



**Max Weber Programme  
Academic Careers Observatory**

**National and European Funding Opportunities  
Conference**

**San Domenico di Fiesole  
Villa la Fonte, 6th March 2013**

## Executive Summary

On the 6<sup>th</sup> March, the Academic Careers Observatory (ACO) of the Max Weber Postdoctoral Programme (MWP) hosted representatives from various National and European research agencies in order to provide a platform to show-case available research and funding schemes. The Conference highlighted in particular, agencies and programmes which are directly aimed at early-career scholars. Delegates explained their schemes and offered advice and insights on the application progress. This meeting included representatives from the European Research Council and the Marie Curie Actions and from national research agencies in Austria, Britain, France, Germany, Poland and Sweden.

The first session of the day focused on European agencies. Monique Smaïhi from the European Research Council and Frank Marx the Deputy Head of Unit from the Research Executive Agency of the European Commission spoke about funding for research proposals at the European level. Marx opened the conference with a presentation on the Marie Curie Actions. The discussant, Arturo Marzano, who currently holds a Marie Curie Fellowship at the EUI, further explained his experiences of the application process and made several insightful suggestions for the process of creating research proposals.

The second session of the morning turned the focus of the conference to funding opportunities for young researchers at the national level. This would be the theme of the rest of the conference, with different countries in Europe represented by delegates from the various agencies. For this session Ken Edmond from the British Academy, Gemma Irvine from the Irish Research Council, Kerstin Sahlin from the Swedish Research Council and Charles Giry Deloison from the Agence Nationale de la Recherche of France all delivered presentations highlighting research funding opportunities available within their respective states.

The focus on research funding opportunities at the national level continued into the first afternoon session. Eckard Kamper from the German Research Foundation, Petra Grabner of the Austrian Science Fund and Aneta Michalkiewicz from the Foundation for Polish Science spoke about funding opportunities. Gaetano Gaballo, a former Max Weber Fellow and representative from the Banque de France also delivered a short presentation about funding opportunities from private organizations.

Finally a Plenary Session concluded the day's discussions. It was repeatedly noted that all of the national agencies shared a similar set of research proposal assessment criteria, namely a focus on research excellence and the development of career prospects for early stage researchers. Panelists further clarified guidelines for submitting research proposals. There followed a lively discussion with the Max Weber Fellows (MWF) on the challenges faced by early career researchers and common difficulties with these applications.

## **Introduction, Ramon Marimon, Director of the Max Weber Programme**

The Director of the Max Weber Programme, Ramon Marimon, opened the conference by briefly introducing and outlining the aims of the Academic Careers Observatory, an initiative of the Max Weber Programme that is funded by the European Commission. ACO analyses the challenges faced by young academics and early stage researchers in developing their careers in an international setting. In order to facilitate the creation of a comprehensive, strategic and fluid international European Research Area within the EU, ACO aims to circulate information about national and international academic careers and research opportunities in the social sciences and humanities within the EU. In line with this effort, conferences are periodically organized to contribute to the dissemination of information and discussion of issues pertaining to career mobility and research opportunities within the EU.

After outlining the aims of the Academic Careers Observatory Marimon then stated that the specific focus of this conference would be on the different academic agencies, both at the national and at the EU level, that provide funding opportunities for academic study and research. In particular, the conference how researches can get in touch with these agencies, and would thoroughly explain the application processes. Particular priority was given to developing an understanding of national and European opportunities for early stager researchers and young academics.

Furthermore, the conference aimed to evaluate the academic situation within the EU, especially within the context of the recent Financial Crisis. The goal of the conference would be to attain a firm understanding of the ways in which academic agencies have reflected and responded to the current climate of fiscal restraints on grant programs. In this manner the March ACO-MWP Conference would further the research agenda of ACO and help open and connect national research institutions to international researchers.

