

The EURAXESS initiatives:

## Designed to develop and enhance researcher's careers

### EURAXESS Jobs

Research fellowships and researcher positions are announced on the European job portal: [www.euraxess.eu](http://www.euraxess.eu). Norway is one of the countries in Europe that places most job advertisements on the portal, which is used by researchers all over the world.

### EURAXESS Services Network

Mobile researchers have a number of practical issues to deal with when moving to a new country, such as taxation, work and residence permits, benefit and pension entitlements, child care and accommodation.

Information about how these issues are handled in Norway is available on the national EURAXESS webpages: [www.rcn.no/euraxess](http://www.rcn.no/euraxess). International researchers may gain further advice and assistance at the institution to which they are affiliated.

### EURAXESS Rights

The EURAXESS project seeks to improve working conditions for researchers through implementation of the Charter and Code, among other initiatives.

Another aim is to grant permits to researchers from countries outside the EU/EEA to enable them to work in Europe. To this end, an EU directive for fast track "scientific visas" has been drawn up targeting this group. The directive is not relevant to EU/EEA citizens, who automatically have the right to work anywhere in Europe.

Norway has not adopted the EU's directive on fast-track "scientific visas", but many of its provisions are incorporated into the new Immigration Act, which comes into force on 1 January 2010. The new Act makes it possible, for example, for researchers to start working in Norway before their final residence permits have been granted.

### EURAXESS Links

EURAXESS Links is a network for European researchers working outside Europe. Its aim is to strengthen the connection of these researchers to the European research community by keeping them informed of research policy, funding schemes, opportunities for collaboration and career opportunities.



### The Charter and Code

- The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers were drawn up in 2005 and are known as the Charter and Code.
- The aim is to ensure transparency in recruitment and funding processes, create attractive working conditions and career development opportunities for researchers, and make mobility an essential component of the career of every European researcher.
- An analysis carried out by the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions in 2008 showed that Norwegian research institutions on the whole already fulfil most of the recommendations set out in the Charter and Code.
- Over 900 European research institutions have signed the Charter and Code.

### The European Research Area (ERA)

Has its origin in the Lisbon Strategy (2000), the Barcelona goals (2002) and the Ljubljana Process (2008). The Lisbon Treaty (2009) establishes measures for the implementation of the ERA. Norway has endorsed the ERA through the white paper *Climate for Research (2008–2009)*.



The Research Council of Norway

The Research Council of Norway is the co-ordinator of EURAXESS in Norway



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## EURAXESS in Norway – the example of the University of Oslo



Karin Brastad is well versed in assisting the numerous international researchers at PGP, a Centre of Excellence at the University of Oslo.





The University of Oslo:

## We need the best minds

The University of Oslo seeks to recruit the very best Norwegian and foreign researchers. Competition is fierce, so it is vital to be an attractive employer. The university has therefore undertaken new measures to attract first-rate minds.

One of the actions the University of Oslo (UiO) has taken is signing the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (the Charter and Code) in the summer of 2009.

These two documents provide recommendations concerning the responsibilities and obligations of researchers, employers and funders as regards working conditions, knowledge development and knowledge sharing, career planning for researchers and researcher mobility.

At the same time UiO formalised its cooperation with the EURAXESS Services Network by becoming a Local Contact Point. UiO already has extensive experience of working with mobile researchers, having launched a project to develop a professional reception concept for international researchers in 2006. Through this project the university has been a prime mover for and key contributor to the EURAXESS Services Network.

### Keen to improve

Although the principles set out in the Charter and Code are generally well-established at UiO, the university wishes to identify areas where there is room for improvement. To this end, UiO plans to carry out an internal analysis that will compare the principles in the Charter and Code with its own practices.

"We need the best minds. So it is essential that we are a professional employer," says Irene Sandlie, head of personnel in the Organisation and Personnel Department at UiO. "We believe that the university's adherence to the Charter and Code and its participation in the EURAXESS Services Network will draw attention to and help to improve our efforts to recruit scholars and ensure good conditions for mobile researchers," explains Sandlie.

### Well-functioning reception apparatus a competitive advantage

"The way researchers are received and followed up by their host institution is an important factor in the competition to attract the top candidates," says Suzanne-Ann Stämpfli, an adviser in the Organisation and Personnel Department and project manager of the reception concept project.

