MAX WEBER PROGRAMME
ACADEMIC CAREERS OBSERVATORY

Report on the Fourth MWP-ACO Conference

OPENNESS AND COMPETITION IN EUROPEAN RESEARCH FUNDING: GRANTS FOR INTERNATIONAL RESEARCHERS

Wednesday, 11 November 2009
Villa la Fonte, San Domenico di Fiesole, Firenze


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Summary

In November 2009, the Academic Careers Observatory (ACO) of the Max Weber Post-Doctoral Programme (MWP) of the European University Institute organized the 4th MWP-ACO conference on 'Openness and Competition in European Research Funding: Grants for International Researchers'. The overall analytical framework built upon the 2008 ACO report, which identified four varieties of academic systems in the EU. Academics, practitioners and representatives of funding agencies discussed theoretical and practical issues relating to EU and national research systems and programmes. Post-doctoral Max Weber Fellows commented on speakers' contributions. The first session concerned the development of the European Research Area (ERA); the second introduced national research systems, belonging to the four academic models; the final roundtable discussion provided information on grants and fellowships. Opportunities for young researchers in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) were emphasised.

Different questions emerged from the conference. The need was highlighted for an 'open, integrated, and competitive European Research Area' and, within it, improved coordination and better distribution of tasks between the EU and Member States' research policies and funding programmes. In this perspective, some reforms are needed. On the one hand, notwithstanding the competitiveness and quality of programmes such as 'Ideas and People' as shown in this report, there is room for improving their financial regulation and the way they meet the specific research and funding needs of SSH. Besides, these and other EU programmes – including Structural Funds – should respond better to the special needs of 'weak' regions and Central and Eastern European countries in terms of funding and the creation of international centres of excellence.

On the other hand, Member States themselves should pursue reforms of their national research policies, implementing best practices in the field. This implies committing adequate financial resources, not least as a way of re-launching the economy during the economic crisis. The investment in research of the Obama Administration through the stimulus package shows that the US has learnt the lesson. Conversely, the resistance by many Member States to meet the goal of 3% of GDP investment in research and development (R&D) shows that Europe may become less attractive in the future.

And yet, being competitive in research is not just a matter of money but also of the efficiency with which it is allocated. The latter implies: injecting merit-based standards in the selection of projects, guaranteeing the continuity and international openness of programmes, and targeting different career stages. Speakers showed that 'good practices' are circulating among many Member States, including some with a Continental tradition: the implementation of on-line application systems, the use of English in the process, and the portability of grants. Other states appear, unfortunately, wanting.

Finally, the conference highlighted the attention paid by EU and national agencies to post-doctoral and starting grants. In the US, funds in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for the National Science Foundation resulted in supporting more post-doctoral researchers than before. Spending three years on post-doctoral research before gaining an academic position has become common. This has pros and cons: researchers are getting more money in a period of crisis, but the period of insecurity is prolonged.


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Session 1. A European Research Area for Young Researchers? ERA's Achievements and Challenges. Chair: Irit Samet, Max Weber Fellow

1) Openness and Competition in the Max Weber Programme and European Research Funding

Ramon Marimon (Director of the Max Weber Programme)

Marimon opened the 4th Academic Careers Observatory conference by presenting an overview of the openness and competition pertaining to the Max Weber Programme and, in broader terms, with regard to European research funding. In contrast to noting that spending on R&D at the EU level has not increased substantially during this decade, overall expenditure does not lag behind the United States. The problems lie in the heterogeneity in funding opportunities, both at national and regional level, and research intensity across and within Member States, which results in uneven performance with respect to publication and obvious potential.

Hence, the need arises to increase the efficiency in allocating available funds and to create a level playing field through an 'open, integrated, and competitive European Research Area'. The latter requires the implementation of the 'fifth freedom', the free movement of knowledge, ideas and researchers in Europe, as well as the emergence of poles and bases of excellence together with higher education of quality across all European regions. Reforms are hence needed at both national and EU levels.