## **Panel 1: Applying for Funding Opportunities for Young Researchers: The European Agencies.**

### **Frank Marx- Marie Curie Actions**

Marx opened the morning session with a presentation on the Marie Curie Actions. The Marie Curie Actions can be an excellent first step for an early career stage young researcher because these fellowships often lead to the attainment of national or European grant. These aim to move from action plans meant to encourage pure mobility of researchers to programmes dedicated to academic training and researcher career development within a highly mobile context. Their objectives are to; strengthen research and development in European research, encourage and attract researchers from around the world, facilitate career development in the private sector, and provide support for researchers at all career stages. In his presentation Marx focused on programmes targeting early stage career researchers.

Marx began by speaking about the International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES) of the Marie Curie Actions. The programme helps research organizations promote mobility between European researchers and the rest of the world. The Scheme serves as a model for other Third countries to demonstrate the strength and design of how European funding modalities work. The Career Integration Grant (CIG) is the corresponding grant for outside researchers coming to study in Europe. Marx ended this section of his presentation by noting that the IRSES is experiencing a great growth in applications.

Marx transitioned to a discussion on the Initial Training Networks (ITN) programmes. These programmes (of which there are three, the Multipartner ITN, the European Industrial Doctorates and the Innovative Doctoral Programmes) are primarily intended for training early career researchers and are proposed by networks of businesses and academic/research institutions. Marx then listed the features all three modes have in common. All of these programmes are:

- Multi/interdisciplinary and in emerging fields of S&T
- Train primarily through research on individual research projects
- Complemented by substantial training modules in key transferable skills
- Consider involvement of private sector entities essential
- Have a strong element of transnational networking
- Enhance career perspectives
- Projects have a duration of 48 months

Finished with the ITN programmes Marx moved on to several other Schemes. He first discussed the Industry-Academia Partnership Pathways (IAPP). These programmes seek to promote cooperation and the transfer of knowledge between the commercial sector and academia. For these research projects, supporting research is mandatory, but research staff can either be experienced researchers or early career academics. IAPP proposals require at least one academic and one commercial partner from two different countries coming together on a joint research project. Marx then discussed the Intra-European Fellowships for Career Development grants, the International Outgoing Fellowships and the International Incoming

Fellowships programmes under the Marie Curie Actions. All of these programmes are meant to be catalysts for significant development in researcher's careers, help them reach a high level of professional maturity, and encourage the development of further research competences at a high level.

Marx closed by briefly touching upon the Career integration Grants established specifically to counter the European Brain Drain. He listed the objectives of these grants as:

- To encourage and help first class researchers to establish a stable research career in Europe
- To provide first class researchers with additional start-up funding for research (lump sum)
- To support to first class researchers to become an independent group leader
- To increase the prospects of long term integration of a first class researcher in the European Research Area

Marx finished his presentation by addressing a few comments directly to researchers in the proposal stage. His best advice was that while an excellent proposal is a must-have, an applicant must also have a bit of luck to pass the selection process. Even great proposals are turned down at times due to constraints on the grant program. Researchers should never take rejections personally; instead they should incorporate constructive criticism into their proposals in order to improve them. Finally he recommended making the proposal structure as clear, simple and easy to read as possible. From a panel's point of view 80% of the evaluation takes place in the first ten minutes of looking at a proposal, so keeping the text clear and readily understandable is essential.

### **Questions:**

During the following Questions and Answer session Helle Strandgaard Jensen, a researcher from the Department of History and Civilisation, asked if it were possible to apply for two Marie Curie Fellowships if the researcher had two distinct project proposals. Marx answered yes, that it was possible but that it should be stated in the application that two proposals were submitted. The review board should be aware of that because the researcher may only accept one award.

Marimon then asked if there were any Fellowship links to banks or industry. He was concerned by this because the MWP Fellowship is multidisciplinary in nature. Marx answered that the Marie Curie Fellowships will differentiate between academia and non-academic projects. While he agreed that multidisciplinary may be useful, he confirmed that there is greater emphasis placed on the research institute from which the applicant comes.

Jensen raised another question about the success rates of the programmes. Marx answered that the success rates for the Marie Curie Programmes typically range from 8-10%, depending on the funding available. The IRSES Programme has a high 60% success rate, and other programmes fall in between these numbers.

