

## ERIC Forum 2

### Employment regulations applied to researchers and support staff in different Countries

#### Work Package 11 Deliverable D11.1

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## Executive summary

The deliverable *“Employment regulations applied to researchers and support staff in different Countries”* presents a comprehensive overview of the current state of employment practices across international organisations and European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs). Building upon findings on international organisations, survey results conducted among ERICs, and presenting the Use Cases, this deliverable describes the employment regulations that apply to researchers and support staff, highlighting challenges and opportunities for providing a minimum common set of employment conditions.

The background analysis evidence that employment regulations applied to researchers and supporting staff within ERICs have been the subject of extensive discussion across the European landscape and multiple projects, reflecting their significance for fostering equitable, aligned and effective human resources practices and regulations. With the ERIC landscape growing and diversifying, it was necessary to collect updated and detailed information about the current practices in ERICs.

The section on European landscape highlights some key findings in employment practices of international organisations. While the legal background is different, international organisations have a higher autonomy defining employment conditions. Although most of them opted for a contract based on internal regulations, employment practices regarding salary regulation, working hours, grading schemes, etc are very homogeneous across organisations.

The section on ERIC's landscape provides a comprehensive analysis of the survey conducted among 23 ERICs. Different aspects from employment conditions were analysed, such as collective bargaining, salary regulations, grading schemes, career paths, working hours, remote working, paid vacation days, and probationary periods. In ERICs, with few exceptions, practices are very heterogeneous, showing the importance of and the need for a European reference framework.

Finally, this report includes three use cases from ERICs that illustrate from different perspectives, the influence of employment practice and governance choices on the proper operation of the ERIC. The Extreme Light Infrastructure (ELI) ERIC describes the unification of employment conditions and the creation of a uniform employment contract in the Organisation. The European Spallation Source (ESS) ERIC explains the challenges they face as a multi-sited ERIC and the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) ERIC highlights how the choice of indirect employment in the ERIC through a national scientific partner institution in the host country affected the operations when transitioning from an international coordination to a limited liability company (GmbH).

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## 1. Background

Employment regulations applied to researchers and supporting staff within ERICs have been the subject of extensive discussion across the European landscape and multiple projects, reflecting their significance for fostering equitable, aligned and effective human resources practices and regulations. This section will focus on analysis of the results produced within the ERIC Forum Implementation Project <sup>1</sup>, the ACCELERATE<sup>2</sup> (ACCELERATING Europe's Leading Research Infrastructures) project, and the RItrainPlus<sup>3</sup> (Research Infrastructures Training Plus project. Listed projects, financed through European Union's Research and innovations funding programmes, addressed various aspects of this complex topic, producing results that explore some of the key topics identified within the scope of this deliverable.

### 1.1. Salary regulation

Most ERICs lack formal salary grids. Salaries are often negotiated individually for each employee based on role, experience, and comparable positions in the same country (ERIC Forum I, D.3.3<sup>4</sup>, sample of 5 case studies).

Many ERICs align salaries with public sector standards as they are often rooted in national research infrastructures (ERIC Forum I, D3.3). However, to remain competitive, some ERICs benchmark salaries against private sector practices (ERIC Forum I, D3.4<sup>5</sup>, survey sample of 18 ERICs). Regarding the incentives, annual performance bonuses are awarded based on evaluations (ERIC Forum I, D3.3). A common European remuneration system and fringe benefits are suggested to account for cost-of living variations across the EU (ACCELERATE D1.7<sup>6</sup>).

### 1.2. Career Paths

With most distributed ERICs employing small teams (10-20 people), vertical career progression is often limited. However, this is counterbalanced by opportunities to take on diverse roles and responsibilities, which can enrich career trajectories (ERIC Forum I, D3.4). Career progression for researchers and support staff often reflects national practices, with limited alignment across ERICs. While some ERICs offer formalised career development pathways, others rely on ad hoc or informal systems, leaving employees uncertain about opportunities for advancement (ACCELERATE, D.1.7). ERICs prioritise cross-training and personal growth. Researchers emphasised the importance of competencies they often lack, such as management, and networking skills. For technicians, career motivation is often tied to financial incentives rather than broader progression opportunities. Both researchers and technical staff highlighted the need for structured leadership and management training (RItrainPlus, D 2.1<sup>7</sup>). Programs like the Executive Master's in Management of Research Infrastructures (EMMRI), offered by BICOCCA University, are supported to develop leadership skills (ERIC Forum I, D3.3) and could fill the gap. Staff turnover remains a concern due to limited mobility and competition between academia and the private sector, which may offer more secure and lucrative opportunities (ERIC Forum I, D3.4).

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<sup>1</sup> [ERIC Forum Implementation project](#) CORDIS EU

<sup>2</sup> [ACCELERATING Europe's Leading Research Infrastructures](#) CORDIS EU

<sup>3</sup> [Research Infrastructures Training Plus](#) CORDIS EU

<sup>4</sup> [ERIC Forum I D3.3 Best practices guidelines in employment and secondment for ERICs](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ERIC Forum I D 3.4 Report on practices and challenges in recruitment for distributed ERICs](#)

<sup>6</sup> [ACCELERATE D 1.7 International Mobility](#)

<sup>7</sup> [RItrainPlus D2.1 Identifying and Updating Training Needs in European Research Infrastructures and Core Facilities](#)

### **1.3. Working Hours**

Flexible working hours are offered in some cases, especially to promote work-life balance. ERICs often adapt national laws for working hours, but details vary depending on the country of employment (ERIC Forum I, D3.3 and D3.4). The recommendation is to adopt flexible working hours to accommodate international mobility and diverse work environments (ACCELERATE D 1.7).

### **1.4 Remote Working**

The pandemic catalysed the adoption of remote working. Some of the ERICs had pre-existing remote work options, which eased the transition and some developed structure policies for remote work defining specific aspects such as working hours and availability, provision of equipment, data protection and work safety requirements. Remote work is seen as a competitive benefit, helping ERICs attract international talent unwilling to relocate (ERIC Forum I, D3.3 and D3.4).

### **1.5 Paid Vacation Days**

Previous findings do not specifically mention vacation days except in the context of unified HR policies.

### **1.6 Length of Probationary period**

In some ERICs probation periods are tiered based on the employee's role. For general employees and researchers probation period is set for 3 months and for senior managers and executives for 6 months (ERIC Forum I, D 3.3)

### **1.7 Benefits provided to the employees**

To enhance attractiveness, ERICs are exploring additional benefits like training opportunities, private pension schemes (e.g., RESAVER) and extra holiday days (ERIC Forum I, D3.3 and D3.4)

## 2. European landscape

In this chapter, the results of the analysis of the employment conditions in four different international organisations acting in Europe will be presented shortly. The organisations were selected according to the publicly available source of information on employment practices and rules in 2024, when the current study began.

The four organisations are EMBL, ESA, ESO and the Joint Undertakings.

EMBL, the European Molecular Biology Laboratory, with 29 member states, has more than 110 independent research groups and service teams covering the spectrum of molecular biology at six sites in Spain, France, Germany, UK and Italy.