At the national level, reforms should encompass: effective opening up of universities and other research organizations, no barriers for the mobility of researchers at all career stages, effective open and competitive R&D funding, better career prospects and working environments to researchers. At EU level there are instead two lines of action. The legal framework should be updated to simplify trans-national R&D contacts and institutions. The governance of the European Research Council and of other European agencies should be strengthened to lower the effective barriers for the mobility of researchers and to coordinate policy reforms of the European Research Area and higher education. In addition, these institutions should consider the specific research needs and costs in SSH: more and less rich grants could be distributed instead of concentrating funding on a few projects following a pattern that is more typical of natural sciences.

2) The Role of Community Research Policy in the Knowledge-Based Economy

Luc Soete (United Nations University, UNU-MERIT)

Soete reported on the main findings of the expert group contained in 'The Role of Community Research Policy in the Knowledge-Based Economy', identifying a set of challenges and recommendations for the EU research and innovation policy in the light of the current unforeseen economic crisis. Overall, the crisis should be taken as a 'window of opportunity' to re-think and re-invent the relationship between European and national research policies. Among the different priorities, public investment in research – to be set at a new 'EU 3% knowledge investment target' - will be crucial to the

re-launch of the economy in the years to come. Member States have already committed to the allocation of 3% of their GDP to R&D: they should be free to decide where to take the necessary resources from but should not blame the private sector for lack of initiative in this area as investment in R&D remains their primary responsibility.

In addition, the need was stressed for a stronger coordination of public actions focused on innovation and technology, with other 'relevant policies', in order to tackle those 'Societal Challenges' which can only be met by diversified top-down and market driven initiatives. In line with this main finding and considering the probable impact of the crisis, a number of recommendations were made in order to support young innovative companies, intervene on regional disparities, steer structural funds to increase research and innovation capacity, revise (also financially) EU research schemes and institutions (i.e., Framework Programmes, the European Research Council) and increase salaries to make Europe a remuneratively valid option for talented researchers.

3) ERC - Starting Grant Call 2010

Alejandro Martin Hobdey (European Research Council, ERC)

The European Research Council (ERC) is part of the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) family and complementary to other FP7 supports to research. It favours bottom-up proposals and individual teams. The FP7 'Ideas' programme provides the funding, which amounts to EUR 7.51 billion in 2007-2013. ERC's aim is to favour brain gain and reverse brain drain by, among other things, improving career opportunities and independence, and raising the aspiration and achievement of basic research in Europe. ERC's main activities include two complementary schemes: Starting Grants (StG), aimed to attract and retain the next generation of independent research leaders; and Advanced Grants (AdG), aimed to attract and reward established independent research leaders.

StG support innovative research, including that of a multi- and inter-disciplinary nature. The target of StG is young investigators (e.g. assistant professors), of any age or nationality, starting or consolidating their own independent research team or programme. StG can be up to EUR 1.5-2 million for a period of up to five years. All disciplines are covered. The application has to be monitored by a Principal Investigator. The host organization has to be located in the EU or an associated state. Candidates for the StG must have earned their PhD 2-10 years prior to the call publication date (current deadline is 11 December 2009). There are two tracks of StG with comparable success rates: research Starters (PhD awarded 2-6 years before) and Consolidators (PhD awarded 6-10 years before).

Compared to previous calls, candidates' knowledge of StG requirements is increasing: between 2007 and 2009, the number of applications declined from 9,000 to 2,503 (464 in the Social Sciences and Humanities) whereas the success rate moved from 3% up to about 9%. Host institutions were located in 19 Member States (around 20% in the UK alone) and selected candidates were nationals of 33 countries. The gender dimension should perhaps be improved: only 23% of all grantees in 2009 were women.

4) European Research Area: Supporting more Competition in Science

Marianne Paasi (European Commission)

Paasi looked in particular at the Cooperation programme, moving from the premise that the European research system is currently characterized by fragmentation and insufficient scientific competition, all of which results in relatively low scientific quality and weak innovation within the continent. For this reason, the implementation of the ERA has moved higher up on the EU agenda and is being carried through the Community level research policy FP7 (EUR 54 billion during 2007-2013) and other initiatives and partnerships. Within FP7, the Cooperation programme (EUR 32.4 billion) funds cooperative research projects and has nine thematic priorities. There is a top-down element as the Commission develops the research agenda. Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH), the eighth thematic priority, have a budget of EUR 610 million for 2007-2013, contain eight so-called activities and fund both small, medium size (EUR 1.5-3 million) and large scale projects (EUR 4 million), as well as supporting actions and thematic ERA nets.

