

Discussion on
Early Career Researchers
@INFN-Fe

Some of the Particle Physics ECRs in INFN Ferrara



Summary suggestions for the town-hall discussion:

ECR is the **most varied category** of researchers

Regardless of the many different projects, our **concerns** are mostly focused on the **work/life balance** and the possibility of having a “**clear path**” to **create a solid career** that will lead to the possibility of getting a permanent position.

➤ **Is the mentoring experience of INFN a model to be supported elsewhere?**

For many of us, the main focus is how to get the next position: many opportunities translate to many career choices.

➤ **Do we have to pick the “right” bandwagon?**

With the great need for hardware/software work in front of us

➤ **How do we properly evaluate this (sometimes) silent contribution?**

➤ **Will the “Publish or perish” approach still be feasible?**

➤ **How do we create a European-level training/mobility program that allows us to differentiate the experiences?**

As young researchers, we invite you to identify a **target goal for national GDP** to be reached to support our future. This is done for military expenses, why not for research?

Guide to the town-hall discussion : ECR = Precarious Researcher

1. Evaluation and Recognition of Work

- **Publication Metric:** The "10-paper" metric isn't universally applicable, as those working in large collaborations may have many publications without adequate individual recognition.
- **New Recognition Strategies:** Need for new methods to recognise the work of early career researchers (ECRs) at both national and international levels.
- **Definition of ECR:** Differences in the definition of ECR at the European level can create disparities; consideration could be given to those who are still eligible for starting grants.
- **Career Recognition in Industry:** Greater outreach to the private sector to promote recognition of research skills and experience.

2. Contract Structure and Working Conditions

- **Short-Term Research Contracts:** Postdoc positions are often short-term (1–2 years), requiring researchers to constantly apply for new positions, detracting from their actual research work.
- **Uniform Salaries at European Level:** Call for a standardised European salary for researchers.
- **Absorption into Research Structures:** Lack of integration of ECRs into academic and research institutions, despite their being a highly skilled workforce.
- **Support for European Mobility:** Improved European procedures to facilitate researcher mobility (e.g., welcoming offices for newcomers at research centres) and European support networks for training and mobility.

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3. Funding and Grant Access

- **Grants for Early Career Researchers:** Opportunities for grants dedicated to young researchers, similar to CSN5 funding.
- **Research Funding as a % of GDP:** Call for a fixed percentage of GDP to be dedicated to research funding at the European level (similar to defence funding).
- **Advance Payment for Travel Expenses:** Bureaucratic and financial difficulties in advancing travel expenses.

4. Representation and Support for ECRs

- **ECR Representation Bodies:** Creation of representative bodies for ECRs, both within INFN and at the European level.
- **Visibility and Accessibility of European Networks:** Greater visibility and access to European networks for ECRs, such as those for training and mobility.

5. Work-Life Balance and Work Environment

- **Work-Life Balance:** Need for clear guidelines in the supervisor-supervised relationship, following the European Charter for Researchers.
- **Psychological Support:** Introduction of a psychological support role for ECRs, with coverage over multiple sections to ensure accessibility and support for mental and work-life well-being.