



Providing a global voice for research staff and postdoctoral scholars

ICoRSA statement on European organisations HR Excellence in Research implementation

The International Consortium of Research Staff Associations (ICoRSA) is a recently formed coalition of national and international organizations that provides a global voice for research staff and postdoctoral scholars on international policy issues. ICoRSA commends the European Commission on its recent study undertaken by Technopolis: 'Feasibility study for the development of a certification mechanism for genuinely good HR management in the public research sector in Europe'. This fundamental research will further the development of the concept of "good human resources management" and will help define ways in which this can be quantified. ICoRSA is committed to good human resources management, and we support the commission's aims to systematically improve this across Europe.

ICoRSA is aware that the commission has suggested that the results of this study be used to assess and potentially implement a European-wide HR accreditation process. These measures will positively impact ICoRSA constituents in countries where such good HR practices do not exist by promoting improvements in working conditions for researchers in those countries.

However, an EU-wide accreditation process has the potential to create bureaucracy and ineffective 'tick-box' measures at many EU institutions, particularly in countries where good HR practices are already implemented. As an example, the U.K. already has aspirational measures, such as the Concordat, that UK institutions are voluntarily adopting. This has resulted in institutions creating and implementing effective policies based on feedback from doctoral candidates and early-stage career researchers that work well within the institution.

ICoRSA supports a range of implementation strategies within a national and/or institutional context, and suggests that the EU Commission initially generate recommended HR procedures to which European institutions can aspire. In this way, each institution can create effective HR practices that work well with existing institutional policies and procedures. Furthermore, we suggest incentivising the voluntary adoption of the recommended HR practices. Allowing institutions to decide independently how to address these aspirational measures will likely result in institutional 'buy-in' or acceptance of the change.

In the event that an EU-wide accreditation process is implemented, we call for a system that is stream-lined and efficient in delivering the overall aim.

We commend the European Commission's efforts towards improving HR practices, and will continue to work with the Commission to advocate for the implementation of effective HR strategies across Europe.