



EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL Pan-European Structure

Higher Education and Research Standing Committee Brussels September 2005

The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their recruitment

In March 2005 the EU Commission published the "European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment". The principles of the document is designed to improve the working conditions and careers of researchers in Europe, to enhance mobility, but avoid brain drain and thus contribute to raise the number of qualified researchers working in the EU.

Representatives from trade unions for teachers and researchers in higher education and research, assembled in the EI Pan-European Standing Committee for Higher Education and Research in Brussels on September 28th 2005 strongly support the Researchers Charter. We welcome the positive outcome of the UK Presidency Conference in London, September 8th-9th 2005. The main conclusions of this event were the need for a cultural change at research institutions in the interest of improving the status of the research profession and the attractiveness of the research profession at all stages of the career.

The Researchers Charter is an important step in the acknowledgement of researchers and the work they are doing towards the attainment of the Barcelona goals of investment of at least 3% of GNP in each member-state in research - of which 1% shall be invested by the public.

The debate about developing research in Europe has for too long only been focused on giving priority to research. The Charter is the first European attempt also to focus on the people who we represent and who have to be given attractive wage, working conditions and research careers to retain them in the profession and to attract other qualified persons into the research profession.

The unions recognize that the Charter is not a binding instrument like a Directive. It is therefore up to each European research institution - private or public - to decide whether or not it will respect the recommendations and principles of the Charter – or develop its own on the basis of these principles. We like the Charter to be the carrot it is meant to be, but we realise that if the implementation on a voluntarily basis fails, it will be necessary to introduce some sort of stick to make the principles of the Charter come into practice. One such stick could be to link funding of research from the EU research programmes to the recognition and the implementation of the principles of the Charter at the institutions receiving funding from EU. National governments also have an important role in promoting the Charter and Code through their policies and funding regimes.

The assembled representatives from trade unions in higher education and research across Europe support the Charter and Code and will work hard to promote the principles in it at both European and national level in each of our countries. We will be active participants in the monitoring process of the implementation of the Charter.