ESA, the European Space Agency, has 23 Member States. Canada also sits on the ESA Council and takes part in some projects under a Cooperation Agreement. Slovakia, Latvia and Lithuania are Associate Members. Four other EU states have Cooperation Agreements with ESA: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Malta. ESA headquarters are in Paris which is where policies and programmes are decided. ESA also has sites in a number of European countries, each of which has different responsibilities. Moreover, ESA has liaison offices in Belgium, USA and Russia; a launch base in French Guiana and ground/tracking stations in various parts of the world. There are around 2547 staff working for ESA (correct as of 2023), from all the Member States and include scientists, engineers, information technology specialists and administrative personnel.

ESO, the European Southern Observatory, is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1962 supported by 16 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), the host country Chile and strategic partners. ESO brings together over 750 staff from more than 30 countries, and countless more collaborators worldwide, all driven by the passion to build the best telescopes, serve the community and benefit society.

JU, the European Joint Undertakings, are based on article 187 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) which specifies that the EU may set up joint undertakings (JUs) or any other structure necessary for the efficient execution of EU research, technological development and demonstration programmes. Article 187 TFEU has been used under the EU's research framework programmes to set up, in particular, public-private partnership bodies in order to integrate industrial research in specific areas. The members of these JUs are typically the European Union (represented by the European Commission) and industry-led associations, as well as other partners. JUs adopt their own research agenda and award funding mainly on the basis of open calls for proposals.

### 2.1 Collective bargaining

According to the ILO International Labour Organisation, Collective Bargaining is *“a key means through which employers and their organisations and trade unions can establish fair wages and working conditions. It also provides the basis for sound labour relations.”* Indeed, the definition itself of *Collective Bargaining* implies the existence of a relevant number of the same type of employing organisations.

This element reinforces the need to have Collective Bargaining for the same type of organisations such as the ERICs.

Collective Bargaining plays a key role in the labour market and in the mobility of workers. Nevertheless, the European landscape shows that an ad hoc contract is the most common solution among the international

organisations analysed; specifically, EMBL, ESA and ESO have their own Staff Regulations and Staff Rules. Only the EU Joint Undertaking differs by applying the standard EC Regulation<sup>8</sup>, since they are Union bodies. The reason can be identified in the singularity of each international organisation. Each has a specific, different purpose from the others, and each is joined by different countries within different frameworks.

## 2.2 Salary regulation

International organisations' legal status allows for salaries and allowances to be exempt from income tax; employees also benefit from an annual or periodic (one case) salary review taking into account cost of living increases. In JU salaries can be reviewed beyond the annual review in case of substantial change in the cost of living.

All the international organisations considered in the current analysis implement a salary regulation composed of a basic salary plus allowances and indemnities.

In some cases, when a regulation has to be applied in different countries, the economic treatment is adjusted to the cost of living in the country where the place of work is located. For example, the Staff Regulations for the JUs employees contain a provision for a correction coefficient greater than, less than, or equal to 100%, which is applied to the official's salary depending on the living conditions in the different places of employment.

The allowances are various, but the family and children allowances, expatriation allowance, installation allowance, and rent allowance are very common.

## 2.3 Grading schemes

The employment regulations analysed prove the same approach on the grading system. The grading systems of the institutions considered show some homogeneity: the employees are usually divided in categories and then each category is divided in grades.

The categories can be divided on the basis of the job function or in relation to the position and a candidate's qualifications and experience.

## 2.4 Career paths

The career path is clearly defined in the organisations analysed; it is shaped inside the different categories, grades and steps of the organisation, and the progression from one step to the following is based on merit. Career development is usually supported by an internal offer of training and upskilling opportunities. Where the system is structured in levels and grades, the promotion from a level to an upper level is usually decided by the Director General upon a periodic assessment which in most cases is done on an annual basis; the performance of the staff is usually assessed against the accomplishment of professional objectives.

## 2.5 Working hours

The number of the usual working hours in the international organisations analysed varies from 39 to 40 hours per week, with exception of the JU where it can reach 42 hours per week; in some cases, flexitime system is foreseen.

Overtime is set with different rules and regulations inside each single organisation.

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<sup>8</sup> Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01962R0031-20140501>



## **2.6 Remote working**

All the organisations in the study acknowledge the importance of flexible work and its multiple benefits for staff wellbeing and work-life balance. Hybrid working and flexible work arrangements are embedded in the different contracts, ranging from remote to teleworking options.

## **2.7 Annual leave and other leaves**

Annual leave is equal in all the entities analysed: it is equal to 30 days paid holiday each year, in addition to public holidays. In JU, it can range from 24 to 30, in accordance with rules laid down by the common accord of the appointing authorities of the institutions. Additionally, each organisation foresees additional “Special leaves.”

## **2.8 Probationary period**

The most common duration of the probationary period is six months, with the exception of JUs, where it can be up to nine months.

### 3. ERICs landscape

In this chapter, we present the results of the analysis of employment conditions in twenty-three established ERICs. The information was collected using a survey, and some selected case studies were included, to illustrate the full dimension of the practices of employment and their potential impact on the operation and sustainability of ERICs.

#### 3.1 Survey

After outlining the context of the “other side” of the research work in Europe (international organisations) and reviewing the main contents of recent studies on employment conditions in ERICs (Past Project review), it was considered appropriate to deepen the analysis and get closer to the object of study of the present work, which is the employment conditions at the ERICs in different countries. This information was collected with an ad hoc questionnaire structured in four sections:

1. Employees geographical distribution
2. Statistics on ERIC personnel (type of contracts, professional profiles, roles, employees with a PhD)
3. Employment conditions at the ERICs
4. Research staff

It was submitted to all the ERICs, a total of 28 recipients, and responses were received from 23 out of 28 ERICs.

The complete and detailed information collected forms the basis and perimeter for developing a proposal for guidelines at the European level for employment conditions at the ERICs, which will be the subject of this Work Package's second task and deliverable.

The survey covers a wide range of aspects related to the employment relationship at the ERICs: the part of this information that is deemed most relevant for the purpose of this deliverable is commented on below.

#### Distributed vs. non-distributed ERICs

For the purposes of this discussion, the ERICs have been divided into two categories, to be analysed where potentially relevant to the employment conditions:

