**HOT TOPIC: Covid-19 will have a huge impact on researcher mobility and the academic world – but how exactly?**

Covid-19, the pandemic that has ravaged the world for most of 2020, continues to take a massive toll on lives, health systems, economies and society in general. It also has a huge impact on researchers – their physical mobility, the way they work, and how they interact and cooperate through international research networks.

Restrictions on travel and social interactions, which hinder movement within and between countries, make conference participation impossible, thwart international research cooperation, and prevent researchers from visiting partner institutions or working and conducting research in them.

A lot has been written about the effects of these trends on academic teaching. We know that universities have moved towards online classes and are preparing for much-reduced enrolments for the upcoming academic year, especially from foreign students. According to one study, some 36% of students are considering changing their study plans.

But much less is known so far about Covid-19’s impact on research, the other side of academia. Research priorities are changing and research budgets have been reallocated. Many people interested in research positions abroad are reconsidering their plans because of travel restrictions, financial uncertainties and other pressures. A lot of uncertainty remains. Researchers are asking themselves questions like: *How can I carry out research and cooperate with my international peers under the new conditions? Can I still research abroad under these circumstances? Should I postpone it? Should I abandon it?* Research institutes and universities are asking: *How should we prepare for the emerging new research context? Do we need new online research collaboration tools? How can we maintain our research excellence? Can we host guest researchers under these circumstances?*

Nobody has answers to these questions at the moment, but researchers around the world are working hard to try and find them. To support and accelerate this process, EURAXESS will carry out a global survey to collect information about current thinking around these issues and the most recent innovative ideas for solutions.

This survey will also explore how changes related to Covid-19 are affecting researcher/academic mobility, especially EU-centric mobility, as well as the potential wider consequences for the research and academic world – financial effects, research output and quality, career qualifications, hosting dynamics, etc. The survey results will provide researchers with concrete information for their work and career agendas, and create valuable insights for policymakers.

With members in some 40 European countries and in all major regions of the world, the EURAXESS network is uniquely placed to conduct this representative survey. As a first step, the survey will collect information from researchers about their situations and perceptions, and the prospects for international mobility in the days of Covid-19. Following this, a complementary survey of universities, research institutions and research policymakers will explore the possibilities and prospects of hosting international researchers and fostering research mobility under the new conditions. The results will help researchers to re-shape their international collaboration and mobility plans, and support host institutions and policymakers in formulating new strategies and policies to maintain international researcher mobility.

For more information, please contact [**survey@eEuraxess.net**](mailto:survey@eEuraxess.net)with your queries or ideas.