



**The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers incorporating  
the**

**European Charter for Researchers and  
the Code of Conduct for the  
Recruitment of Researchers**

**Report on the Internal Analysis and the  
Corresponding Plan of Action**

Skopje, 11 December 2013

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## 1. About Finance Think

Finance Think is a non-for-profit association for economic research, economic policymaking and advocacy. As an informal group, it exists since 2011, while as a formal organization has been founded in 2012. The Association is established as an independent think tank / research center, ruled by the Law on Associations and Foundations. Two other laws regulating Finance Think's work include the Law on Scientific-Research Work and the Law on Working Relations. The governing structure of Finance Think is fairly simple: on the top is the Association's Assembly, which elects the Executive Board and the Advisory Board. The Executive Board then appoints the Chief Economist who is the CEO of the research center. The Chief Economist leads the economic researchers in the three domains of Association's work: development economics, macro-finance and financial system.

Despite human resources were introduced as a topic as of the beginning, its actual promotion has started in the second half of 2013. Presently, the human resource management of the Association is performed by the Chief Economist. To conduct the internal analysis was a challenging though fairly easy step, given the Association has not formally established its own rules for recruiting researchers and managing the research process and was fully driven by the current national legislature in this regard. However, the national legislature is fairly general without offering benefits of deep elaboration of the principles underlying research profession in the country. On the other hand, the internal analysis helped the Association to reveal strengths, which were apparently not formally dealt with, but also fields of action due to the short period of the Association's existence. We would like to face up to these points in a transparent way in order to document high-quality and innovative professionalism and development in our fields of activity.

## 2. Endorsing the Charter

Finance Think endorsed the Charter on 07 March 2013. The endorsement of the Charter has had a couple of objectives: i) to support a change in working research culture; ii) to steer joining a truly pan-European network consisting of researchers and research organizations; iii) to favor a stimulating and favorable working environment for researchers; iv) to show that "Finance Think" cares about its researchers/employees; and v) to bring benefits from international visibility by implementing the Human Resource Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R).

### 3. Report on the Internal Analysis

The workshop pertinent to the internal analysis took place on 12 April 2013, with the objective to examine the internal situation with respect to the 40 criteria taken from the Charter and the Code. The selected method incorporated the key players concerned at Finance Think. It was conducted according to the principles of the so-called key informant approach. A total of 10 people took part in the workshop.

On the senior management level, the following people actively participated:

- Ms. Blagica Petreski, Chief Economist;
- Dr. Marjan Petreski, Chairman of the Assembly and of the Advisory Board.

The following stakeholders participated actively:

- Employees (without a management role) who are researchers with a permanent contract (3 persons);
- Representatives of project teams (principal investigators and team members), who are financed by third parties and hence have limited contract (4 persons);
- Representatives of the Advisory Board with purely advisory role in the Association (1 person).

#### *3.1. Procedure*

At the beginning, the content and purpose of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers was presented in detail and unresolved questions were answered. This was followed by an analysis of the four dimensions of the Charter: **i)** Ethical and professional aspects; **ii)** Recruitment; **iii)** Working conditions; and **iv)** Training. For each criterion, the relevant national legislature was analyzed and existing rules, measures and applications were discussed. The group discussed ways of reconciliation of the national legislature and the Charter & Code's principles, discussing concrete ideas for implementation with a timetable and delegation of tasks. Then, each participant in the workshop conducted a rating in the form of a questionnaire on how the current state of Finance Think – the one driven by the national legislature – could be evaluated. The rating was done on a scale from 0 to 10. 10 represented the maximum positive result that could be achieved (i.e. there is no further potential for improvement). 0 represented the worst imaginable result, i.e. no measures have been taken yet or there has not been any recognizable result or it has not been useful.

None rating could occur since some criteria might not apply to the Association under certain circumstances, nor are planned for the future (e.g. teaching or post-doctoral appointments).

