

DRAFT letter to EKM, for internal consultation only:

Dear Mr. President of the Commission,  
Ladies and Gentlemen of the Federal Commission on Migration,

We, the undersigned, representing research institutions throughout Switzerland, are submitting a postulate to seek the adaptation of certain laws and regulations to the realities of academic employment, and thus to secure and further strengthen Switzerland as a research location in a rapidly changing and currently difficult environment. While new strong players, such as the BRICS countries, are increasingly vying for talent in the global research landscape, Switzerland has suffered a setback due to its non-association with Horizon Europe and has lost attractiveness for researchers from abroad. Our situation in the international competition for talent is further complicated by current legislation that prevents us from employing third-country nationals. Specifically, we have identified two problem areas that urgently require a political solution:

**Social security law:** university employees often have to be posted abroad for several months for research purposes. For such a posting, there is an obligation to be subject to social security law. This is regulated within Europe (within the EEA and CH-EU), but for employees who are not posted to an EU/EFTA state, these regulations are not applicable. With third countries, e.g. African, Asian or Latin American countries, where a large part of our research projects are carried out, there is usually no comparable agreement. Here, the possibility of a so-called continuation of social insurance in Switzerland would exist. However, this would require 5 years of insurance coverage in Switzerland. This is an unfulfillable requirement in the academic middle class, where contracts usually last only two to three, up to a maximum of six years. Here we recommend a relaxation of the existing requirements, or the recognition and regulation of the situation of academics employed on a temporary basis, as otherwise employment in Switzerland is associated with considerable restrictions for many young researchers, and is thus significantly less attractive than comparable positions in other countries.

**Family reunification:** Academic careers often demand great flexibility and high mobility, especially from young researchers, so that in many cases ten years of academic nomadism from the beginning of a doctorate to a permanent position is the rule rather than the exception. It is therefore all the more important to create a framework that enables even temporarily employed scientists to reconcile family and career. However, salaries, especially in the lower salary brackets, are often calculated in such a way that the migration office does not allow family reunification. Thus, researchers often have to choose between separating from their family for months or years and giving up a promising job, which in turn runs counter to the desired equality of opportunity and compatibility of family and career. Here we need to examine how, at least in the case of contracts with a duration of more than 12 months, the salary classes/family allowances or income floors for a family reunion can be adjusted in such a way that the attractiveness of our universities as employers can be increased.

We thank you in advance for your sympathetic consideration of our request and remain,  
Yours sincerely,

Centre for African Studies Basel  
European Institute, University of Basel  
Etc. etc.

Appendix: Case Studies