

Employability, education and EU research funding – ensuring improvement for the future of Europe

Employability is a driving force for society and should therefore be regarded as a priority by all policymakers. EuChemS, the European Chemical Society, addressed this issue through a panel of diverse speakers, examining the key challenges ahead from a variety of angles: that of academia, industry, early career researchers, as well as from the perspective of the European Commission and the European Parliament.

Interestingly, several themes were repeated by different speakers, namely:

- the need for greater communication between all relevant parties
- improved academia-industry collaboration
- recognising the forerunner role of high quality (higher) education
- correcting through concrete actions the continuing gender bias and bias towards other minorities
- taking note of the diminishing borders between different scientific disciplines
- recognising the importance of closer collaboration on an equal footing across Europe and beyond

Concerning communication, it was noted that it also relates to the notion of listening and not solely that of talking. Thinking on this further, I argued that in addition to listening, hearing and ultimately, understanding, are also part of all successful communication. When it comes to science-policy interaction in particular, there continues to be room for improvement - whether it is for scientists to better communicate and share their research, or for policymakers to better understand and make use of scientific feedback.

In general, a number of challenges encountered by the interaction between education, employment and research funding continue to prevent many opportunities from taking shape. But whilst some of the examined problematics during the workshop are the same that have been recognised in the past, there is a growing awareness around some of the issues, and ways forward are indeed being forged. And this is of course the first step of any improvement process.

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