The SSH Cooperation Programme is very competitive, with a success rate of 8-11%. From 2010 onwards the working programme is focused on societal challenges as thematic orientation. Each of the challenges is addressed by a specific set of research actions and the relevant funding scheme is the Large Scale Integrating Research Project (4-5 years in duration). For more information, see http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ssh/ and http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/index_en.html.

Comments and questions

Nadia Steiber commented in general on the 'fifth freedom' as experienced by young researchers, in terms of insecurity, barriers to mobility and the insufficient focus of the EU on the portability and transferability of pension rights. She then addressed the problems of family positioning and of gender equality with respect to the mobility of women and their different life-cycle needs, highlighting also the fact that women tend to lose in a hyper-mobile research system, and that this system should be 'human' and consider researchers' needs.

Antonio Miralles concentrated on the comparative advantages and attractiveness of the EU as opposed to the US in terms of research. Lower funding and salaries in the EU are a problem but only part of the story. As stressed by Paasi, the modernisation of universities is also crucial, including the availability of qualified administrative staff. This would relieve researchers from excessive and complex paperwork, which encourages rent-seeking by people who are not exclusively interested in the quality of research. In addition, the overall accountability of universities towards researchers (the portability of grants, guarantees for tenure tracks positions) has to be greatly improved. Universities must enjoy the 'flexibility' to renew contracts to good researchers.

Luminita Gatejel formulated fundamental questions of a practical nature with respect to funding applications. First, she questioned whether the focus on interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity does not sometimes requiring excessive compromise. Second, she

pointed out the bias that funding programmes have in favour of innovative as opposed to incremental research projects.

A number of questions came from the floor. An important topic of discussion was whether there is still an academic 'iron curtain' between Western and Central-Eastern European (CEE) countries. In particular, whether a level playing field can be established outside countries such as the UK, the Netherlands or Belgium. Evidence shows the CEE countries do not benefit from any ERC funds. In addition, recognition of foreign PhDs in post-socialist countries is problematic, universities are not interested in 'having back' researchers who studied and/worked abroad, and this represents an obstacle for the repatriation of researchers. Additionally, it was pointed out that there is a real Catch-22 in the system: one needs to be on tenure track to obtain grants, but that without grants one cannot obtain tenure. Finally, questions were asked on the details of the application process to the ERC, the Cooperation Programme and the concept of 'socialisation of knowledge' raised by Soete.

Martin Hobdey explained that ERC grants are portable (and cover spouses as well), but that much depends on one's Programme Coordinator. In addition, ERC is aware of funding issues in CEE: while in the near future disparities between West and East in this area may be levelled out, there also exist other EU programmes more apt to tackle them. Finally, he pointed out that excessive novelty in proposals is regarded with suspicion and can be counterproductive: in fact, building on one's previous research is a safe application strategy.

Paasi also addressed the trade-off between academic excellence and overall cohesion. She said that the EU is devoting a reasonable amount of funds to build capacity in CEE countries and that, in this respect, the Cooperation programme and the Structural Funds can play a role. However, due to subsidiarity, Structural Funds can make a difference insofar as Member States employ them in the field of research and innovation.

Marimon emphasized the importance of international competition. National or regional funding can be restricted to researchers working in the specific country or region, but competition for these funds should be open and international. Hence, the need for international evaluation standards and procedures even at the local level. He cited the example of Israel, which opened up its research market following these principles by ensuring adequate funding and academic excellence.

Soete discussed further the relationship between universities and research in Europe. He underlined the fact that universities lack a strategic view beyond their short-term preoccupation for raking and visibility in top publications. He then elaborated on the concept of 'socialisation of knowledge' arguing that, because of its importance for the community, knowledge should be considered and nurtured as a 'public good'.