"We want researchers to be able to get to work on their research as soon as possible after their arrival. Our reception apparatus is designed to make things easier for visiting researchers by providing information and assistance, so that international employees can settle in quickly."

The reception concept is built on the principle of local integration and central coordination. Researchers are followed up by their host institutes, while a dedicated centre is responsible for coordinating the hosts' reception services and offers special assistance such as housing services and Norwegian language courses.

### EURAXESS Services Network provides broad contacts

"We will continue to focus efforts on further developing the reception apparatus," states Stämpfli. "Our participation in the EURAXESS Services Network is a key to those efforts because it provides us with a broad range of contacts including research institutions, the authorities and other organisations in Norway and abroad."

Information about UiO's reception concept: [www.uio.no/english/for-employees/organization/ifif](http://www.uio.no/english/for-employees/organization/ifif)



A Norwegian course for more than just the language:

## Learning, problem solving and socialising

It is Thursday morning and at the University of Oslo (UiO) 15 of the university's international academic employees are deep in concentration, trying to understand the examples their teacher, Inger Egebakken, is giving them. "Can you play football?" she is asking.

### Focus on everyday Norwegian

The UiO Norwegian language course, which focuses on oral and conversational skills. "Most of the international employees at UiO use English as their working language, which works fine, but they want to learn Norwegian for personal and social reasons," explains Egebakken. "They want to be able to understand the lunchtime conversations of their Norwegian-speaking colleagues, they want to be able to speak a bit of

Norwegian when they go shopping and they are keen to be integrated into Norwegian society as a whole. For that, the language is vital."

"We practise dialogues that deal with basic language functions such as introducing oneself, talking on the telephone, going to cafes, discussing news events or a TV programme," says Egebakken. "The aim is not for the researchers to be able to teach in Norwegian by the end of the course, but for them to be able to get by in everyday situations in Norway."

### Solving challenges

The courses also serve as a social meeting place for researchers and their spouses or partners. In addition they provide an opportunity for the host organisation to pick up on any challenges international researchers may face in dealing with UiO and living in Norway. It may appear daunting to obtain a Norwegian national identity number, open a bank account, find accommodation and secure a kindergarten place, and it takes time to understand how everything works in Norway.

"Questions asked by course participants also enable us to be aware of potential problems so that we can provide assistance and relevant information to those concerned," says Suzanne-Ann Stämpfli, who coordinates UiO's reception services. "Moreover, the researchers are able to benefit from each other's experience and give each other advice on how best to solve problems they may encounter."

Project manager of the UiO reception project, Suzanne-Ann Stämpfli



## With knowledge as a livelihood

How can a small country such as Norway successfully compete for the best and the brightest? And how can Europe emerge victorious in the face of worldwide competition?

Mobility, internationalisation of research and international research cooperation promote scientific excellence. There is consensus in Europe on the need to realise the "fifth freedom – the free movement of knowledge" and a common European research arena, the European Research Area (ERA), if a knowledge-based European economy is to be created.

The EU initiative Better careers and more mobility is one of the instruments being implemented to realise the ERA. In order to succeed in the global competition for the best researchers, Europe must both educate and retain the most highly qualified candidates and also attract talent from other parts of the world. It is in this competitive arena that Norwegian research institutions have to operate.

### Career opportunities for researchers – a crucial factor

If Norway and Europe are to achieve their goals, they must be able to offer researchers attractive careers with opportunities to work across national borders. For mobile researchers, transparent and professional recruitment processes and promising career development prospects for themselves and their families are important considerations when it comes to choosing a place of work. Factors such as good benefit and pension entitlements also play a part in making a researcher position in a foreign country appealing.



Frenchman Christophe Raufaste is happy with Norwegian administrative procedures at the University of Oslo (UiO)

"High-calibre research and good working conditions attracted me to Norway and UiO. Besides I wanted to experience something different and to try living in a country where people have a closeness to nature."

Christophe Raufaste

The EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion project brings together a number of initiatives designed to develop and enhance researchers' careers. All countries in the ERA are eligible to take part in the EURAXESS network. As of 2010, 37 countries are involved.

The Research Council of Norway coordinates the EURAXESS network in Norway and hosts the national EURAXESS portal: [www.rcn.no/euraxess](http://www.rcn.no/euraxess). EURAXESS initiatives are also followed up at Norwegian research institutions in their efforts to compete for top researchers.