### **Monique Smaïhi-European Research Council**

Monique Smaih then delivered a presentation about the European Research Council. The purpose of the ERC is to allow researchers the opportunity to work for up to five years on a research project of their choice with their own team members. The full financial autonomy given to researchers by this grant is meant to attract top team members from both within and without the EU. Furthermore, depending on the demands of the project, work can be carried out around the world (however the project is meant to be based in the EU). Grants are typically handed out between two and seven years after completion of a PhD. This encourages early stage career researchers to apply for the grants, and facilitates the career development of these young researchers. The average success rate of the ERC falls around 12%.

Smaih then discussed the criteria that constitute a competitive application. The proposal must demonstrate research independence, the researcher must have accomplished a minimum of one (but more are preferable) publication without a supervisor -only significant publications in ranked journals, invited papers or presentations delivered, and prize winning publications will be accepted, and researchers must have a prior promising track record in attracting funding and earning researcher awards. Proposals may be submitted as many times as the researcher wishes. In order to assist the development of the applicant while only about 25% of proposals pass the first stage of consideration those who are rejected receive a full individual report plus a review of the panel discussion. This is extremely helpful for unsuccessful applicants seeking to revise and improve their project proposal.

While making the application Smaih recommended that the proposal be submitted the day before the official deadline. She stressed the importance of reading the guide for applicants and recommended that special care be taken in writing the synopsis of the proposal. Smaih followed up with several other tips for the application process; the applicant should talk to the grants office in their home country for extra tips, create a profile that emphasizes their accomplishments without overselling their work, emphasize the ground-breaking features of the project, and balance these with a high risks/high gain approach, use funding wisely and include alternate strategies designed to mitigate the risks and justify use of resources.

Smaih also discussed several tips for getting panel members attention; she stressed that all proposals must follow the formatting rules and word count limitations required by the ERC. Applicants must proof read their proposals well and have all the documentation ready and submitted on time in advance of the deadline.

### **Questions:**

During the following Q&A session Alanna O'Malley (MWP-ACO) asked about the high success rate in Switzerland. Smaih answered that applicants from that country are specifically trained at the interview and submission level for the application process. Current Max Weber Fellow Daniel Horn followed up by asking who would be the best to provide feedback on an application before it is submitted. Smaih recommended that peers of the researcher be asked to look over and critique the proposal. In response to Laurie Andersen's (University of Siena, MWP EUI) question about proposal success rates Smaih further clarified that about 30% of all applicants receive a C grade and outright rejection. Marimon asked how the ERC's budget is distributed across different panels. The answer was that the budget for each call is just fixed for three domains and then within each, the panel budget is calculated according to the requested amounts. The budget is set at the time of submission in order to give equal chances to all applicants.

## **Arturo Marzano-Institutional perspective, Marie Curie Fellow, EUI, Personal Experience.**

Marie Curie Fellow of History Arturo Marzano followed Smaïhi's presentation by discussing the different ways to prepare and submit a successful research proposal. He stressed that the researcher's CV should reflect the aims of the proposal and the focus of the host institution. Projects representing completely new topics are not encouraged. Furthermore there should be a demonstrable connection between the current proposal and the researcher's prior work. The proposal should be a logical extension of what has gone before and should complement and add to the researcher's CV. Moreover the host institution should be a perfect match for the aims and needs of the project. Finally the selected mentor should be the most logical and ideal person to prepare and finalize the project.

Concerning the actual work that must go into the project Marzano stressed that work on the project should be started long before the proposal has to be submitted and the researcher must be able to display their knowledge in the field. The applicant must be familiar with the relevant archives, research materials and prior efforts surrounding the area of research.

Finally Marzano addressed the 'selling process' of the proposal and the relationship between the researcher and the host institute. The researcher should not submit proposals for the first research ideas they have; they should wait until they have truly outstanding ideas for proposals. Once they do, during the application stage the researcher should try to sell their proposal idea as best they can in order to truly demonstrate that the research project will contribute to and enhance research at the EU level in a tangible manner. In terms of the match between the proposal and the selected institution the researcher must be able to demonstrate not only why the specific institution is required but also what the project will bring to the institution in return. A compelling argument for both sides of this question must be made. The host institution should maintain a high profile and a solid academic reputation. Priority will be given to institutions which have received Marie Curie grants in the past.