Session 2. National and Regional Strategies in Opening Research Funding and Making It Internationally Competitive. Chair: Claudius Torp, Max Weber Fellow

5) NSF Support of the Social, Behavioural, and Economic Sciences

Frank P. Scioli (National Science Foundation, NSF)

Frank Scioli introduced the National Science Foundation and its research funding during the US economic crisis. The NSF is an independent agency of the federal government whose mandate is to support basic research. NSF is funded by the US Congress. One Directorate at the NSF focuses on Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences, and is comprised of the Division of Social and Economic Sciences (SES), the Division of Behavioural and Cognitive Sciences (BCS) and the Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS).

The role of the NSF in social, behavioural and economic sciences has to be understood within the context of the change in academic careers over the last decade and the current economic challenges in the United States. With the crisis, both public and private US universities experienced financial problems due to lower state tax revenues and the bear stock market that negatively affected endowments at private institutions. With a reduction in the number of available jobs at academic institutions, the US risked losing a whole generation of future scholars. To attend to this, the Obama administration placed particular emphasis on funding new research investigators and post-doctoral reseachers. The NSF obtained a budget of USD 6.5 billion for 2009, plus an additional USD 3 billion from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA stimulus package). USD 43 million of the additional support was provided for social and economic science research.

The ARRA support had specific guidelines: it was a one-off supplement; it had to be disbursed for projects submitted in fiscal year 2009; it did not allow for new solicitations. Funding opportunities for post-doctoral researchers and new investigators were especially encouraged. Besides supporting additional high quality research, the funds would alleviate the lost generation of scholars noted earlier. The economic crisis has thus reinforced a trend already visible in US academia: researchers may be able spend up to three years on post-doctoral research prior to obtaining an academic position.

6) Academy of Finland: Research Funding and Expertise

Eili Ervelä-Myréen (Academy of Finland)

The Academy of Finland is a research council that provides international funding and is modelled along the lines of the French Academy. The Academy is a focal point for international collaboration within Finland. It is an independent agency that operates within the administrative sector of the Ministry of Education. The Academy's strength is research training with which it provides funding for research projects of doctoral students and post-doctoral researchers and for the professional advancement of young post-doctoral researchers.

Post-doctoral researchers are considered a priority at the moment. No nationality restrictions apply to Post-doctoral Researchers' projects but non-Finnish nationals are required to work in Finland (Finnish post-doctoral researchers can work abroad). The Academy supports graduate schools, provides funding for researcher training abroad and it supports doctoral studies of employed persons. In addition to training programmes, there are bilateral research agreements with countries outside the EU, such as India, China, Japan and Chile.

A major source of funding is ERA-NET calls. A prime example is the project New Opportunities for Research Agency Cooperation in Europe – A Strategy for Social Sciences (NORFACE ERA-NET), which is financed by the 6th Framework Programme (FP6) and includes participating agencies from 13 countries. NORFACE runs two research programmes: 'Re-emergence of Religion as a Social Force in Europe?' (EUR 5.4 million in 2008-2010) and 'Migration in Europe: Social, Economic, Cultural and Policy Dynamics' (EUR 28 million in 2009-2013). The latter programme runs 12 research projects worth EUR 2-4 million each. Finally, NORFACE prepared an important pilot study on Doctoral Mobility in the Social Sciences, which focuses on various aspects of research life such as familial or supervision obstacles to mobility.

7) Hungary as a Potential Country to Host Your Next Career Step – Lessons to Learn from the Region

Erika Szendrak (Informal Group of RTD Liaison Offices, IGLO)

During her presentation, Szendrak introduced the research opportunities and available programmes in Hungary while, at the same time and despite the huge differences, trying to capture common trends among CEE countries in the field. She also highlighted the problem of budgeting in Hungarian Forint and not in Euro, especially in relation to (fluctuations of) the exchange rate.

