

FBK confirms its HR Excellence in Research status: Advancing more attractive and sustainable Careers

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This prestigious European recognition is awarded to research organizations that demonstrate ongoing progress in implementing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers in their policies and practices.

In October 2016, Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK) joined the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers ([HRS4R](#)) initiative launched by the European Commission, with the goal of obtaining European certification for excellence in human resources management. Two years later, FBK received the [HR Excellence in Research](#) certification from the European Union, attesting to the Foundation's commitment to aligning its human resources policies with the principles of the [European Charter for Researchers](#) and the [Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#).

The “European Charter for Researchers” as a guiding framework

Cited as a reference point in the provincial collective agreement for the research sector in Trentino, the European Charter for Researchers is a set of principles underpinning the development of attractive research careers and supporting excellence in research and innovation across Europe. Its focus is on the rights and responsibilities of researchers, employers, funders, and policymakers. The Charter consists of 20 key principles grouped into four pillars: a) ethics, integrity, gender equality, and open science; b) evaluation of researchers, recruitment, and career progression; c) working conditions and practices; d) research careers and talent development.



HR Excellence in Research

The recognition is granted to organizations that adopt an action plan to ensure transparent procedures in the recruitment, evaluation, and career development of research staff.

To renew the certification first obtained in 2018, FBK hosted the audit visit carried out by the team appointed by the European Commission at the end of November 2025. The delegation met with

around thirty people, including researchers at different career stages, center directors, and doctoral students. The audit reviewed progress achieved in recent years and examined future goals and improvement plans.

Following the audit, the renewal of the certification—confirming that human resources management is aligned with European standards—also included an assessment of strengths identified by the auditors, along with recommendations for further improvement. These indications will be considered in the new three-year action plan for 2026–2028.

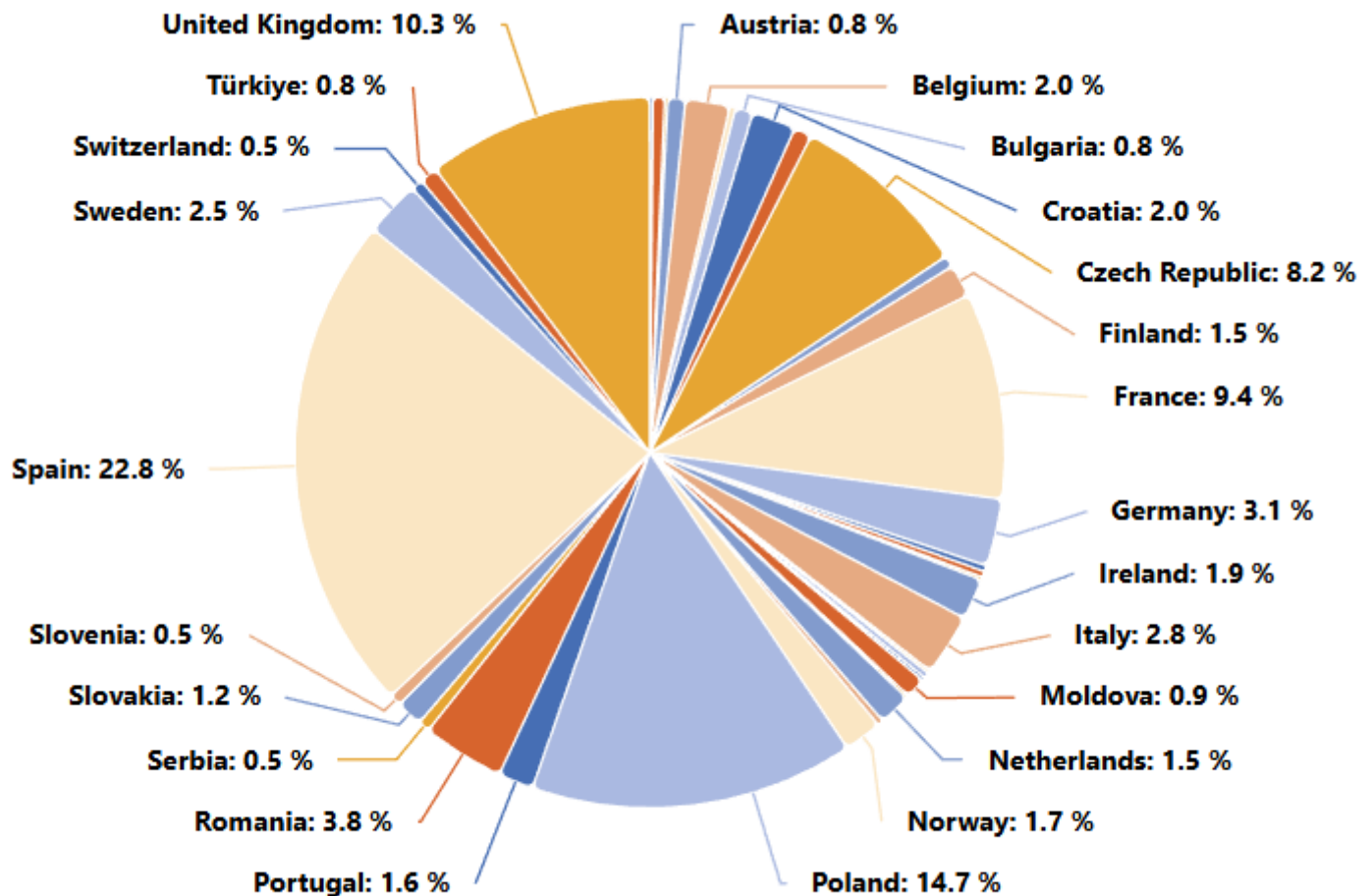
The auditors' conclusions

“FBK has built a mature and integrated HR system. The HR strategy is fully embedded in the organization’s procedures. Management’s commitment to implementing the action plan is indisputable. Researchers expressed a very positive perception of the work environment, technical and administrative support, research and development infrastructures, evaluation criteria, supervision, and career advancement. The benefits of the HR strategy are reflected in increased researcher engagement, transparency, and institutional coherence.”

Ambitions are high, ethical and recruitment frameworks are exemplary, and welfare and professional development measures are steadily moving toward full alignment with the renewed [European Charter for Researchers](#).

The benefits of HR strategy are seen in increased researcher engagement, transparency, and institutional coherence.” The organization has made a strong effort to comply with the principles of the Charter and the Code, achieving more than remarkable results. Examples of good practices include:

- strong attention to working conditions and work–life balance;
- personalized career guidance for early-career researchers;
- excellent planning of staff training opportunities;
- a comprehensive program of awareness-raising activities;
- strong involvement of management in implementing the HRS4R;
- effective administrative and technical support that enhances productivity and funding capacity;
- improved information and management tools (e.g., website, intranet, dashboards);
- efficient implementation of open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment.



The journey continues

As a result, FBK is once again listed among the 21 [Italian HR Recognized Institutions listed on the EURAXESS website](#). For FBK, this achievement—made possible by the patient, day-to-day work of many people—represents concrete evidence not only of intent, but of a sustained commitment to ensuring a high-quality and attractive working environment. This renewed and strengthened commitment is reflected in the 54 actions planned for the next three years, translating the 20 key principles of the European Charter for Researchers into practice. After ten years of implementation, shared practice, and continuous improvement, these principles have become an integral part of the DNA of FBK’s international community of talent.



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

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<https://magazine.fbk.eu/en/news/fbk-renews-prestigious-european-recognition-for-commitment-to-attractive-and-sustainable-research-careers/>

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