Then, the Association formed three working groups to draft three documents:

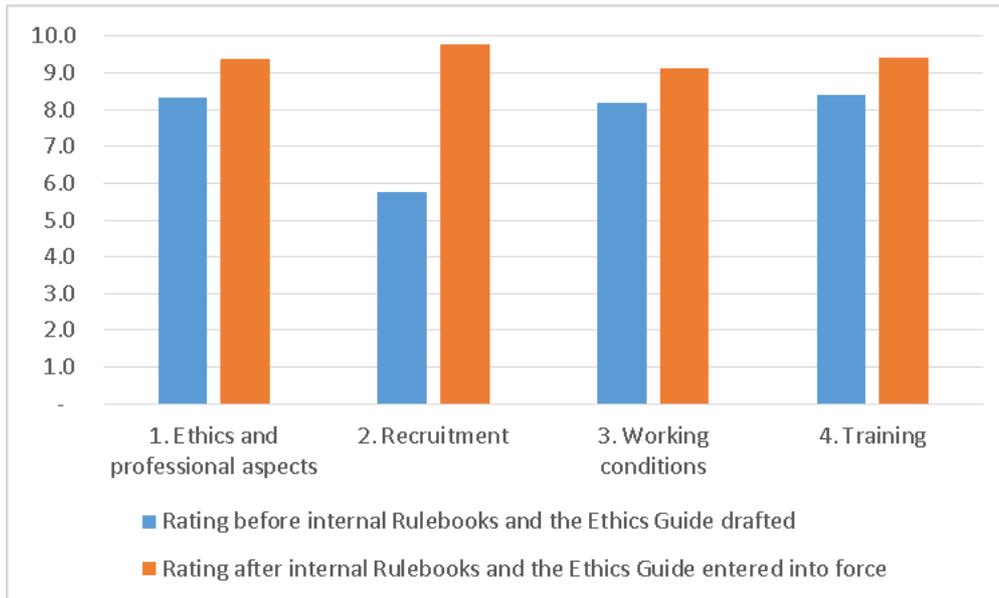
1. Research Rulebook;
2. Rulebook for Recruiting Researchers;
3. A Guide for Research Ethics and Governance,

each document having being aligned with the principles of the Charter and the Code, while being aligned with the national legislature as well. The first drafts of the above documents were ready by mid-September 2013. E-mail discussion followed, i.e. each working group gathered the comments of the other two working groups, so as to arrive at satisfactory text of the documents. In mid-November 2013, the three texts were communicated with the wider community of Finance Think, largely being an exercise to introduce the internal legislature.

The three documents were adopted by the Assembly of Finance Think at the Assembly session at 11 December 2013. The ten members of the initial workshop conducted again the same questionnaire on 23 December 2013 to judge the current state – driven by both the national and the internal legislature.

### ***3.2. Aggregated results***

The following results were obtained on the first (before) and the second (after) round of ranking Finance Think's research environment:



All three “Ethical and Professional Aspects”, “Working Conditions” and “Training” dimensions received a rating above 8.2 before the drafting of the internal procedures and above 9.1 after entering into force of the internal procedures. On the other hand, “Recruitment” received a rating of 5.8 – a worrying one – during the first round of ranking. This suggested that the internal procedures to be drafted should have included clearer, transparent, more detailed and precise procedures related to recruitment of researchers than compared to the solutions of the current national legislature. This was a special task for the working group drafting the Rulebook for Recruiting Researchers. Results were evident, as the after-rating of 9.8 even exceeded after-ratings in the other three dimensions. This suggests that the establishment of the internal procedures have done much of the work to improve the process of recruiting researchers.

Despite this, in what follows we present the detailed results, illuminating the **strong** points, as well the action plan to improve further, especially at the **weak** points.

### 3.3. Action plan

The following table contains the detailed results of the internal analysis as well the proposed actions to improve where deemed needed:

**ACTION PLAN**

	Rating before internal Rulebooks and the Ethics Guide, drafted	Rating after internal Rulebooks and the Ethics Guide entered into force	Actual improvement	Space for further improvement	Further improvement	Who	When
<b>1. Ethics and professional aspects</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>6%</b>			
Research freedom	9	9.5	6%	5%	Enlarge the market of ideas by proposing cooperation with universities and other research centers	Executive Board	By Dec-2014
Ethical principles	10	10	0%	0%			
Professional responsibility	10	10	0%	0%			
Professional attitude	7	9.5	36%	5%			
Contractual and legal obligations	10	10	0%	0%			
Accountability	5	7.5	50%	25%	Making all data gathered within Association's projects publicly available	Project managers / Principal investigators	Continuously
Good practice in research	9.5	10	5%	0%	Improved good scientific practice: Training on the topics of plagiarism, data security, information on code & charter, accountability of researchers	External or internal trainer	Sep-14
Dissemination, exploitation of results	6.5	8.5	31%	15%	Seminar on scientific journalism: Writing of short press releases on each paper/project	External trainer or experienced journalist	Mar-15
Public engagement	9	9.5	6%	5%			
Non discrimination	9	10	11%	0%			
Evaluation/ appraisal systems	6.5	8.5	31%	15%	Devising a professional development report (broader than the report for measuring research)	Chief Economist	Jun-14