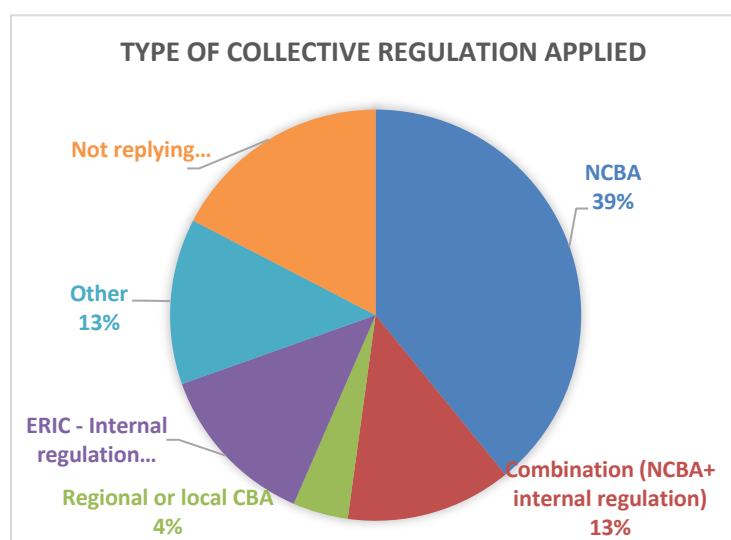
- **Distributed:** ERICs that defined themselves as distributed were AnaEE-ERIC, BBMRI-ERIC, CERIC-ERIC, CESSDA-ERIC, CLARIN-ERIC, DARIAH-ERIC, EATRIS-ERIC, ECRIN-ERIC, EMBRC-ERIC, EMSO ERIC, EOS ERIC, EU-OPENSOURCE ERIC,, European Social Survey, Euro-Argo ERIC, Euro-BioImaging ERIC, ICOS, Instruct-ERIC, LifeWatch ERIC, MIRRI-ERIC. A total of 19 over 23 of the respondents.
- **Non-distributed**, meaning both the “multi-site” and “single-site” ERICs, according to the definitions given by the EGERIC Report<sup>9</sup>. ERICs that defined themselves as multi- and single-sited were ELI ERIC, European Spallation Source ERIC, EU Solaris, and JIV-ERIC.

<sup>9</sup> According to the *Assessment on the Implementation of the ERIC Regulation* (EGERIC Report), by **distributed ERICs** is meant that “Only the statutory seat’s and some hub’s activities are hosted in one location, usually the ERIC’s host country/statutory seat while most of the facilities are established and hosted in the ERIC members and coordinated within the overall operation.” ERICs are defined as **Multisited** “when the ERIC directly controlled facilities are sited in different countries (comparable examples EMBL, ESO, ESS-ERIC, ELI-ERIC) but not in all members.”, and **Single site** “when the statutory seat and all research facilities are in a single site directly controlled and operated by the ERIC (comparable to CERN, ESRF, ILL: so far it is the case of JIVE-ERIC and EURO-ARGO-

### 3.1.1 Collective bargaining

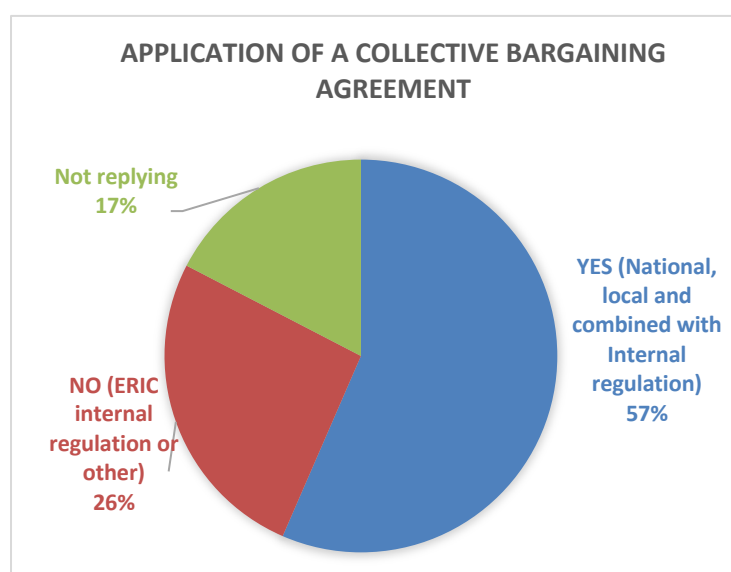
After these introductory distinctions, the first dimension considered is the choice made by ERICs with respect to the regulatory source of the employment relationship with employees, and, in particular, if and how ERICs apply collective bargaining agreements

National collective bargaining agreements (NCBAs) are negotiated by trade unions and employer organisations of a certain production sector in a Country (or in a Region, in case of regional collective bargaining agreement); they, alongside the law, identify a set of rules applicable to workers in the relevant production sector. This choice gives workers and employers a well-known framework for the definitions of rights and obligations, and any changes are delegated to unions. The downside is that this type of contracts commonly available today may not offer to the ERIC the necessary flexibility to fulfil its tasks, particularly in cases where negotiation choices may have onerous or challenging consequences for the ERIC organisation.



ERICs declared to adopt NCBAs, Regional collective bargaining agreements, staff rules defined by the ERIC (Internal regulations) and a combination of NCBAs with internal regulations. Overall, the level of collective bargaining coverage of ERICs exceeds half of the respondents, taking into account jointly those that apply national contracts, regional contracts, or a combination of national contracts and internal regulations. The numbers corresponding to the chart are shown in table 1.

Among the ERICs that apply NCBAs, it should still be noted that three of them (one single site and two distributed) declared that they do not employ any person directly but that the entire staff is seconded by another entity. This may lead to the conclusion that in these cases, the NCBAs are in force within the sending entity rather than in the ERICs (receiving entities).



The chart on the left represents the distribution of ERICs applying a collective bargaining agreement, alone or in combination with Internal Regulations, against those that don't. The number of respondents who did not reply to this point is also shown.

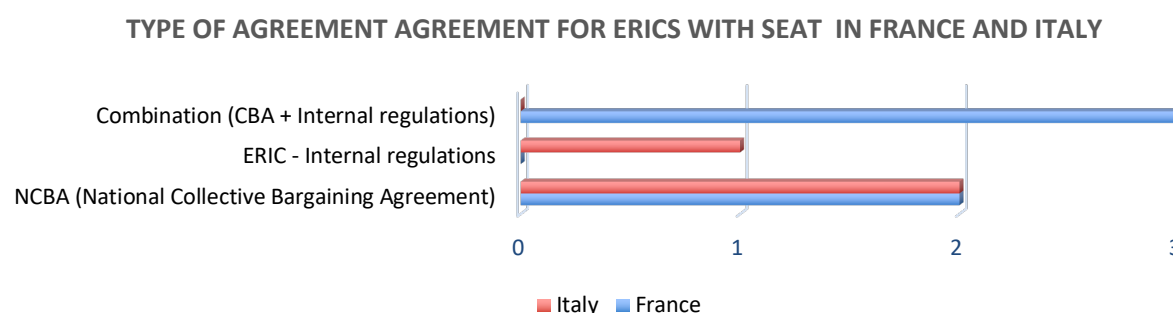
ERIC)". Note that EURO-ARGO ERIC defined itself as "Distributed", so for the purpose of the current analysis it was included amongst the distributed ERICs.

Type of contract	ERICs
NCBA	9
Combination (NCBA+ internal regulation)	3
Regional or local CBA	1
ERIC - Internal regulation	3
Other	3
Not replying	4
Total	23

Table 1: Number of respondents that declare to have adopted each framework for the definition of the employment contract

If we look at distributed versus non-distributed ERICs, it emerges that most non-distributed ERICs (3<sup>10</sup> out of 4) declared to apply a collective bargaining agreement, even if negotiated at different levels. This can be explained by the larger number of employees on the payroll and the more complex organisation, often characteristic among non-distributed ERICs and their greater geographical concentration.

Looking at the distributed ERICs instead, we can see that they adopt a wider variety of solutions. Even ERICs based in the same Country adopt different solutions in terms of collective agreement. This is particularly evident in France, where 5 ERICs are based, and in Italy, which hosts 3 ERICs' Statutory seats.



