# Becoming the leader: Focus on experienced researchers

Alexandra Bitušíková

Vice-Rector for Research, Matej Bel University

Career choice: Researcher, Bratislava, 9 November 2016

# Charter and Code (2005)

- **The European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers** constitutes **a framework for researchers, employers and funders** which invites them to act responsibly and as professionals within their working environment, and to recognise each other as such.

- The Charter **addresses all researchers** in the EU **at all stages of their career** and covers all fields of research in the public and private sectors, irrespective of the nature of the appointment or employment, the legal status of their employer or the type of organisation or establishment in which the work is carried out. It **takes into account the multiple roles of researchers**, who are appointed not only to conduct research and/or to carry out development activities but are also involved in **supervision, mentoring, management or administrative tasks**.

# Specificities of career development of experienced researchers

- Career development of researchers is a never-ending process
- Broad diversity of models in the EU and worldwide in terms of career development of researchers including experienced researchers
- Definition of experienced researcher (C&C):
  - Experienced Researchers are defined as researchers having at least four years of research experience (full-time equivalent) since gaining a university diploma giving them access to doctoral studies, in the country in which the degree/diploma was obtained or researchers already in possession of a doctoral degree, regardless of the time taken to acquire it.
- Starting point: postdoc position is not clearly defined and accepted within the area of the Bologna signatories – it is a very vaguely described position and can last from 2 to XY years – postdoc position is mostly exploited position of all (despite the definition of „experienced researchers" in C&C).

# Example of academic career: UK

**Career curriculum in the UK:**
- Ph.D. Candidate
- Postdoc/Research Assistant
- Teaching Fellow
- Research Fellow
- Lecturer A
- Lecturer B
- Senior Lecturer or Reader
- Full Professor

# Example of academic career: Germany

**Career curriculum: 2 SYSTEMS**

- **Old system:**
  1. PhD Candidate( Academic Employee/Junior Research Fellow position)
  2. Habilitation (Academic Assistant/Senior Research Fellow position)
  3. C3 Professorship (Professor)
  4. C4 Professorship (Professor)

- **Provisional new system:**
  1. PhD Candidate (Academic Employee/Junior Research Fellow)

- After completing a PhD, under the new system a researcher has two options:

- 2a. Habilitation. During this time, one is usually considered an Academic Assistant/Senior Research Fellow or
  2b. W1 Professorship/Junior-Professorship (Junior-Professor)

- 3. W2 Professorship (Professor)
  4. W3 Professorship (Professor)

# Example of academic career: Sweden

**Career Curriculum**

- 1. PhD Candidate
  2. Forskarassistent /Postdoctoral Fellow
  3. Adjunkt /Junior Lecturer
  4. Lecturer (Senior)
  5. Professor

# Example of academic career: Italy

Career curriculum:

- 1. PhD candidate
- 2. Possibly post doc position (assegno di ricerca)
- 3. Possibly Temporary Lecturer ('professore a contratto')
- 4. Researcher ('ricercatore') type A or type B
- 5. Associate Professor ('professore associato'), tenure track or tenured
- 6. Full Professor ('professore ordinario'), tenured after a probationaly period ('professore straordinario')

# Example of academic career: Slovakia

Career curriculum:

- PhD candidate

- Assistant - Postdoc (postdoc not defined in any legislation or strategies)

- Assistant professor

- Associate professor (after habilitation)

- Full professor (after inauguration)

# Differences in academic career development

- Ways of appointment (professorship as a career development procedure in front of scientific committees of the faculty and university – tenure track – so called inauguration - life position and status; or professorship as an open position at a certain university for a certain period of time)
- Gender gap (women disadvantaged from the beginning of their academic career)

# Non-academic careers

- Non-academic career is equally important as an academic career: doctoral candidates and young researchers should be taught that **moving from academia to industry is not a second choice**, but a legitimate first choice.

- It is the institutional responsibility to provide support for professional development of doc candidates and ESRs (e.g. by offering transferable skills training, career services etc.) and supervisors should also support this training (often they do not do).

- The aim: to raise awareness among doctoral candidates and ESRs of the importance of recognising and enhancing the skills that they develop and acquire through research, as a means of improving their employment/ career prospects inside & outside academia.