## **Panel 2: Presentations: Applying for Funding Opportunities For Young Researchers: National Agencies.**

### **Ken Edmond- The British Academy**

Ken Edmond kicked off the second session of the conference by discussing several of the grants offered by the British Academy. First, a strong emphasis is placed on awards for researchers who are at an early stage in their careers. There is also an emphasis on cross-country engagement and developing a better understanding of the world around us. The Postdoctoral Fellowships are the flagship programmes for the academy. They offer up to 3 years of funding for a researcher to focus on a particular project. These programmes therefore supply the opportunity for an early-stage researcher to have time to dedicate to one particular field of study while also gaining experience teaching and participating in conferences. Following this strategy research knowledge is gained and disseminated almost simultaneously.

Any EEA researcher who acquired their doctorate within the last three years can apply, prior U.K. experience is not required (although an applicant must have pre-agreed support from a U.K. institution upon submitting an application and a doctorate from a U.K. institution). The application process takes place in two stages. The next application process begins in October of 2013. For the 2012-2013 academic year there was an application success rate of around 5%.

Edmond then discussed two specific Fellowships and Research Grant programmes. He began with the Newton International Fellowships, which are run by British Academy and the Royal Society. These Fellowships are awarded with the particular intent for the award-holder to leave the U.K. after receipt. The Fellowship supports foreign scholars (working outside the U.K. and not a U.K. citizen at the time of the application) who wish to study within the U.K. for a period of time lasting up to two years. The focus therefore is on building and maintaining partnerships between foreign scholars and British institutions.

The Leverhulme Small Research Grants differ from the Newton International Fellowships in several key ways. These grants are open to scholars who are ordinarily resident in the UK, but they can also be used when researchers start to build a larger scale EU grant or application. For both of these programmes the assessment procedure is primarily through peer review, which is done by Academy Fellows who are experts in the field of study.

Continuing with the theme from the morning Edmond then outlined several key evaluation criteria that a researcher should consider when submitting a proposal. His list is shown below.

Evaluation criteria for all awards:

- ➔ Academic merit
- ➔ Originality of proposal-excellence of research (risky innovative methodology)
- ➔ Relationship to and volume of research already in the field
- ➔ Feasibility of research programme
- ➔ Specificity of scheme of research
- ➔ Intended outcomes



### **Gemma Irvine, Irish Research Council.**

Gemma Irvine followed Edmond's lead by discussing the opportunities offered by the Irish Research Council. Irvine spoke about opportunities to conduct research in Ireland, which she introduced as an excellent environment for researchers with many funding providers and several universities. She spoke about the academic scene in Ireland, which is where leading research in many fields (including the Humanities and Social Sciences) is currently being carried out. Comparatively with the rest of Europe research impact in Ireland has outgrown the EU average and Irish institutions secure a large proportion of research funding every year.

Having introduced Ireland as an excellent location for researchers Irvine then turned to the academic focus common among Irish institutions. Exploratory and innovative research is highly emphasized and interdisciplinarity is considered key in any research proposal. The focus is on investing in ideas and promoting excellence in research projects. Typically the success rate for research applications hovers around 12%, with a focus on individual early career-stage research and recent postdocs researchers.

Irvine then went on to discuss the four different schemes present in Irish national programmes. The first and second are the Government of Ireland Postdocs, which can be used for one year in order to prepare a project for publication or for a period of two years spent developing a new research project. The typical annual salary is around 31,500 euros. Any researcher is eligible for these funding opportunities but research outputs, peer reviewed publications and thesis samples (Table of Contents and one chapter) must be available. An applicant may also not be a staff member at an Irish institute of higher education and must have received their PhD within the previous five years. A gender statement is usually required with the research proposal outlining how the research would impact the population.