This shows, at the same time, the variety and vitality of the collective agreement dimension in the EU Countries and the lack, at European level, of a sound reference for the ERIC employment needs and specificities.

### 3.1.2 Salary regulation

One of the main functions of collective bargaining is determining, through negotiations between representatives of opposing interests in the game, the proper salary level for each professional position in the relevant economic sector, to the point that in Europe minimum wages determined by collective parties are recognized as reliable<sup>11</sup>.

It is interesting to see whether and to what extent the ERICs rely on the NCBA grading scales in order to understand where this determination takes place, and whether there is any relationship with the presence of a legal minimum wage law in the relevant national legal system.

<sup>10</sup> It should be mentioned, however, that one of these does not employ directly but indirectly through national research organisations that confer the personnel to the ERIC in-kind.

<sup>11</sup> DIRECTIVE (EU) 2022/2041 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 19 October 2022 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union

Seven respondents apply salaries determined internally, and they are based in the following Countries: Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, France, Finland, and Spain. It should be noted that the minimum wages set by collective agreements cannot be derogated in a pejorative sense, so ERICs that do not apply collective agreements and set wages independently have to adopt salaries that are equal to or better than those set up by the collective agreement in force in the comparable sectors. In addition to complying with the law, adopting salaries that are more favourable than the minimum treatment established by collective bargaining can also be seen as a competitive tool for ERICs as employers in the European labour market, given both their

international vocation and the need to attract highly qualified professionals, who are generally difficult to recruit and retain, especially in ERICs of small dimensions. Among the countries mentioned above, only in the legal systems of Italy and Finland there is no statutory minimum wage law.

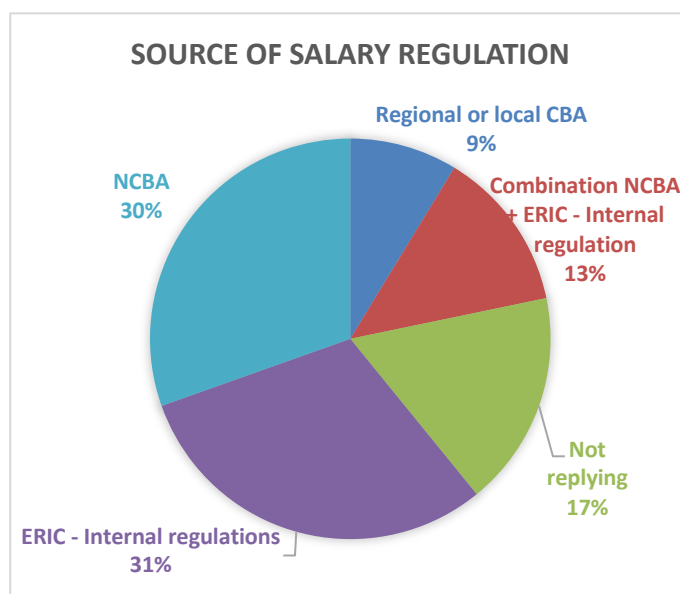
Seven ERICs as well apply NCBA-determined salaries, and they are based in the Netherlands, France, and Germany. Each of these countries has a legal minimum wage in place.

Two respondents, one based in Spain and the other in France, apply salaries defined by a regional collective agreement. In both countries, there is a legal minimum wage in place.

Three respondents apply salaries defined by a combination of NCBA salary levels and internally defined salaries. They are based in France, Sweden, Norway, and Finland. Only Norway and France have a statutory minimum salary wage in place.

A majority (6 out of 9) of the ERICs that adopt the National Collective Bargaining Agreement (NCBA) also use the salary scales set out within the NCBA. Of the other three, two said they used a combination of collective agreement and internal rules. The only one that said it used internal rules only, in any case, could not, for the reasons given above, have set wages below the minimum established by the collective agreement.

Even the two ERICs that indicated they use regional or local collective agreements adopt collectively agreed wages. Globally, this indicates a strong correlation also in the ERIC landscape between adopting collective bargaining agreements and following its salary guidelines.



### 3.1.3 Grading schemes

Classification systems are the part of collective agreements or company regulations that create a structure of ranked jobs within an organisation, assigning each job a professional value expressed in terms of competence, ability, responsibility, and experience. These are essential to career paths and professional recognition.

From the descriptions provided by the respondents regarding the classification systems in use in their organisation, it was possible to group them into three basic models:

#### a) Professional categories graded by levels

This grading system model, adopted by two ERICs, is divided into broad professional categories— typically, scientific roles, technical roles, and administrative/managerial roles. Each category is further divided into

levels to reflect different tiers of responsibility, expertise, or experience. This approach provides a structured framework for classification and compensation, ensuring clarity regarding job roles and career progression within the ERICs, and it is well-aligned with the relevant EU recommendations.<sup>12</sup>

Level	Scientific/engineering roles	Technical roles	Admin/managerial roles
<b>Level 1</b>	e.g. Early stage researchers	e.g. Junior engineer	e.g. Admin support
<b>Level 2</b>	e.g. Postdoctoral researchers	e.g. Engineer	e.g. Admin specialist
<b>Level 3</b>	e.g. Senior researchers	e.g. Senior engineer	e.g. Manager
<b>Level 4</b>	e.g. Leading scientist	e.g. Head of department	e.g. Head of administration

However, it may appear more appropriate for non-distributed ERICs, which are more complex in structure and have more people on their payroll. Distributed ERICs may benefit from lighter structures that nevertheless ensure staff career progression.

#### b) Levels divided by grades

LEVELS	GRADES		
<b>1</b>	A	B	C
<b>2</b>	A	B	C
<b>3</b>	A	B	C
<b>4</b>	A	B	C
<b>5</b>	A	B	C
<b>6</b>	A	B	C
<b>7</b>	A	B	C
<b>8</b>	A	B	C
<b>9</b>	A	B	C

This system is organized into levels, which are subdivided into grades. Levels represent the degree of possession of the key skills, competencies, and experience required to perform a particular job, while grades within levels describe less pronounced differences that allow for gradual career progression. This system is commonly used by Universities in central and northern Europe and is often embedded in collective agreements for the research public sector. Ten ERICs are currently applying systems inspired by this model.

#### c) System based on the macro professional role

LEVEL/ROLE
Executive
Managers
Specialists
Support roles

The last model is based on macro job roles, where employees are framed according to the degree of responsibilities and the impact of the position on the organisation's results, and no further distinctions within levels are foreseen. This appears suitable for lean structures, which do not have a complex organisation. Four ERICs are currently applying systems inspired by this model.

The structure of grading systems is typically dealt with at the level of contracts or company regulations. Given the close link between job titles and the recognition of professions at the European level, increasing mobility between ERICs and beyond is considered central. A basic structure of grading systems with homogeneous titles can allow interoperability and smooth transition in the ERIC landscape.

<sup>12</sup> EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG for Research and Innovation, 'Towards a European Framework for Research Careers', 21st July 2011; COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe and annexes

### 3.1.4 Probationary period

A considerable variety of solutions is adopted for the duration of the probation period, even among ERICs located in the same Country (see table aside). It is noteworthy that several respondents stated that the duration depends on the professional qualification or the role for which the person is hired, which is reasonable. Therefore, the duration of the probation period could be linked to the proposal for the framing system, assigning different probationary periods to different positions.