- Only about 4% of PhD grads end up working in academia
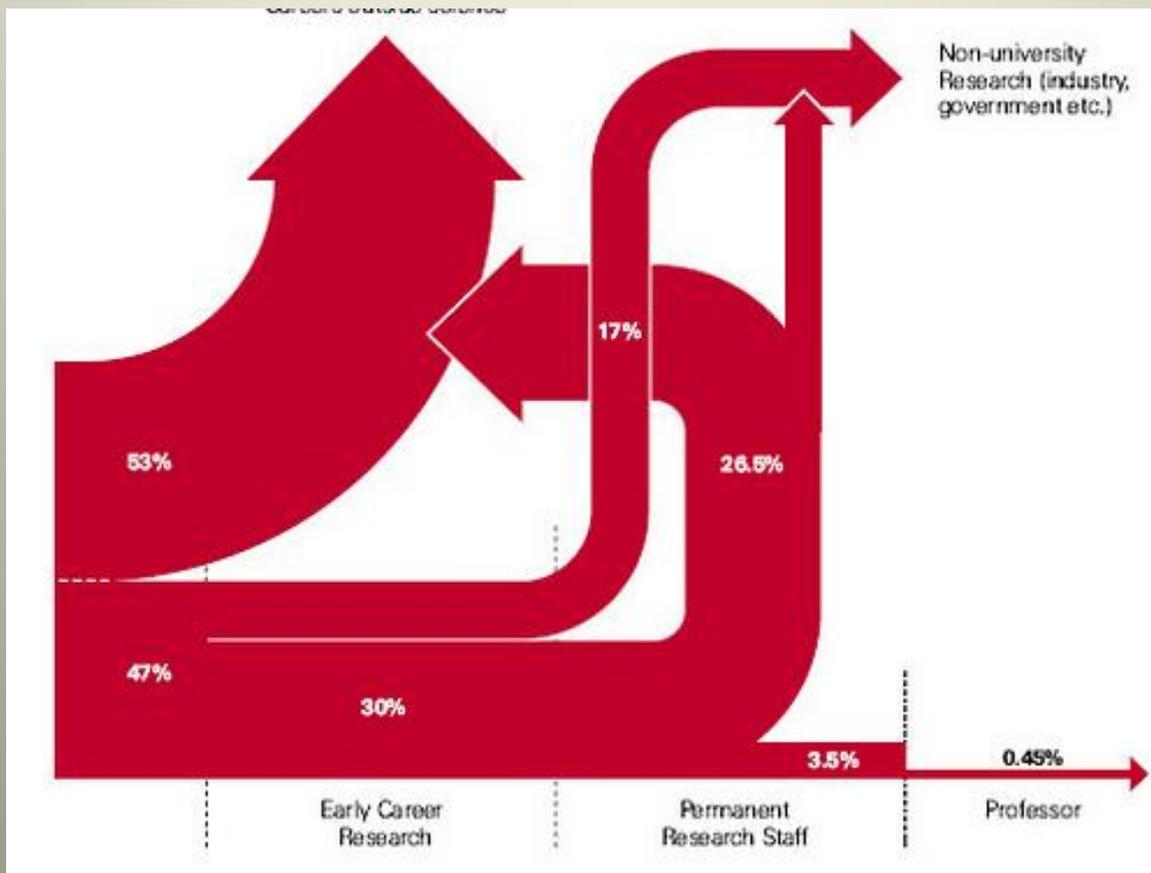
# Roles of experienced researchers

- Management and administration (at various institutional levels, projects etc.)
- Supervision
- Mentoring
- Acting as role model
- Advocating research ethics and integrity
- Networking support
- And other tasks…

# Who is a good supervisor/ mentor?

- Surveys of Eurodoc show that supervision is one of the biggest challenges in doctoral education

- The introduction of structured programmes with more explicit rights and duties of both doctoral candidates and supervisors, 3-4 year time-frame to doctoral degree as well as calls for interdisciplinarity and attention to transferable skills demand introduction of new supervision practices, methods and procedures and new ways of their assessment.

- Is every experienced researcher ready to lead, supervise or mentor ESRs in their further careers?

- Does every supervisor encourage his/her doctoral students to become better than himself/herself?

# The 4th Industrial Revolution Challenges

- No clear perspective, but we know many jobs will diseappear and new ones will appear

- Education needs to reflect these new challenges – but do we know what are the challenges?

- How to prepare and educate new generation of researcers and leaders to be creative, adaptable, and responsible and ethical?

- Who are the educators? Who are the supervisors and mentors?

# What needs to be done

- Structural change at the level of institutional (doctoral) education (support to institutional structural changes, e.g. creating doctoral schools or centres in order to enhance the quality of doctoral education and establishing career support centres)

- Support to supervision training development (creating platforms to exchange of supervision practices btw senior and junior supervisors)

- Creating international fora for supervision practices

# THANK YOU VERY MUCH