The third scheme discussed by Irvine was the Enterprise Fellowship, which typically creates a partnership between the research and industries in the scientific, cultural or social fields. In order to qualify for this Fellowship applicants must currently be living and must have spent less than 40% of their European research career outside of Ireland. Finally, the fourth scheme is the International Career Development Fellowship. This programme was cofounded by Marie Curie Actions (ELEVATE) and offers three years of funding, which are split between two years spent in an international host institute and one year at an Irish institute of higher education

The Irish Research Council serves as the contact point for all of these programmes, the ERC, the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework programme and the European Social Fund.

### **Kerstin Sahlin, Swedish Research Council**

Kerstin Sahlin then rose to give a presentation on national funding agencies within Sweden. The issues of funding researchers as individuals is a pertinent one in Sweden where there has been a long tradition of funding centres of excellence. The SRC supports basic research of the highest quality in all academic fields. Recently the government has increased the budget for research and is re-focusing on individual funding. There is also an added emphasis on young researchers and innovative research, with a number of new opportunities to be announced in the summer of 2013. Applicants are encouraged to apply for four or five year grants as opposed to the traditional 3 year position.

Sahlin then discussed the Postdoc academic landscape of Sweden. Particularly in the Social Sciences there is a need for young, early-career scholars and younger academics especially in the positions of assistant professors, lecturers and researchers. The current debate in Sweden is how to attract young people into the country and into academia. Reflecting this debate aptly, one-third of the available SRC funding goes to early career-stage researchers. Half of the people who receive grants have a career age of less than 7 years. Tenure track positions are being created in universities in order to attract the best international candidates and research. Therefore there are excellent opportunities for people who are seeking postdoctoral positions.

There is also a greater focus on the number of ERC starting grants as a quality measure for the Swedish research system. Several Swedish funding bodies now have specific instruments for attracting young researchers. The current question being confronted by the SRC is whether universities should be nominated individually or whether research grants should be handed out to individual researchers who have a host university.

Sahlin then discussed several different funding instruments available in Sweden. These are listed below. In addition she emphasized that generous financial support will be given over the next 10 years to young researchers and there is a scheme under development for the recruitment of excellent international scholars into Swedish universities.

Specific Funding Instruments:

- ➔ Postdoc funding
- ➔ Specific grants for young researcher (not for H and SS)
- ➔ Grants for excellent young researchers a new scheme, call will be out in summer 2013, young researcher is less than 6 years post PhD.

### **Charles Giry Deloison, Agence Nationale de la Recherche, France.**

Closing out the morning's presentations was Charles Giry Deloison, who spoke at length about the Agence Nationale de la Recherche, in France. Two types of programmes are found within the French context; thematic-targeted in calls in a range of areas and open non-targeted calls in all scientific fields. In 2013 three different thematic-targeted calls have been issued, one for learning (which has since closed), one for open research area for Social Sciences in collaboration with several foreign research areas (ORA) and one for emergence and evaluation studies. These programs are aimed specifically at team-led research and are not considered as individual grants.

There have likewise been three calls issued for applications for open programmes. The first is the White Programme. The White Programme is a completely free research opportunity for an ambitious research project with original objectives. While young researchers may apply to a White Programme the programme is not specifically aimed at early-career researchers. The program has a success rate slightly over 20%, which is considered a low success rate in France. (2012 figures)

The second programme is the GCGC, which is aimed at early career researchers. To be able to apply to this programme a researcher must be under the age of 39, devote at least 75% of research time to the project (whose duration must last between 2-4 years and involve only one partner), have a permanent position within a French university and may not combine funding with funding from another source. The objectives of the programme are to allow researchers to rapidly access research responsibilities, help researchers develop their own research, and allow them to demonstrate their ability to engage in exploratory and innovative research. This programme has a somewhat more respectable success rate of 23%. (2012 figures)

The third call that Deloison discussed was the Return of Postdocs Programme (PDOC). This programme encourages young French candidates who have emigrated or foreign doctors who have submitted their thesis in France to return to the country for their postdoctoral research. This programme seeks to provide funding for these researchers to help them develop their own research and find employment in research or research-oriented public institutes. Applications to this programme must devote 100% of their research time to the project, must be within five years of their PhD, have spent at least one year of experience abroad and may receive funding from no other sources. This programme has a 22% success rate. (2012 figures)

Deloison then listed several different evaluation criteria, which have been listed below.