The country spends annually some HUF 250-280 billion on R&D, i.e. less then 1% of its GDP (and decreasing due to the financial crisis, as well as being subject to high exchange rate volatility). Public funding provides some HUF 170 billion from both domestic and EU sources. On the domestic front, the Research and Technological Innovation Fund (RTIF) finances HUF 40-50 billion and the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund HUF 5-7 billion. The RTIF finances the National Office for Research and Technology (NKTH), which is responsible for running the Mobility/Cofund Scheme (co-financed by the EU) as well as the ERC national 'runner up' scheme. The EU provides some HUF 64-79 billion through the New Hungary Development Plan and HUF 10-20 billion through FP7. The overall share of EU funding is rather high, which is both a signal of success, but also of high dependency on the European Union for funding. EU Framework Programmes influence also the definition and design of domestic programmes. Corporate funding provides the rest, i.e. some HUF 120 billion per year.

There is a 'Wasserkopf' problem, as most funding is concentrated in Budapest (Szendrak argues that this is probably true also for other CEE countries). In addition, applications are scarce and many do not meet high quality standards. As for the university landscape, there are circa 70 universities and colleges, see http://www.mrk.hu/eng/?id=3, but only 10% of these are research-intensive. For research in SSH, there are positive exceptions,

such as the Central European University and the Collegium Budapest. Finally, 17 of the 40 Research Institutes of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences are dedicated to SSH research.

8) Supporting Young Investigators

Annette Schmidtmann (German Research Foundation, DFG)

Schmidtmann introduced the research policy and programmes of the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (German Research Foundation, DFG), which is the national independent agency promoting research at universities and other publicly financed institutions in Germany. The DFG's mission includes the promotion of young researchers and international co-operation, which implies that DFG actively seeks to attract to Germany non-national researchers at an early stage of their career.

Some are of particular interest for young researchers. One is the individual grants programme: these are post-doctoral grants available to researchers, irrespective of nationality, to work in Germany . No thematic priorities and no deadline applies to these grants; proposals are peer-reviewed and evaluated on the basis of their merit. Another option is research grants including one's own temporary position, which are regulated by the same rules as individual grants and have to be spent in Germany. Early career fellowships fund clearly defined research projects abroad for up to two years; these are open to international researchers provided they have been resident in Germany for three years and that they commit to continuing their career in Germany. At the assistant professor level, the Emmy Noether Programme provides funding for a junior research group of young post-doctoral researchers for up to five years. Finally, the Heisenberg fellowships are meant for researchers preparing for a tenured position, including foreign researchers interested in pursuing their career in Germany. All grants are 'portable', implying that when changing the research institution the grant can be transferred to the new institution.

9) Italy: A Case of Inefficient and Opaque Administration of Research Funds

Tullio Jappelli (University "Federico II" of Naples)

Jappelli deplored the lack of funding and overall systemic weakness (low mobility of researchers, fragmentation and discontinuity of programmes, lack of adequate financing and general opacity) in Italy. Grants are small and applications are complex. The Ministry of University and Research (MIUR) is the main provider of public funding.

The Basic Research Investment Fund (FIRB) had an annual budget of EUR 174 milion in 2002-03 and supported basic research. The grants (4-5 for Economics) were small, EUR 200-300 thousand for three years, for four teams of researchers. The programme is not currently in operation. The 'Rientro dei Cervelli', similar to the Marie Curie actions for junior and senior researchers, was launched in 2001 to facilitate the repatriation of Italian scholars who work abroad. It was open to researchers who held positions abroad, it granted full time contracts for four years, but no tenure followed. During 2001-2006, 593 grants were awarded (25 to Economics), but the programme was discontinued in 2007. 'Futuro in Ricerca' is a programme similar to ERC for individual research funding

targeted at young researchers. It supports basic research and it began in 2009 with a EUR 50 million budget. The grants range from EUR 0.3 million to EUR 2 million for four years (4-5 for Economics). There are two categories: under 33, not employed by an Italian university, and under 38 for all. Co-Financing of Research Activities (COFIN) co-finances (70% from MIUR) the projects of professors employed in Italian universities. The budget is very small: 25-30 projects in Economics get EUR 3-4 million per year, hence EUR 8-10 thousand per year, per research unit. Foreigners are not eligible.

As for private funding, some institutions provide research grants: Bank of Italy, Unicredit, Compagnia di San Paolo, Fondazione Cariplo, Fondazione Antonveneta. These are, however, irregularly funded, opaquely evaluated, and barred to foreigners. There are some exceptions (Collegio Carlo Alberto and the Einaudi Institute for Economics and Finance, EIEF in Turin).