Duration	Countries
1 month	AT, FI, NL, IT (30 days)
2 months	NL
3 months	CZ, FR (3 months, renewable once), IT (3 months, depending on qualification), ES (for permanent contracts), DE
4 months	FR (4 months, renewable once), FR, IT (depending on qualification)
6 months	CZ (for managerial roles), FI (maximum), FR, ES (180 days for permanent contracts), SE

### 3.1.5 Career paths

Closely related to the topic of grading systems is that of career progression, which refers to the transition from one level to the next. This occurs according to internally determined procedures or collective agreements and based on predefined criteria.

The most commonly adopted tool by ERICs is merit-based evaluations (18 out of 23 respondents), typically assessed through interviews that may be supported by a questionnaire filled out in advance. This moment is often meant to be a chance for the employee to comment on and review working conditions.

The performance of the appraised employee is measured against pre-defined criteria. The most frequently cited is the degree to which the objectives set for the period have been achieved; in addition, criteria relating to how the performance has been carried out and to relational or behavioural aspects are often used. In a few cases, certain aspects of the role or performance are also considered, such as the level of responsibility involved or the impact within the organisation.

Automatic grade progression linked to seniority is also applied sporadically, always in conjunction with periodic merit assessments.

A transparent and uniform career progression system proposal is key for individuals to move between positions and continuously grow professionally through mobility experiences.

### 3.1.6 Working hours

Working hours are one of the few topics on which European legislation has directly intervened, as it is closely related to the health and safety of workers, through the Directive 2003/88/CE, which has been transposed into national law by Member States. Therefore, all EU countries are subject to the same minimum conditions, in terms of breaks, rest periods, holidays, and maximum working hours. However, many countries have established conditions that are more favorable than those set by the legal framework, especially at the level of collective bargaining. As a result, a considerable variety of solutions can also be found among the ERICs, even within the same country.



The following table shows countries where ERICs have adopted employment contracts with a similar number of weekly working hours:

Duration	Countries
40 hrs/week	AT, CZ, NL, IT, NL, SE, DE
39 hrs/week	I.O.
38 hrs/week	NL
37.5 hrs/week	FI, DN, UK, NO
36 hrs/week	FI, IT, ES
35 hrs/week   1610	FR, PT

In the case of work schedule distributions different from the "normal" working hours, overtime is possible for a majority of respondents (14 ERICs out of 23). Then, it is tightly regulated and only permitted under specific circumstances, with prior agreement required. . Shiftwork, on the other hand, is much less common (3 ERICs out of 23 respondents) and looks connected to activities or services that need to operate continuously. In addition, most respondents (15 ERICs out of 23) adopt flexible regulations regarding the distribution/organisation of working hours, adding an additional element of variety.

The great diversity and flexibility, coupled with the existence of a basic European framework and the impact of teleworking, leads to the view that the differences between ERICs in terms of working time are not determinant in terms of the need for greater uniformity at the European level. However, it emphasises that there is scope to provide ERICs with a general working hours framework that could facilitate mobility, to the extent that the conditions for the employees' work-life balance do not change drastically from one ERIC to another. In any case, working time should be considered on a case-by-case basis in the context of the complex balance between regulation and economy, laid down in the collective agreement or staff regulations.

### 3.1.7. Remote working

All ERICs permit remote work, with variations in frequency, which can range from one to five days per week. Some ERICs express the frequency and quantity of remote work allowed as a percentage of the total working hours, increasing organisational flexibility.

As with other topics, there are also differences in application among ERICs based in the same country.

Duration	Countries
1 days/week	ES
2 days/week	FR, DE, CZ
3 days/week	FI, ES
4 days/week	CZ
5 days/week	FR, IT, NL, PT
20% of tot. working hours	SE
50% of tot. working hours	FI, IT
80% of tot. working hours	IT
100% of tot. working hours	FR, NL

The table aside represents the remote working hours or the maximum remote work duration per country, according to the contract adopted by ERICs.

The massive use of remote work is undoubtedly a competitive element for ERICs in the European labor market, given the growing demand for flexible work arrangements compatible with personal lifetimes.

The wide geographic and international distribution of ERICs also creates a demand for remote work in countries other than the one in which the ERIC is based, but national tax laws impose limits that are difficult to overcome.



### 3.1.8 Annual leaves and other leaves

In the context considered, there is a certain variety in terms of the annual vacation days guaranteed by each organisation, even in the same countries (see Appendix .2.3.7). This is another indication of the variety of solutions adopted by ERICs and the multiple ways in which the plurality of regulatory sources (mainly law and collective agreements in this case) interact with each other.

Duration of the paid annual leave according to the countries where ERICs are based:

Country	Duration (per year)
CZ	20 days + x extra days e.g. based on age, children, etc.
ES	23 says
CZ, AT, FR, NL	25 days
FI, IT	28 days
IT	26 vacations days+ 58 hours of leave (on yearly basis) +4 additional leave days
NL	29 days
FI, DE, FR, UK	30 days
SE	30 days / 25 days for contract with hourly paid overtime compensation
ES	32 days
IT	33 (comprehensive any kind of leave)
FR	35 days
FR	42 days
NL	42.25 days

Norway uses a different scheme, with 25 unpaid days per year of leave, but a holiday payment.

In this case, proposing a unified solution at the ERIC level in Europe could result in a worsening of conditions in some cases, unless the most favorable solution for the worker among those adopted is applied to everyone. In any case, it is important to keep in mind the economic implications of the number of paid vacation days and the impact that any modification could have on the overall balance of the national contract or regulation, which should be considered in its entirety.

In addition to the annual leave, each ERIC has in its own contract a series of paid leaves, that add to the annual leaves. These should be taken into account as well when proposing a unified solution.

### 3.1.9 Benefits provided to the employees

The benefits offered to employees, in addition to the remuneration, can be a topic of interest in relation to ERICS's attractiveness as an employer in the European research labour market.

The majority of the respondents (17 out of 23) declared to provide employees with one benefit tool at least: supplementary health insurance appears to be the most frequently used (11 ERICs out of 23), followed by meal vouchers (8 ERICs out of 23), which are tax exempted in many cases. Bonuses and allowances (e.g. relocation allowance) can include a variety of goods and services. They were mentioned by around a third of respondents (respectively, 8 and 6 respondents)<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> More than one

Benefit	Number of ERICs that apply it
Private health insurance	11
Bonuses	8
Meal plan	8
Allowances	6
No responses	6
Other	5

Overall, it can be said that ERICs already tend to offer benefits to employees in order to be attractive employers at European level, and the wide application of health care integration packages appears coherent with this idea. As this issue is usually left to the autonomy of the organisations, there could be space for providing a suggestion as to which types of treatment are most attractive to employees and can best serve the purpose of attracting staff, without prejudice to the full autonomy of the institutions to assess the feasibility and appropriateness of adopting each measure for their own staff.

### 3.1.10 Pension schemes

Finally, another tool that contributes to ERICs' attractiveness as European employers, of a different nature than benefits, is the supplementary pension plan, which is in addition to the national statutory pension.

