send the Invitation we use ARTI researcher's database. This list contains the contact of different types of researchers working on public universities, private universities and research institutions. The questionnaire was answered by all level of researchers but mostly by early – stage researches – 40% of total responses. The other results are 15% of recognized researchers, 28% of established researchers and 18% of leading researchers. The majority of researchers came from universities 89% and only few responses came from researchers that work in research institutes 9% and of them that work in other organizations 5%. The gender structure of respondents was balanced, 52.5% of the respondents were female and 47.5% of respondents were male.

In Part B, the respondents were asked to share their experience during their doctoral studies. Most of the respondents have declared that during their doctoral studies they collaborated with other institution or departments, but only 21 % emphasized that this collaboration was strong and continuous all the time, 18 % collaborated sometimes with other departments and 29 % collaborated only a few times when they needed certain information. 16 % of the respondents didn't collaborate at all with other institutions or departments while working on their doctoral dissertation. Only 16 % of researchers have completed their doctoral studies as part of a join doctoral program. Only 54 % of the respondents declared that their university offer exchange programs and only 21 researchers were part of any exchange program or study visit during their doctoral studies. 65% take part in a Tempus program and 59% in other programs. The percentages of responses are more than 100% so the people that answered this question have selected more than one checkbox and they have been part of more than one exchange program. 75% of the respondents have responded that doctoral programs are realized in Albanian and only 8 % have responded that these studies are realized in a foreigner language in English and French and 17 % didn't response this question. So in Albania the doctoral studies are realized in Albanian.



From the response is an impression result that in total 49% of the response confirms that there is a written agreement where only 30% asked that in this agreement the rights and the obligations are clearly defined. During the doctoral studies the doctorate candidates have the possibility to have more than one supervisor. The responses for the access to the research infrastructure during doctoral studies are very unsatisfactory. Only 11% of the researchers indicate that they had unlimited access to the research infrastructure, 38% had only partial access, 26% had no access that is a high perceptual, and 25% had choose other option of the question response.

The level of doctoral students' satisfactory of their collaboration with mentors is high, 43 % are "very satisfied", 30% are "satisfied" and only 1% "not satisfied at all". Only 35% of responders declared that they were employed immediately after the completion of their doctoral studies. Only 8% of responders declared that they have difficulties in finding a job after the completion of their doctoral studies mark 1-2 and 20% declared that they have little difficulties in finding a job, mark 3-4. Regarding the relevance of the doctoral studies to the demands of the work market, 63% of the responders emphasized high relevance, mark 4-5, 10% emphasized neutral relevance and only 6% emphasized low relevance. Regarding the list of additional skills gained during their doctoral studies, the responders highlight the most: 74 % - creative and critical thinking, 68% - entrepreneurship and the other skills are ranked from 35 to 45 %.

Working conditions

In Part C the respondents were asked about their employment conditions. 91% of the respondents work as full-time employment, only very few are working part-time 5% and contract work with engagement 4%. Regarding the answer to the question about working condition, entitlements an entitlements and career development prospects when interviewing for the position they held 81 % response that they were fully or at most informed about this, 18 % indicated that they were only partially informed and only 3% were not at all informed about this information. 70% of the respondents indicate that having flexible working conditions is a very important factor, 22% indicated that some of them are important (mark 4,3) and only 8% indicated that it is not an important factor. But only 57 % of the responders indicated that their current employment offer flexible working conditions, 35 % indicated that some of them are offered and 5 % indicated that no one of them are offered. The level of satisfactory with the work-live balance at their current position is low, only 30% indicated that they are very satisfied with this balance, 60 % are neutral, mark 4 & 3, and 10 % are not satisfied. Also the level of satisfactory with their salary is low; only 4% indicated that they are very satisfied with their salary, 15 % mark 4, 46 % mark 3 and 36 % are not satisfied, mark 1&2. This is because in Albania the level of salary in the public universities and research institutes is very low. 87% of the respondents answered that their organization were covering all cost of health benefits, 16 % that their organization were partial covering of these costs, 9% that indicate that they would like these cost to be covered and only 4 % don't care about these benefits especially if they have negative impact in their salary. Regarding the pension benefits there is a little bit deference in the response.