Evaluation criteria:

- ➔ excellence, methodology, of project
- ➔ overall impact of project, the deliverables, and what it will produce
- ➔ the quality of the team
- ➔ scientific and technical quality
- ➔ appropriateness of project resources and the project feasibility

## Questions

During the following Q&A session chaired by Max Weber Fellow (SPS) James Cross it was asked of the panellists if pre PhD experience should be emphasized or even mentioned in the application process. The general consensus was that relevant past experience should be mentioned as long as the applicant does fulfil the criteria of the early stage researcher. Irvine said that it would be a benefit for an applicant to mention that they can draw upon other experiences related to the research project.

Jensen then asked Sahlin if there was a preference by the SRC for postdoctoral applicants from within Sweden or from the EUI. She answered that while there is an excellent success rate for both what is truly crucial is contact with a host institution willing to sponsor the research project. She stated that most of the larger Swedish universities have large and competent grants offices through which you can set up contact with universities.

Marimon then asked two questions; why there are so many PhD restrictions in France, and whether funding opportunities are available inside of Sweden for research with a focus on datasets? Answering for the French system Deloison responded that the intent was to limit the

application process to attract and focus on the best possible candidates. Sahlin then addressed the second question, stating that both the SRC structures and the researchers themselves appreciate the value of dataset-based research.

### **Panel 3: Presentations: Applying for Funding Opportunities For Young Researchers: National Agencies.**

#### **Eckard Kamper, German Research Foundation**

Opening the afternoon session Eckard Kamper spoke about the national funding opportunities in Germany. The DFG, like the SRC, is actively intensifying its promotion of young researchers in an open call rather than a thematic manner. In order to encourage younger researchers the DFG is sponsoring programmes aimed at helping them develop their research careers, develop scientific independence and correspondingly improving Germany's visibility in the science field.

Eligibility for most programmes is determined by 2 criteria; the applicant must have both a German PhD and an affiliation at a German institution. The selection criterion for research proposals includes scientific qualifications, the quality of the project, the expected knowledge gain, the fit of the project to the scientific environment and the feasibility of the project.

Kamper then went on to discuss two programs in detail, the Emmy Noether programme and the Heissenberg Fellowship. The Emmy Noether Programme is aimed at highly qualified postdoctoral researchers and is intended to enable researchers to lead independent working groups and demonstrate their qualifications for scientific leadership positions in the future. Funding for this programme lasts for 5 years and it is specially designed to encourage applications from researchers from abroad. It promotes group work and the development of a complex scientific project.

In contrast the Heissenberg Fellowship is designed for people waiting for their first professorship and seeks to fill the gap between habilitation and job. It tries to create employment opportunities both abroad and at home and is designed to attract early career-stage researchers.

#### **Petra Grabner, Austrian Science Fund**

Following Kamper, Petra Grabner delivered a presentation about academic funding in the Austrian national context. Grabner first discussed the application process. Eligibility for funding programs in Austria typically carries a residency requirement and requires at least a working knowledge of English, the language of submission for most applications. Application reviews are conducted outside of Austria and each assessment is tailored specifically for each project proposal. Austrian applicants enjoy a fairly high proposal success rate of 30%.

Grabner then discussed the three pillar structure of national academic funding programmes. There is a certain cradle to grave approach in that there are opportunities for every career juncture. Grabner discussed two programmes in particular, the Start Programme and the Lise Meitner Programme. The Start Programme is arguably the most relevant for early career researchers. Both domestic and foreign researchers may apply. The application process is open, but intention to conduct research abroad or previous experience abroad is considered

beneficial. The aim of the 6 year programme is to target outstanding researchers from all disciplines and help them develop the skills and qualify for leading positions in Austria or elsewhere. Early career researchers are encouraged to apply and use this opportunity to establish themselves. More advanced researchers may also apply to the programme but they must have had their previous work published in top international publications. The success rate for this programme is considerably lower than the national average.