Half of the respondents (12 out of 23) use a form of pension protection that is additional to the statutory treatment. Five respondents indicated that they use a European supplementary pension fund, of which 3 are (or will be) members of RESAVER.

Seven respondents, on the other hand, use a Country-based supplementary pension scheme, in one case explicitly referring to the use of the pension fund provided for by the national collective agreement applied. Generally speaking, in view of the progressive ageing of the population in Europe, given the low birth rate and the resulting imbalance in the demographic ratio compared with a few decades ago, providing employees with a complementary pension scheme can be an important ERICs attractiveness leverage.

The use of a transnational pension fund would be all the more appropriate given the wide geographical spread of ERICs and the mobility dimension inherent in research-related professions, and even more so in distributed infrastructures.

A proposal along these lines has already been drawn up, consisting of the adoption of the RESAVER pension fund. However, it has not yet reached significant dimensions at European level. A proposal to this effect could be sent to ERICS without prejudice to the necessary cost-benefit analysis to be carried out by each individual organisation.

## 3.2 Case Studies

This section includes a collection of cases of interest among the ERICs regarding personnel management (case studies). Three ERICs provided an overview of specific issues by describing their problematic consequences and the proposed or applied solution.

### 3.2.1 ELI ERIC Use case: The unification of employment conditions and the creation of a uniform employment contract in the organisation

ELI ERIC - The Extreme Light Infrastructure is the world's leading laser-based research infrastructure. It serves cutting-edge research in physical, chemical, materials and medical sciences, as well as breakthrough technological innovations. It aims at enabling access to the world's most intense and shortest-pulsed lasers. ELI ERIC operates as an integrated organisation with a presence initially in the Czech Republic and Hungary, where two research facilities (centres) -ELI Beamlines and ELI-ALPS- are based. A third facility -ELI-NP- in Romania is expected to join at a later stage. ELI is operating as a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ELI ERIC) established in 2021.

#### Description of the factual situation

The establishment of ELI ERIC and the gradual integration of the facilities into the integrated organisation necessarily imply a transition for the staff in terms of employment conditions that should be supported by a cohesive employment policy and staff rules. This poses a significant challenge, due to the differences in the two environments, but also to a difference in staff profiles at the two facilities. ELI ERIC currently has 631 employees in both facilities with 37 nationalities; the composition is as follows: 290 researchers, 209 technicians and engineers, and 132 administrative staff. The establishment of consistent terms of employment across the organisation, in compliance with the requirements of the local legislations of the host countries, is an essential element of the establishment of an integrated HR system at ELI ERIC.

#### Identification of the problem

ELI ERIC has personnel employed in more than one country, in which different legal frameworks apply. Therefore, there is a need to comply with the

requirements of applicable laws in the host countries as well as to take stock of the practices at both facilities. Employment contracts form the basis of the employer-employee relationship providing clarity, protection, and a legal framework for employment, establishing clear expectations, and protecting the interests of both parties. Both facilities were using their own employment contract templates. The desire to achieve consistency across the organisation is reflected in the development of a unified contractual framework for employment and a single employment contract template to be used across the entire organisation, with adaptations to local legal requirements only where absolutely required. And it was the difference in the labor code and legal requirements in both countries that proved to be the most challenging.

#### Proposed solution

In the first phase, a detailed legal review of the current employment contract templates and employment conditions reflected in the labor code in both host countries has been performed with the support of two specialized law companies in the Czech Republic and Hungary. This review involved in particular an analysis of differences among currently used employment contract templates, an analysis of their compliance with legal requirements, and the identification of ways to align the templates. This extensive work required a fine balance between the objective of consistency and the necessary customization to local requirements. On the other hand, the form, extent, and language of the future employment contract template are elements that were carefully assessed to ensure that they are well understood and accepted by the staff. The main employment domains reflected in a unified employment contract were the type of work, place

of performance of work, date of commencement of work, term of the employment relationship, probationary period, length of the weekly working hours, etc. The Czech and Hungarian labor law possessed the most challenging differences in

statutory rules for the length of fixed-term employment relationships, provisions on overtime work, daily/weekly working hours, the duration of the probation period, overtime rules, annual leave, salary determination, and home office rules.

### **3.2.2 ESS Use Case: Multi-sited RI with personnel employed in more than one country.**

#### **Description of the factual situation**

European Spallation Source ERIC is one facility under construction located in two countries. ESS has two host states (Sweden and Denmark) and a total of 13 member countries. The majority of the actual facility is located in Sweden however, a very crucial and integrated part of ESS, the Data Management and Service Centre, is located in Denmark. The majority of the staff is employed in Sweden (currently 540) under Swedish employment conditions and around 40 are employed in Denmark under Danish employment conditions. The Greater Copenhagen region (Copenhagen and southern Sweden) is a cross-border region with a bridge connecting the two countries, and many of our employees live in Sweden and work in Denmark and vice versa.

#### **Identification of the problem**

Since the European Spallation Source ERIC is located in two countries many of our employees need to work in both countries. With the current legislation

there are limitations in both the social security legislation and the tax legislation on the amount of time that can be spent in the other country without triggering consequences for the taxation or social security affiliation which has a significant impact on both the employee and the European Spallation Source.

#### **Proposed solution**

Specific simplified rules for ERIC's similar to the legislation applicable for governmental organisations where the employee pays taxes in the country where he/she is employed regardless of the number of working days in the other country and he/she continues to belong to the social security system in the above mentioned country as well.

N.B. in the Öresund area, there are quite good exemptions that allow employees to work up to 50% of the working time in the home country without triggering taxation nor jeopardizing the social security affiliation. But with the above mentioned change it would be even more clear.

### **3.2.3 SHARE ERIC Use Case: Indirect employment in the ERIC through a national scientific partner institution in the host country: transitioning from an international coordination to a limited liability company (GmbH)**

This Use case presents the employment practices in the SHARE-ERIC, which is a distributed European Research Infrastructure Consortium. SHARE-ERIC has a seat in Germany, and the host country provides the bulk of financing for the international coordination of the infrastructure. Unlike many other ERICs, managerial and coordination roles in the SHARE-ERIC and the international coordination of the survey are not direct employees of the ERIC

or subject to ERIC's direct supervision. As an alternative, SHARE-ERIC entrusted these roles initially to the MEA/MPG, and afterwards to the SHARE Berlin Institution (the scientific partner institution). Such an institutional setup requires careful implementation in accordance with ERIC Regulation and the SHARE-ERIC statutes. The use case presents the consequences of the changes related to the institutional transition of SHARE-ERIC

imposed by the retirement regulations of the initial host institution, the transitional solutions that were adopted for the interim period, and the final institutional framework that is being developed.

The use case also presents the considerations related to the distributed network of scientific partner institutions that follow the experiences of changing roles and responsibilities at the national levels.