In sum, Italy is unattractive for researchers due to lack of funding, delays, irregular payments and lack of transparency. Jappelli provocatively suggested delegating evaluation to foreign experts and funding, through MIUR, those ERC 'research chairs' that are positively evaluated but that receive insufficient EU funding.

Comments and questions

Holger Döring addressed the conference presenters by asking them to compare the situation of EU universities ten years ago and the prospects for European research ten years from now.

Sarolta Laczo raised the issue of the future cooperation in research funding between private and public institutions. She mentioned the examples of collaboration between the Central European University and the Hungarian National Bank and of the existence of campus development funds in France. In particular, she pointed out the positive experience of the Economics Department of the University in Toulouse, where the state tops up private funding with exactly the same amount of money and which is conducive to the greater interest and involvement of international researchers (private funding is used to hire international researchers for three years, who are then integrated into the university).

A number of questions came from the floor. One question concerned any suggestions that could be made towards establishing an Italian research funding agency. Another question was put concerning 'who appoints whom?' (such as the director) in private foundations funding research.

Scioli commented on the current state of affairs of social and economic research at US universities and the relation between politics and research. Recently, an amendment to an appropriation bill aimed to force the National Science Foundation to limit funding to certain sciences only, specifically excluding political science. While the NSF did not engage in lobbying against this amendment, the university community mobilized to continue support of political science funding. In the UK similar pressure to stop the publication of research not in line with government priorities was being advocated.

Szendrak speculated on the future situation of research in Hungary and in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe in general. She said that if there is any planning at all, this looks only at the short term. She added that the lack of long term strategies is partly compensated by the active involvement of EU institutions.

Schmidtmann also elaborated on the future prospects of EU research. Ten years from now universities will be more differentiated. Therefore, a coordinated excellence initiative at supranational level is needed. This may be tailored to the different fields, especially taking into account their different visibility. Finally, she commented on the still embryonic roles of dual career programmes (for couples), which are being implemented slowly in Germany (for example at the Technical University of Munich).

Martin Hobdey referred to the ERC lists (mentioned by Jappelli) and informed us that currently nine Member States actively take them into account. He claimed that such use of the lists was not originally envisaged, but that this practice is developing fast.

Session 3. Applying for Funding Opportunities for Young Researchers. Chair: Gianluigi Fioriglio, Max Weber Fellow

United Kingdom

Rachel Tyrrell (Economic and Social Research Council, ESRC)

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is a non-departmental public body principally funded through the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and is committed to enabling UK social scientists to collaborate with the best researchers across the globe. The ESRC is based on principles of impact (academic, economic, societal and policy), world-standard quality of funding for research and training, and independence from political, commercial or sectional interests.

The ESRC finances Post-doctoral Fellowships with a 20-25% success rate. Awards are tenable for one year on a full time basis (two years for Economics) and are designed to enable publication, dissemination and further training, although limited new research is permitted. Applicants should have no more than three years' post-doctoral experience to be eligible. Economics and quantitative methods are priority disciplines. ESRC Mid-Career Development Fellowships funds entirely new research (especially interdisciplinary), to help researchers develop their careers. Awards are tenable for two years and are granted to programmes of work linked to substantive career development. Applicants should have between five and fifteen years active research experience. The ESRC Research Grants Scheme funds small grants up to GBP 100 thousand and standard grants up to GBP 1.5 million. Applications can be made at any time. Current success rates are approximately 15-20%. International co-investigators are funded as well. Finally, the ESRC has bilateral agreements with research funding agencies in several countries, including Australia, Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, South Africa and Sweden. Details on current opportunities are available on the international pages of the ESRC website.

United States

Frank Scioli (National Science Foundation, NSF)

Scioli explained the myths surrounding the NSF and pointed out that the Foundation does not only fund scholars at elite graduate institutions, 'famous' academics or hard science only. In fact, the NSF through CAREER grants funds the research and education plans of junior researchers. He also gave some practical advice on how to structure a successful application to the NSF.

