

Brussels, September 2013

## Comment on the HR certification mechanism proposed by the European Commission

Eurodoc, the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, has been invited to give input to the 'Consultation on a proposed European Commission certification scheme for genuinely good HR management in the public research sector in Europe'. As a representative of 34 national organisations, Eurodoc has long been active in promoting best practices in the research profession since 2002. We have formally endorsed the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers in October 2011 and Eurodoc is an active member of the HR Strategy implementing these principles. **We strongly support the European Commission's effort to formalise this process** through a certification procedure and have the following comments:

- **The HR Strategy must be incentivised.** While respecting institutional autonomy and understanding the importance of streamlining reporting, we consider the role of the European Commission as more than a funding provider. The Commission has the duty to ensure that its funding is used to support mutually agreed EU goals.
- **The accreditation process must involve its target audience - most importantly doctoral candidates and early-stage researchers** who are often not consulted but are most affected by these measures.
- **The accreditation process must not become a 'tick-box' exercise.** We would like to emphasise, as others have done<sup>1</sup>, that it should build on what has been achieved at the European and national levels, and a simple duplication of already existing systems should be avoided.
- **The certification procedure must be considered as establishing a baseline for good HR practices in the public research sectors in Europe.** European higher education and research institutions must strive for continuous improvement and not view having secured an HR certificate as the final objective.

We welcome efforts towards a certification scheme for excellent HR practices and look forward to working with the Commission and our partners in promoting best practices.

If you have any questions, please contact the Eurodoc Policy Officer Anna Tschaut ([annatschaut@gmail.com](mailto:annatschaut@gmail.com)) or the Eurodoc Board ([board@eurodoc.net](mailto:board@eurodoc.net)).

<sup>1</sup> For example, The Concordat Strategy Group: <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/167-625941/UK-sets-out-position-as-the-European-Commission-consults-on-a-certification-for-HR-management-of-researchers.html>; European Commission: [ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/hrs4r/Enhancing\\_HR\\_strategies\\_researchers\\_11062013.doc](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/hrs4r/Enhancing_HR_strategies_researchers_11062013.doc)