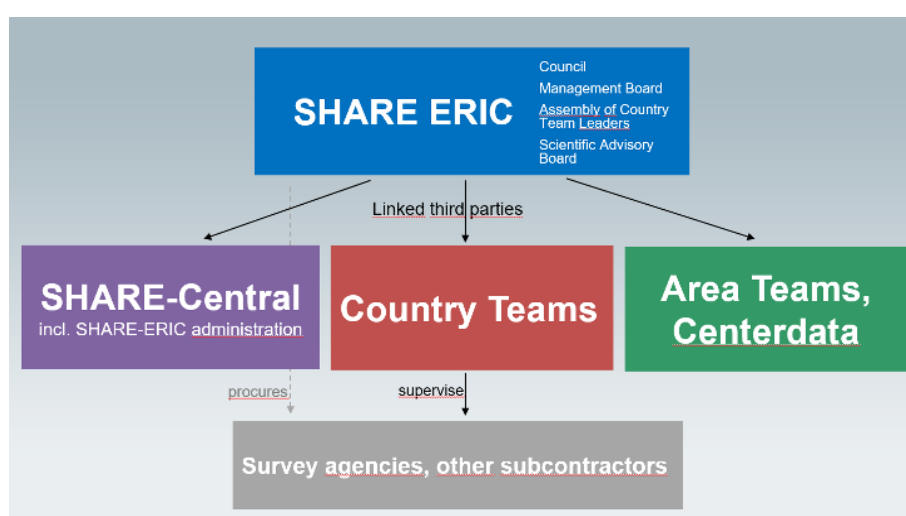
### SHARE-ERIC as a distributed infrastructure

The **Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)** is a research infrastructure for studying the effects of employment, health, social, economic and environmental policies over the life course of European citizens during the population ageing process, via a centrally coordinated face-to-face survey interviews. It is a distributed ERIC, that is coordinated centrally, with currently 28 countries participating in the survey, while 15 countries are ERIC members. Until the end of 2022, SHARE was centrally coordinated at the Max Planck Society (MPG). MPG funded about two-thirds of the costs of the international coordination of SHARE (SHARE-Central), about 40 staff researchers) and the management of the SHARE-ERIC (some 5 staff members). Dutch-based Centerdata is responsible for software development and data exchange, with a service-based agreement. Country teams are located in 28 Scientific Partner Institutions.

In the past few years, the SHARE-ERIC went through a significant reorganisation. Upon the retirement of the SHARE Managing Director, prof. Axel Boersch-Supan from MPG, there was a need for an institutional transition. In order to create a stable institutional setting for the international coordination of SHARE, a consortium of four large German research institutions – the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) with its Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, the largest research hospital in Germany, and the German Centre of Gerontology (DZA) established the SHARE Berlin Institute (SBI). The SBI began its work on 15 June 2022, taking over the international coordination of SHARE (SHARE-Central).

In the transition period, until the end of 2024, the Managing Director of the SHARE-ERIC remained with prof. Axel Boersch-Supan, while from 2025, prof David Richter, Director of the SBI, was nominated as a Managing Director of SHARE-ERIC. Following the transition, the funding of the SHARE international coordination, that was split between the BMBF and MPG was fully shifted to the BMBF. Given the new institutional setting, the funding to the SBI is based on the ministry grant earmarked for maintaining the SHARE Central activities, that needed to be approved by the Ministry.

The figure below presents the organisational structure of SHARE-ERIC:



The move of SHARE international coordination to the SHARE Berlin Institute (SBI), which is a limited company (GmbH) established under German legislation has complicated both governance and day-to-day management. The SBI is a separate legal entity with its own governance structure, including a shareholder assembly and a supervisory board. The SBI director was a member of the SHARE-ERIC Management Board, and from 2025 takes the role of the SHARE-ERIC managing director, reporting to the SHARE-ERIC Council. At the same time, as the SBI director he is required to report to the SBI shareholders and the SBI supervisory board.

The employment structure and division of responsibilities to the SHARE-ERIC administration and SHARE Central also needs to ensure the transparent financial flows between SHARE-ERIC and SBI. SBI is a recipient of EU grants that are coordinated by SHARE-ERIC. Since the SHARE-ERIC administration was initially employed by SBI, the independent financial supervision of the grants expenditure required in the grant agreements could not be guaranteed, and this issue needed to be addressed. It should be noted that in order to fully use the VAT exemption of the ERIC, the SHARE-ERIC is providing central procurement for survey agencies in the vast majority of participating countries, which are paid directly by the SHARE-ERIC, with VAT exemptions approved by the German tax authorities. As a result, the financial management of the SHARE-ERIC comprises accounts for the SHARE-ERIC membership fees, but also separate country accounts, where the relevant funding is provided by the countries towards the cost of the national survey agencies. From 2025, the financial administration of SHARE-ERIC is moved to the SBI, while at the same time the separation of tasks between SHARE-ERIC and SBI is to be ensured by the cooperation agreement between SHARE-ERIC and SBI and relevant description of tasks of the involved staff, including also the SHARE-ERIC Managing Director.

## Employment in SHARE

The ERIC practical guidelines indicate that ERIC employment policy shall be governed by the laws of the country in which staff is employed. Within these

guidelines, as SHARE-ERIC experience shows, various options of employment can be applied within these broad guidelines. The practice of SHARE-ERIC shows the challenges for employment practices during the period of institutional transition, but also as a consequence of mobility of people involved in SHARE at the country levels.

SHARE-ERIC human resources comprise the central coordination team (SHARE-CENTRAL), administration support to the SHARE-ERIC (including financial management and accounting), as well as SHARE Country Teams in 28 countries, who are employed by the Scientific Partner Institutions. The total human resources of SHARE comprised around 50 people at SHARE-ERIC and SHARE-Central, and around 60 people employed in the Country Teams. In this use case, we describe the practice of employment in SHARE Central and SHARE-ERIC in the period of institutional transition between 2022 and 2025.

## SHARE Central and SHARE-ERIC employment until the end of 2022

As mentioned earlier, until the end of 2022, the seat of SHARE-ERIC and the central coordination team ("SHARE-Central") were located in Munich at Max Planck Institute (MPG). SHARE-ERIC had no own staff. All staff, whether belonging to SHARE-Central or SHARE-ERIC was hired by MPG. SHARE-ERIC's responsibility was to carry out procurement, subcontracting, and financial oversight, while SHARE-Central's responsibility was to internationally coordinate the survey. SHARE-ERIC and SHARE-Central were linked by a Cooperation Agreement. The SHARE Central team employment was financed partially by the German Ministry, for Science (BMBF), partly by the Max Planck Institute, and partly on the project basis. Furthermore, some positions (accountant, EU project officer, and partially head of finance) were financed from the SHARE-ERIC membership fees paid by the participating countries. Such a model includes certain risks related to the stability of employment, particularly for the part of the team financed on the project basis.