Awards are available by discipline on www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/ and non-US nationals are eligible if they are either invited by US investigators to work on specific projects or become co-principal investigators within innovative new collaborative research projects. All proposals involving post-doctoral researchers must have a mentoring plan submitted as part of the proposal. The proposal must clearly state what the research question one seeks to answer is and, very importantly, it must clearly articulate the methodology for answering the question. A realistic budget plan is also important. In particular, an

applicant proposing to involve a team of researchers has to state who is being employed and how the tasks are divided among participants. Finally, a rejection does not imply that one is likely to be always rejected. The unsuccessful candidate receives all the reviews of her/his proposal and a Panel Summary reflecting the discussion of the disciplinary Advisory Panel that discussed the research project. If the applicant is not satisfied with the decision, there is a procedure for appeal. 70-80% of all proposals are rejected, hence, reviews and Panel Summaries are useful to consider whether revising and resubmitting is in order.

France

Diane Roman (French National Research Agency, ANR)

The ANR is a new public research funding institution established in 2006. The Agency's budget for 2008 was 896 million euros, 15 million of which go to the Social Sciences and Humanities. About 1,500 projects are funded every year, and projects last between two and four years. The average project lasts 36 months and, in the case of SSH, receives EUR 180 thousand. Applications should specify one Principal Investigator who must hold a permanent position in a French research organisation, regardless of nationality. There are exceptions, such as the 'Returning Young Researchers' and 'Chairs of Excellence' programmes. Non-permanent researchers may be part of the research team and receive a corresponding salary.

There are six main programmes. The 'Programme blanc' is an open, bottom-up, non-thematic call for proposals in all research fields. The 'Programme jeunes chercheurs' supports young researchers or lecturers (under 38) with a permanent position in a French university or research organization. The call is open to all research fields including SSH. The 'Chaires d'excellence' offers visiting short (18-24 months) or long-term professorships, to both junior and senior academics. Part of the grant can be dedicated to support the grant-holder (mobility or living allowance). The 'Retour de post-doc' is a programme for returning young researchers, including French PhD holders (less than 3 years after completion) currently in a foreign post-doctoral position. Thematic calls in the SSH cover different aspects of the disciplines. Calls for 2010 focus on 'Les Suds, aujourd'hui', 'territories and governance' and 'creation and creativity'. Bilateral and quadrilateral calls are open in collaboration with Germany, the UK, the US, Argentina and Japan. The deadlines are in January 2010, for details visit the ANR website.

Spain

Cecilia Cabello Valdés (Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology, FECYT)

The FECYT was established in 2001 and is an organization dependent on the Ministry of Science and Innovation. It has the major role of proposing actions to agents of the scientific research and technological innovation system. With respect to funding, Spain has developed a range of research opportunities for foreign scholars at both the state and regional levels. The regional programmes require researchers to be based in the region providing the grant. These programmes have common features: they are open to

applications from foreign researchers, all applications can be made in English, all fields of research are welcome (including SSH) and all fund working contracts.

At the national level, three programmes are open to non-Spanish researchers. First, the *Ramón y Cajal* (RyC) programme offers experienced researchers the opportunity to join, for up to 5 years, a Spanish institution to work on a research project of their choice. 233 positions were offered in 2009, with an annual salary of EUR 33,250 (EUR 15 thousand at start up). To be eligible researchers must have completed their PhD 2-10 years before the call and have 24 months post-doctoral experience at an institution other than the host institution. Evaluation is based on the CV (80%) and research project (20%). In the seven calls since 2001, three thousand researchers were funded, 15.5% of funding assigned to SSH, of which 21% were foreign scholars.

Second, the *Juan de la Cierva* (JdC) programme offers research opportunities to young researchers within three years of obtaining their PhD to join a research group in the country for three years. This year there were 350 positions available and the annual salary started at EUR 25,250. Evaluation criteria are based on the candidate's CV (55%), on the quality of the host research group (30%) and on the scientific quality of the proposed project (15%). In the four calls since 2004, 1,400 researchers were funded, 16.5% of funding was assigned to SSH, 28% were foreign scholars. Both the JdC and RyC schemes are provided by the Spanish Ministry for Science and Innovation.