In addition Austria has specific funding programmes in place for the promotion of women in science. One such is the Lise Meitner Programme for Incoming Researchers. This programme is open to non-resident researchers from any academic discipline and carries with it no age limit. Its purpose is to create international contacts in Austria and to develop the Austrian scientific community. Applications are on a rolling basis with a success rate close to 30%.

## Questions

During the Q&A session that followed these two presentations it was asked; “how friendly are the programmes to junior American faculty who might want to join with German or Austrian colleagues?” The Chair, Max Weber Fellow (HEC) Konrad Lawson, replied that there was no problem as long as applications have an affiliation with faculties in the host country. Lawson then asked if it was the standard process that applicants have established a salary at a host institution with grants as extra funding? Answering for Germany Kamper replied by saying that wasn’t typical. Usually, the university supplies a letter of intent which leads to the researcher receiving a funded job and personal costs are covered in this process. Grabner followed up on this by saying that this usually depends on the grant but that the general rule is that an Austrian professor will apply for a standalone project and cover the costs of the teams involved.

Cross then asked if the success rates quoted are considered high as a whole or if they are similarly reflected in the Social Sciences. Grabner estimated that about 20% of the funding budget in Austria goes to the Humanities but in order to get an accurate picture one would have to differentiate between disciplines. For example proposals for Archaeology and Ancient History are generally extremely successful, which may not be the case for other disciplines. Kamper answered by saying that German success rates for the Social Sciences are about 30%.

Marimon then asked how the problem of foreign researchers leaving after their grants are finished is confronted in Austria and Germany. Kamper replied that the German academic system is very rigid, which has been problematic at times, but schemes have been developed specifically to compensate for this. Grabner pointed out that Austria does suffer from this issue, but that the issue of tenure compensates.

Finally it was asked of both presenters; “how much emphasis should be placed on the specific country of study should the research topic have?” Kamper and Grabner both stressed that it is far more important for the research proposal to be convincing in scientific terms and capable of standing alone; there is no need to reference the country of study.

### **Aneta Michalkiewicz, Foundation for Polish Science**

Following the Q&A Aneta Michalkiewicz carried the session forward by speaking about national funding in Poland. She stated that since the Foundation for Polish Science is quite small in comparison with the other agencies discussed that day the Foundation focuses on the very best researchers and proposals so that they can become even better. Funding programmes are financed from structural funds and there is a specific programme for Monographs which acts as the Foundation's publisher.

In addition to the national programmes there are several international opportunities such as the Copernicus, the Max Planck Institution, and the Alexander van Humboldt foundation. In particular there is a programme called 'Ideas for Poland' which accepts both domestic and foreign applicants on a rolling basis. Therefore Poland is open to researchers at the early career stage and benefits from many researchers who bring ERC grants to the country.

Michalkiewicz then discussed the Homing Plus programme, which is an important early career opportunity for young researchers. Applicants must be researchers who are up to 4 years post PhD, and Polish researchers currently abroad are specifically encouraged to return home. Funding from the programme can last between one and two years. Interestingly there is a higher success rate for proposals from the Social Sciences in this programme than in the bio, and technology fields. Applications are in English.

Michalkiewicz ended by stating that the Foundation for Polish Sciences will facilitate young researchers with finding a host institution in Poland, and that most if not all programmes are open to all nationalities, with new programmes and opportunities being offered in the years to come.

### **Gaetano Gaballo, Banque de France**

Former Max Weber Fellow Gaetano Gaballo finished the day's presentation by speaking about the Banque de France, which maintains several funding programmes for academic study. The Banque is a private foundation rather than a national agency and does not fund research in all fields but rather promotes an overlap between the academic world and various policy fields involving the Banque's business. In this sense and for this purpose the Banque attracts and funds researchers and specific research projects.