86 % of the respondents indicated that their organization were covering the pension benefits, 3 % indicated that their organization were covering the pension benefits they wouldn't mind if they didn't receive them, 8% didn't receive pension benefits but they wish to received it, the number of response is equal with them that didn't receive health benefits but they wish to receive them. Also 4% didn't care about these benefits especially if they have negative impact in their salary. Only 41 % of the respondents would be interested in participating at European fund for supplementary pensions for researchers even if it brought some extra cost, 48% would be interests to participate as long as it doesn't bring any extra cost, and only 11% would not be interested to participate in this. When they were asked if pension benefits will prevent they from moving to another country to conduct research if those rights are not transferable, only 21 % indicate that this will be a problem, 48 % that these probably will be a problem and 31 % that this will not be a problem. With these responses we go to the conclusion that receiving health and pension benefits is really a very important matter. Regarding the level of satisfaction of the benefits of the work in their organization they indicated that 63% of them are satisfied with free days, 42 % are satisfied with holiday imbursements, only 21 % are satisfied with the reimbursed of travel cost to and from work, this because in Albania only this is offered only for people that held director job position, 47% are satisfied with the accesses to research infrastructure and 52% are satisfied with the unique career development opportunities that their actual job position offer to them. Regarding the regular evaluation of the researchers' work 71% of them indicated that their work is regularly evaluated and it is very or sometimes useful, 6% answered that this evaluation is not useful for them and 23 % answered that their work is not evaluated, this because in the group of the researchers we asked respond the questioners are many researchers with Prof. title. The questions related to a gender balance in the research organization revealed a well-balances distribution, 64 % of the responders indicated that there are an almost even number of men and women in their organization. 32% of the responders declare that they have suffered some kind of gender discrimination in the office and 6% of them answered that the discrimination is continuous. 43 % of the researchers have never worked in other sectors, while 57 % did. For 36 % of them this work was very useful. 80% of the researchers indicated that their organization collaborate all the times or sometimes with other sectors. 68 % of the researcher indicated that during their current employment offer them the possibility to have all the times or sometimes training possibilities and 13% of them indicated that they never have this possibility. Only 41% indicated that their work place value mobility as a good practice in the training of the employers, 33% were neutral and 25% indicated that their organization didn't value mobility as a good practice in training the researchers. 88% of the researchers have the possibility to conduct independent research. 53% of the researchers responded that their organization offered partial state of the art research infrastructure while 39 % indicated that their organization didn't offer it and only 9% declared that their organization offered adequate research infrastructure.



Euraxess awareness

Only 18% of the researchers have heard about EURAXESS and 60% of them indicated that they aren't secure if their work position uses EURAXESS to publish the job positions. The reasons of this result are that the Albania didn't have his own EURAXESS Network and ARTI have promoted it only in some events.

Conclusions from the Questionnaire on Remaining Mobility Obstacles in Albania: Industry

Sample number

A total of 24 responses have been received during the survey. To send the invitation we used ARTI's research institution databases. The survey was send to the organizations' representatives, like as public and private universities, research institution and research NGOs.

Organization representation

The survey was implemented among public universities 29%, Public Research Center 13%, Private Research Institute 4%, NGO 33% and other 21%. The organization who responded can be mostly classified as micro or small – 38% and 33%, 25% of the organization who responded are medium and only 4% are large organizations. The positions of the respondents who completed the survey on behalf of the organizations are as follows: director, dean, rector, coordinator, researcher, director executive, professor, CEO, etc.

Research in the industry sector

For 83% of the organizations' representatives that responded the questionnaire are of opinion that research and development are very important for their organizations and remain 17% indicated a mark 4 for this questions. Also 79% of them indicated that for their organizations have special values to researchers and for 17% of them answered this question with mark 4 and only 4% of them indicated that for their organization the researchers have the same value as all other employee. 54% of the responders are neutral if the doctoral studies of their employees are to the demands of the work market with mark 3, 17% indicated mark 4 and only for 29% of them responded that their employees doctoral training is very relevant to the demands of the work market.