Third, the *Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios* (JAE-Doc) scheme managed by the Spanish National Research Council (CISC) offers researchers within 10 years of obtaining their PhD, and who have spent 18 months outside CISC, the opportunity to join a team in Spain and work on a specific research project. 259 positions were offered in 2009, with an annual salary of EUR 28,903. Evaluation criteria are based on the candidate's CV (50%), on the quality of the host research group (30%) and on the scientific quality of the proposed project (20%).

Besides these three programmes, opportunities are available in both Catalonia and the Basque country within the ICREA, and IKERBASQUE programmes respectively. ICREA has three subprogrammes: Senior, Academia and Junior. It is targeted to researchers at least four years after their PhD and with four years of international experience. There are 30 positions per year and the salary is comparable to that of a full professor. IKERBASQUE has two subprogrammes: Science.eu.com and Fellowships. The former offers permanent positions to 30 researchers (eligibility rules and funding are similar to ICREA) The latter provides grants for periods of 6-12 months. Finally, in Catalonia the *Beatriu de Pinós* scheme provides 2-year post-doctoral grants of EUR 26,555 per year (about 40 positions are available every year) to researchers within five years of obtaining their PhD.

Hungary

Erika Szendrak (Informal Group of RTD Liaison Offices, IGLO)

The second part of Szendrak's presentation focused both on the implementation practices of research programmes in Hungary and on practical advice for successful applications for funding. In particular, she pointed out the importance of the host

organization's institutional characteristics, a fundamental factor in finding the appropriate funding structure for one's research. Before applying one has to be aware of the signatory of the host institution, i.e. of her/his contractual representative, of the head of relevant research programme, of the administration (financial, project management) and whether it is in charge of preparing the paperwork, of the Principal Investigator and of external as well as internal collaborators. Procedures differ greatly if one applies as an individual researcher or together with a team. The conditions of each grant vary significantly, and one should always check whether teaching obligations are included or not. As for budgetary implications, it is of utmost importance to understand the flow of funding (prefinancing, reporting periods, closure of the project) and which costs are eligible for financing. Finally, Szendrak also highlighted the issues of language and interpretation problems when applying.

Finland

Eili Ervelä-Myréen (Academy of Finland)

Ervelä-Myréen unveiled some of the details of the application process for funding at the Academy of Finland. The proposals can be sent in English and application is on-line. The Academy's webpage publishes, each year, the calls for applications. When applying for funding a project group, a Principal Investigator has to be nominated, but s/he will not be funded by the project. A few practical recommendations were given. In order to increase one's chances of success, the proposal has to increase its visibility and rouse the interest of the evaluator by answering the 'So what?' question as soon as possible in the process of the application. Proposals should not be longer than 15 pages and they should very clearly, through the use of tables and graphs, illustrate the aims and importance of the research. The theories and methodology should be explained well as these tend to separate the excellent from the competent.

Germany

Annette Schmidtmann (German Research Foundation, GRF)

Schmidtmann focused on the practicalities of applying in Germany. The reviewing process is rather complex. Two individual reviewers scan through the applications to find the right reviewers, unbiased with no conflict of interest and who are experts in the field. The applicant is entitled to ask that certain reviewers should not be contacted. When the external reviewing process is completed, elected panels composed by PhD holders discuss the individual proposals and reviews to decide on funding recommendations. The Bundesrat, representatives of Federal Ministries and of the Länder, constitute the budget committee, which makes the final decision. In case of rejection, you are entitled to receive all the reviews and to complain to the Programme Director in the case of inconsistencies.

As for the selection procedure, some programmes have further requirements. The Heisenberg Fellowships and the Emmy Noether Programme also invites individual applicants for an interview. Once selected, grantees are invited each year to an annual meeting, chiefly for networking purposes. As for gender issues, Schmidtman mentioned that all stipends can be prolonged by one year during childrearing. Parental leave is also

possible, but it should be mentioned in the original proposal. In addition to the above, the DFG recently launched the so-called Early Career Incentives – New Measures for Young Researchers. These facilitators for application are specifically meant for researchers who apply for the first time to the DFG. Rather than previous results and publications, the reviewing process is here more geared towards research potential.