The programmes offered by the Banque are quite specific in scope and not as broadly available as other programmes discussed during the conference. The general research grant offered by the Banque is the most flexible funding opportunity; generally research projects chosen for this grant are in the field of economics or other relevant areas for the Banque. The papers written by sponsored academics tend to be well funded under this particular schemes and the Banque reserves for itself the right of 'first use' of the research collected by funded academics.

Essentially the Banque's schemes offer a trade-off against the French national schemes. Researchers are given plenty of time and resources to develop their ideas but the Foundation is also quite keen to create contacts and build up a network of academics. Additionally there

are prizes available for candidates in economics from all nationalities designed to encourage research in the fields important to the Banque. For example, the Prize for Young Researcher in Economics in 2013 is an award of €2000 and a release from 80 hours of teaching if the candidate is affiliated to a French university. In this way this prize is used to encourage specific areas of research.

During the discussion that followed Gaetano further clarified that research proposals submitted for the Banque's consideration are judged by committee on a rolling basis. Gaetano himself is a researcher for the Banque, and came to the EUI to present in an ambassadorial context.



## **Plenary Remarks: Commonalities and Challenges in the Funding Application Process in Years of Financial Restraint.**

Following the conclusion of the last presentation the conference then entered its plenary session. It was noted that many of the different funding systems discussed that day shared similar assessment criteria, which emphasizes a focus on research excellence and the development of career prospects. Career advancement is most easily accounted for by publication in top peer reviewed journals, but it should be clear whether or not there is a distinction made between national journals (e.g. Irish history) or international journals. Furthermore, while there are many programmes designed to meet the specific needs of early career researchers, when the period of eligibility is longer for the application process preference is skewed towards later stage researchers. In this time of economic restraint while the university sector is deeply affected there has been a rise in the number of applicants to these schemes there has been no apparent cut in funding to these programmes.

When looking at eligibility for funding opportunities from national academic agencies an important contrast is noted between the very closed, protectionist system that is the norm in the ANR and the more open schemes in the North. For example, Sweden displays the opposite characteristics to France where the system is open and well-funded. The reintroduction of tenure into the Swedish system contrasts with the rigid academic system of career development in countries of Southern Europe. The question then arises as to whether or not closed systems are undercut by their ability to attract top candidates? This dichotomy feeds into the questions of openness, competitiveness and advancement between the countries of the ERA, a primary focus of ACO at the moment. It was noted that in several countries closed academic systems were gradually and marginally opening, and that this might continue in the future as closed systems devise programmes specifically to attract foreign elite academics.

The group then discussed several of the specific trends on the academic career ladder. Marimon led this debate by observing that in the 7 years since the MWP programme was started it has been observed that at the top of the academic career ladder the market is more open. The problem now being confronted is how to deal with this, and whether the European Research Area can be transformed to create an open door academic market.

Marx addressed the impact of the recent fiscal contractions. He stated that there is “a good chance that research budgets will continue to increase.” At the EU level, Europe has to complement what is already happening at the national level. The conference’s presentations reflect the rich variety of options that are already available. He then said that it is now incumbent on the Member states to push their agendas forward at the EU level. He finished by saying that hopefully the research community holds a great influence in this regard and that in his view the future is bright for Horizon 2020. Deloison disagreed. He said that while France has several programmes aimed specifically at getting foreign researchers to come work in France his own projections for research financing are much less optimistic. Sahlin agreed, noting that while European-wide funding is increasing it is doing so very slowly. Collaboration across countries must be pushed further.

Irvine then reiterated that the best approach for each programme is to continue trying to attract the best researchers and projects. Irvine proposed that the term 'excellent researcher' be further defined. The group followed her lead in this by saying that an early stage researcher needs to be a problem solver, an entrepreneur, self-employed and self-motivated and aware that their expertise, critical thinking and problem solving are their finished products. Young researchers shouldn't unnecessarily limit themselves but be aware that are opportunities beyond academia, particularly in the field of policy-making. If one has the opportunity to work in a funding council environment they should seize the chance to work on the other side of the system.