



Press Release CarLiS Stakeholder Conference and Matchmaking Event

Title: A tough patch for PhDs in the private labour market

Subtitle: The transition from academic to private sector research work often hits many graduates hard. Research institutions are now responding with tailored training programmes.

Lead: The majority of PhD graduates will not find permanent employment in the academic sector. For the transition from academic to private research work, university institutions increasingly offer course programmes that prepare for the work requirements of the private sector. In a pilot project funded by EU funds, the two worlds were brought closer together: private sector and academic space.

Text body (can be shortened away from the bottom): "Soft skills have not been soft for a long time," said Jürgen König, programme director of the doctoral programme in pharmacy, nutritional sciences and sports science at the University of Vienna at the final conference of the Careers in Life Sciences project in Bratislava. Over a period of two years, a Slovak-Austrian cooperation conducted surveys, developed curricula and provided further training on the topic of transition from academic training and research activities to the requirements of the private labour market. What is increasingly needed for this is now evident: skills in the sub-areas of career strategies, soft skills, knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship.

Because what entrepreneurs value in highly trained PhDs does not always have to do with their research focus: "Staffing levels are currently shrinking worldwide - knowledge workers are particularly in demand for this reason. The ability to dedicate oneself to a task intensively and with high quality over a longer period of time is of decisive importance here," says Philipp Almhofer, career expert and key account manager at StepStone, one of the market leaders in the field of international job exchanges.

But there is also a great demand from young researchers for skills enhancement for life after university. "After attending the courses in our pilot project, the young researchers are enthusiastic about the learning content," says L'ubica Lacinová from the Institute of Molecular Physiology and Genetics at the Slovak Academy of Sciences. "Over the period of the covid pandemic, forms of personal communication often suffered, and now soft skills such as self-presentation, intercultural communication and project management are particularly in demand," she continues.

More than 175 participants attended the final conference and subsequent matchmaking event in Bratislava - a remarkable success in the field of the newly created network, where researchers met entrepreneurs and stakeholders met PhDs from the participating research institutions and universities. In workshops, PhDs were able to optimise their CVs and career planning under professional guidance. In the course of numerous career stories, they also gained insight into personal career paths - from the idea to the established start-up.

The life sciences stakeholders' conference and subsequent matchmaking event were organized within the framework of the CarLiS (Careers in Life Sciences) project supported via Interreg Slovakia – Austria programme (European Regional Development Fund). SAIA, n.o., University of Vienna, Bratislava University of technology, Comenius University Bratislava and Slovak Academy of Sciences join the forces in the project to create a sustainable training preparing PhD students for career paths beyond academia.



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