

Position Paper emerging from the Conference on employment in public/private research held at CNEL on 12 December 2023

A growing number of not-for-profit research bodies operates in Italy to pursue Research goals of constitutional and European relevance, employing public funding while having private legal capacity (Foundations, Consortia, Consortium Companies...). These have recently been joined by the European Consortia for Research, Digital Infrastructures and Chip development Infrastructure (ERIC, EDIC and ECIC).

These institutions (among which CIRA, Elettra Sincrotrone, CINECA, CMCC, the Foundations of the provinces of Trento and Bolzano, the Italian Institute of Technology, Telethon, etc., ERICs with operational offices in Italy, such as EPOS, EMSO, CERIC, and more) already employ thousands of researchers, technicians and managers, and constitute an important "Third Ring" of Italian research of public relevance.

The characteristics of the research labour market at national – and even more, European – level, require that the bodies operating in this market offer competitive careers and conditions. However, so far, due to the absence of a uniform regulatory framework responding to the needs of the research work, these institutions have adopted industrial or services' contracts, which are not in line with the needs of this type of employment relationship, and limit their ability to attract the required talents.

Taking into account also the developments of these aspects in the context of the construction of the European Research Area, as well as the indications coming from European institutions such as the new European Charter for Researchers, it is proposed to activate initiatives for the development of a national reference framework, well connected to the European one. In this context, all major aspects that influence the career and attractiveness of the various professions should be addressed. These include mobility, professional and economic recognition, and the provision of clear career paths based on merit, working-time and working conditions flexibility.

The outcome of this action should be the development of a simple system of rules taking into account the aspects not covered by the national legal systems, and proposing solutions that can be shared between the all "third ring" institutions, which operate in a similar regulatory context and manage comparable issues, as emerged during the conference.

From a European perspective, this system of rules may be disseminated and shared - as a set of best practices - also outside Italy, with the aim of developing reference guidelines.

To this end, it is proposed to establish a working/interest group – and, in perspective, an association – with the aim of continuing the dialogue profitably undertaken in the Conference and of acting as an interlocutor with the reference subjects in the Italian Government and the European Commission, as well as, where necessary, in the Italian trade unions and their representations at European level.

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