Mobility in the workplace

The collaboration between sectors in 83% of the cases exists and is continuous and in 13% is temporary but is very beneficial to them; only in 4% of the organization rarely collaborate with other sectors. It seems that almost all the organization support temporary engagement to their employees. 59% of the organizations are of the opinion that this temporary engagement should be support and only when some benefits for the perspective organization can be achieved; 38 % thinks that this collaboration is very



important and only 4% prefer to keep their work in house. All the organization evaluated positively mobility as a factor for career development of its employees, 54% of the respondents indicated mark 5; 38 % indicated mark 4 and remain 8% indicated mark 3

Working conditions (benefits, flexibility)

All the organizations offer full time contract for them employers, some of them also offer part-time contracts exactly 46% of them and only 8 % of them offer contract work placement contracts. No one of the company offer their employers the possibility to working at home. 92% of the organization declared that during the interviews with candidates for employment, they are clearly presented with the working condition and advancement opportunities, 4% of them indicated a mark 4 and also 4% of them indicated a mark 3. 67 % of the organizations are offering all of the flexible working conditions, 29% of the organizations offer only some of the presented working conditions and only 4% of the organization didn't offer these. 88% of the respondents indicated that their organization is offering any training possibilities to their employees. Regarding the level of satisfaction with the work-life balance at their organization the employees are very satisfied because 88% of them indicated mark 5 and 4, 13% are neutral and 4 % are not satisfied. But regarding the level of satisfaction with the salaries their organization scan be able to offer to its employees, in general the respondents are neutral where 80% indicated mark 3 or 4, only 13 % responded that their employees are very satisfied with their salary and 8 % indicated that their company didn't offer a satisfied salary to their employers. 88% of the organizations are covering health and pension insurance to their employees and the remaining 12% are covering partial health and pension insurance to their employees. Regarding the evaluation of the progress of the researchers work only 67% of the organizations do this evaluation regularly and 33% of them do it often. The most important benefits to motivation of the researchers are the access to the research infrastructure, 84% of the respondents indicated mark 4 or 5, and the unique opportunities for career development, 92% of the respondents indicated mark 4 or 5. The organizations representatives' that answered the questionnaire indicated that the other benefit didn't have a high importance in motivating the researchers. So only 54 % indicated that day off, 41% indicated that holidays bonus and 25 % indicated that covering transport costs are motivational factor for the researchers. Great most of the organizations publicly announced the job vacancies, exactly 88% of them, and only 13% didn't. Regarding the gender balance at the organizations is neutral the number of men and women employees is almost the same in 75% of the response and only in 25% of the organizations mostly of the employees are women. 71 % of the organizations offer to their research the possibilities of independent research; in 25% of the organizations this possibilities depended by the research experience level and only 4% of the organization didn't offer this possibilities to his employees. The top research infrastructure is fully provided by the 38% of organizations; 38% declared that this can be considered as true only partially and in only 4% of organizations didn't have it. . Regarding the opportunities to the researchers to disseminate and/or build their research results in 58% of the organizations the researchers have these opportunities; in 29% of organization the



researchers have some of these opportunities and in 13 % of the organizations the researchers didn't have these opportunities.

Almost all the organization will be interested in participating at European fund for supplementary pensions for researchers (79%) and only 21 % of the organization didn't are interested to participate in this.

Euraxess awareness

Based on the fact that in Albania doesn't yet exist the National Euraxess Network 42% of the respondents didn't know what is Euraxess. 50% of them indicated that they have only heard of it in passing and 8% of them have heard and use it, this because ARTI in his activities have promoted this network. 88% of the respondents didn't know what EURAXESS Job portal is and 12% of them know this portal but didn't use it. Regarding the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, 58% of the organizations' representatives have heard about it but no one have signed it and 42% of them didn't know what it is.