## SHARE employment between 2022 and 2024

With the beginning of the SBI's operations in June 2022, the SHARE Central personnel were employed by the SBI. The transition meant that their existing MPG contracts were terminated, and new contracts were concluded with the SBI. Given that the SBI's official seat is in Berlin, most of the personnel began to work remotely, as they lived in the area near Munich. This change also initiated a gradual exchange of personnel, as people decided to leave the SHARE for different reasons. As a result, there was a gradual reduction in the number of staff involved in the SHARE Central, as well as personnel changes on the key coordination positions. There were several issues that emerged in this period. First, the necessity to ensure the independent financial supervision of the SHARE-ERIC EU projects. As the head of finance and accountant of the SHARE-ERIC were initially employed by the SBI, this raised the risk of the potential conflict of interest, as the SBI was an affiliated institution in the EU grants, where SHARE-ERIC was the project leader. Second, as presented in the legal opinion prepared for the SHARE-ERIC, unlike many ERICs, key managerial roles in SHARE-ERIC, such as the Managing Director and core departments like finance, EU grants administration, and central administration, were not direct employees of the ERIC or subject to the ERIC's direct supervision. Instead, SHARE-ERIC entrusted the International Coordination duties and operations to MPG/MEA and more recently to SBI (a Scientific Partner Institution). This arrangement, while uncommon in other existing ERIC, does not directly violate the ERIC Regulation. However, assigning the SHARE Central responsibilities and key staff positions, typically employed directly by the ERIC (or in some cases seconded to the ERIC), to a Scientific Partner Institution requires careful implementation to align with the ERIC Regulation, the Statutes and to prevent potential conflicts of interest. In the case of SBI, the directors as well as the employees of SBI are subject to management supervision of the Shareholders, who exercise direct control over the management of SBI. This scenario presented a potential conflict between SBI's interests and those of the ERIC, especially since the

ERIC's management and its nearly 40-member staff are under SBI's employment.

The ERIC Practical Guide issued by the European Commission suggests that "provisions of the statutes and agreements between the ERIC and legal entities operating national facilities should allow for a clear identification of the activities and resources which are under the ERIC's responsibility and those which are under the other legal entities' responsibilities". This implies that the duties of the SBI, in its capacity as the International Coordination of SHARE-ERIC, need clear regulation, among others, to implement safeguards to avoid any conflicts of interest and to ensure that SBI staff's duties and responsibilities do not clash with the obligations stemming from their roles and responsibilities while acting for the ERIC.

Given the necessity to solve this issue relatively quickly, in November 2023, the SHARE-ERIC Council approved the interim solution, according to which key roles, including those of the Managing Director, Head of Financial Management, and accountant would be directly employed by SHARE-ERIC. The Council also entrusted Agnieszka Chłoń-Domińczak, Deputy Managing Director of SHARE-ERIC the role of the Acting Managing Director of SHARE-ERIC. This transitional solution lasted until the end of 2024.

Third, the transition resulted in challenges related to day-to-day management of the team, that was mainly employed based on the remote work contracts. For example, according to the labour regulations, remote employees cannot receive reimbursement for travel from their place of living to the place of work, that is in many cases from Munich to Berlin. This resulted in the problems related to the organisation of the face-to-face team meetings. A practical solution was to organize them not in Berlin, or to plan the meetings less frequently to avoid additional costs born individually.

## SHARE employment from 2025

After completing the institutional transition, all HARE Central and SHARE-ERIC personnel are employed at the SHARE Berlin Institute. This means that for the key roles in the SHARE-ERIC, including the Managing Director, Financial Management will be separate agreement between the SBI and

SHARE-ERIC, that clearly defines roles, responsibilities, and reporting channels between SBI and SHARE-ERIC. This ensures that those responsible for central coordination and core management activities of SHARE-ERIC are directly answerable to SHARE-ERIC's executive management, i.e., the Managing Director or the Management Board. Equally, it will ensure that the executive management level of SHARE-ERIC maintains full accountability and is directly subject to the Council,

### **SHARE Country teams – resources and responsibilities.**

In addition to the international coordination, SHARE has country teams in its 28 countries that participate in the survey. These country teams make the country-specific adaptations to the questionnaire; supervise the data collection from a country perspective thereby reporting to SHARE-ERIC; and help SHARE-ERIC during database construction in country-specific matters. Moreover, area teams support SHARE in specific scientific areas such as health, healthcare, work and retirement, income and assets, and family and social networks. In each country, there are at least two people involved: Country Team Leader (CTL) and Country Team Operator (CTO). Both CTL and CTO are usually employed at the SHARE scientific partner institutions, in the respective countries, and are delegated to the tasks related to the development of SHARE-ERIC Infrastructure.

The up-to-date experience also indicates that such a solution requires monitoring in case of transitions. In case that the Country Team Leader changes his or her institutional affiliation, or a new Country Team Leader is appointed, this also leads to the change of the scientific partner institution of the SHARE-ERIC, and may affect the position of the Country Team Operator, as well as country funding.

Practical solutions that were adopted in SHARE are numerous. For example, in 2018 after the

resignation of the CTL in Poland, the selection of the new CTL was combined with the necessary transition of the ESF-funded project that supported SHARE implementation in Poland. The approval of the new CTL was followed by the necessary project-level changes. Furthermore, in order to ensure the continuity of the activities, the Polish CTO was employed at the new scientific partner institution. Another experience is related to the transition of the SHARE CTL in Portugal, who moved to another university in 2024. This resulted in the split of the institutional affiliation of the CTL and CTO, and resulted in the need to change the CTO in the future.

### **Main take-aways**

Experience of the SHARE-ERIC presents an interesting case of employment in the ERIC, that is conducted indirectly, through the national scientific partner institution in the host country. The 2022-2025 transitional experience shows that the change of the institutional setup can create significant transitional challenges, related to the employment contracts, the organisation of work, as well as ensuring the independence of the management of the SHARE-ERIC to its scientific partner institutions, including the one responsible for the international coordination. This is particularly important in the case of the personal union of the SHARE-ERIC Managing Director, who at the same time is the Director of the SHARE Berlin Institute, which is a dedicated institution established to support the international coordination of SHARE. While such a solution in the long-term perspective provides a stable long-term functioning of the ERIC, practical challenges related to the clear division of roles and responsibilities in SHARE-ERIC management emerged, which required special solutions adopted in the interim period.



## 4. Conclusions

The topic of employment, in all of its aspects (contract, social security, pension, mobility, career path, etc.), has been at the center of attention of ERICs since they were created. ERICs are international, new entities, usually with a small employee base. This makes it hard for them to attract and retain talents, especially when a clear career path or the possibility of mobility between ERICs or beyond is not evident.

With the community of ERICs and their diversity growing steadily over the years, it was necessary to survey ERICs to collect complete and updated information for understanding the current landscape. The analysis confirmed that the approaches adopted by ERICs to working conditions are very heterogeneous. This is mainly due to differences in national legislation, collective bargaining solutions, and national or local employment regulation traditions. Moreover, it shows, above all, the lack of a reference at the European level that could be adapted to the needs and requirements of ERICs, leading them to find, on an individual basis, the most appropriate approach in a given context (space and time in which the decision was taken), which affects the chances of professional growth and reduces mobility between ERICs.

On this basis, we can confirm the need for a common employment framework for the ERICs. ERICs-to-be will be able to use the framework as a reference for defining their employment conditions. It will also serve ERICs to understand where they stand compared to similar RIs, to self-assess their capacity of attraction based on the employment conditions, and eventually intervene in areas where the law does not bind them. This would contribute to achieving organisational convergence between the ERICs. Finally, as proposed in task 11.2, the framework can be used to interact with relevant stakeholders and collect their reactions to create a solid ground in the event of potential future legislative interventions.