<b>2. Recruitment</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>2%</b>			
Recruitment	9	9.5	6%	5%	Persons with disabilities: Job advertisements accentuating the non-discrimination of persons with disabilities	Executive Board	Continuously
Recruitment (Code)	6.5	10	54%	0%	Structured interviews (tests) Job advertisements widely communicated through press, but also via web and social networks	Executive Board, IT manager, Selection panel	Continuously
Selection (Code)	4	10	150%	0%	Increased focus on social skills and leadership quality, if necessary	Selection panel	Continuously
Transparency (Code)	4	10	150%	0%			
Judging merit (Code)	6.5	9	38%	10%	Pursuing the research report and the professional development report for short-listed candidates	Selection panel	Continuously
Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	3	10	233%	0%			
Recognition of mobility experience (Code)	6	9.5	58%	5%			
Recognition of qualifications (Code)	9	10	11%	0%			
Seniority (Code)	4	10	150%	0%			
Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	NA	NA					
<b>3. Working conditions</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>9%</b>			
Recognition of the profession	10	10	0%	0%			
Research environment	9	10	11%	0%			
Working conditions	8	9.5	19%	5%	Advancement of women and families: expansion of flexible working hours, work from home - Devising a procedure for flexible hours and work from home	Chief Economist	Jun-14

Stability and permanence of employment	6	8	33%	20%	Information on career paths: Info sessions during team building sessions on the possibilities for career path	Chief Economist	By Dec-2014
Funding and salaries	8	9.5	19%	5%	Non-monetary incentives: Creation of a working group to generate ideas	Chief Economist	By Dec-2014
Gender balance	9.5	10	5%	0%			
Career development	7	8	14%	20%	Devising a personal professional development plan for a year and a longer-term plan and clearly spelling out the expected role of the Association in the realization of the plan	Chief Economist	Jun-14
Value of mobility	9	9.5	6%	5%	Dissemination of info on opportunities for exchanges and mobility	Chief Economist, Each researcher	Continuously
Access to career advice	6	8	33%	20%	Information on career paths: Info sessions during team building sessions on the possibilities for career path	Chief Economist	By Dec-2014
Intellectual Property Rights	10	10	0%	0%			
Co-authorship	9	10	11%	0%			
Teaching	NA	NA					
Complains/ appeals	5	6	20%	40%	To appoint a researcher with lower load to deal with appeals; once conditions allow, appoint separate (ombudsman-type) person for this	Executive Board	Immediately
Participation in decision-making bodies	10	10	0%	0%			
<b>4. Training</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>6%</b>			
Relation with supervisors	8	9	13%	10%	Enable a formal procedure for requesting a mentorship of a senior colleague	Chief Economist	Feb-14
Supervision and managerial duties	10	10	0%	0%			

Continuing Professional Development	7	9	<b>29%</b>	<b>10%</b>	Devising a personal professional development plan for a year and a longer term plan and clearly spelling out the expected role of the Association in the realization of the plan	Chief Economist	Jun-14
Access to research training and continuous development	8	9.5	<b>19%</b>	<b>5%</b>	Devising a personal professional development plan for a year and a longer term plan and clearly spelling out the expected role of the Association in the realization of the plan	Chief Economist	Jun-14
Supervision	9	9.5	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>	Enable a formal procedure for requesting a mentorship of a senior colleague	Chief Economist	Feb-14

## 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the major deficiency identified in the field of recruitment has been largely overcome with the adoption and hence implementation of the three documents ruling the research and researchers-related issues at Finance Think: Research Rulebook, Rulebook for Recruiting Researchers and the Guide for Research Ethics and Governance. Some other spaces for improvement were still pointed out of the internal analysis, which are expected to sharpen the approach of the organization to recruiting and managing of researchers. Besides the fields of action identified above, the ideas for improvement generated in the analysis phase also have to be used as a resource for Finance Think and implemented in accordance with the means and reasonable prospects.