



UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES
EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION

Supporting Early Career Researchers in Europe

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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION
COMITE SYNDICAL EUROPEEN DE L'EDUCATION



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COMMISSION

This project was carried out with the support of the European Commission

Is it right to work unpaid for the benefit of your research career?

Rob Hardwick (02 July 2012)

Postdoctoral salaries and PhD stipends have undoubtedly improved considerably in recent years, but a culture of acceptance of voluntary research work persists across UK institutions.



Europe's early career researchers gloomy over prospects

Long hours, job insecurity and need for mentoring noted in global survey of young scientists

January 30 2014

December 11, 2014

21st-Century Postdocs: (Still) Underpaid and Overworked

Why advertise research jobs if you've already picked your winner?

There's no point in advertising a research job if a good internal candidate has already been lined up, says our anonymous academic

UCL network to flag up struggles of junior staff

Group to lobby coalition to highlight plight of well educated but broke early career researchers

September 25 2014

Should academics lose out financially for taking maternity leave?

The risks of taking maternity leave as an early career academic are never made clear. One postdoc shares her story

Researchers' 'unrealistic' hopes of academic careers

Fewer than half of those new to research can expect long-term academic careers

September 12 2013

Should PhD students be classed as employees?

The Rise of the Post-Post-Postdoc

Universities need to be transparent about how they allocate teaching hours

The current system exploits graduate teaching assistants, excludes them from discussions and often treats them as a lower class of teachers

- [Graduate teaching assistants deserve more than £4.40 per student per week](#)

Fixed-term posts still the norm for researchers

November 23 2007

The perils of juggling motherhood and academia

When Patty Ramirez became pregnant during her PhD she assumed she could 'have it all'. The reality was far more stressful

June 4 2015

Our research

- Supported by the European Commission
- European social dialogue – European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE), European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)
- Led by UCEA
- 5 case studies – Cyprus, Finland, Germany (Hamburg), Italy, Romania, UK
- Project outputs available here:
www.ucea.ac.uk/en/empres/rs/ecr.cfm

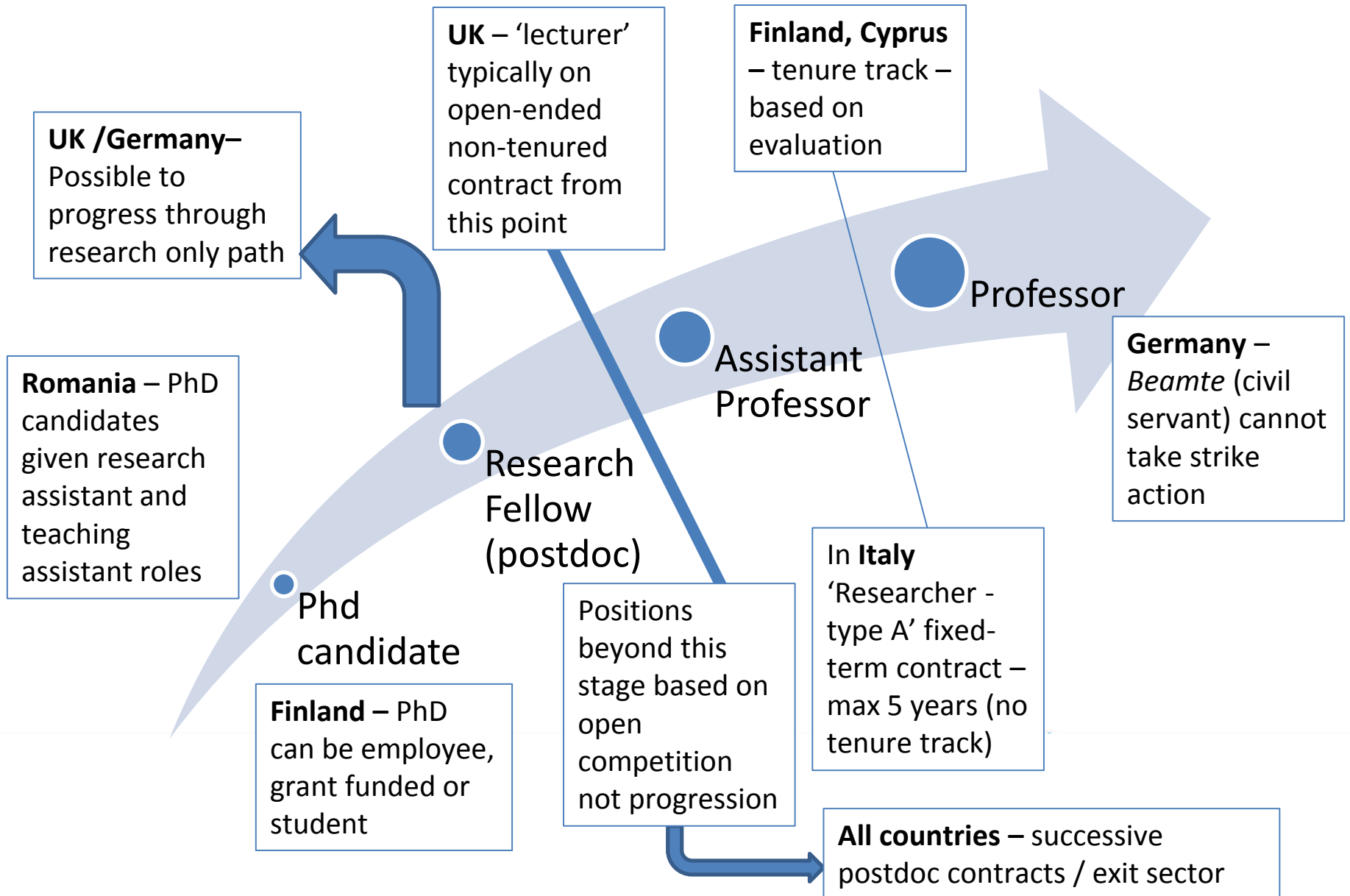


What do researchers say?

Degree of satisfaction with different aspects of the current academic position per current career stage (EU27) Source: MORE2 Higher Education Survey (2012).

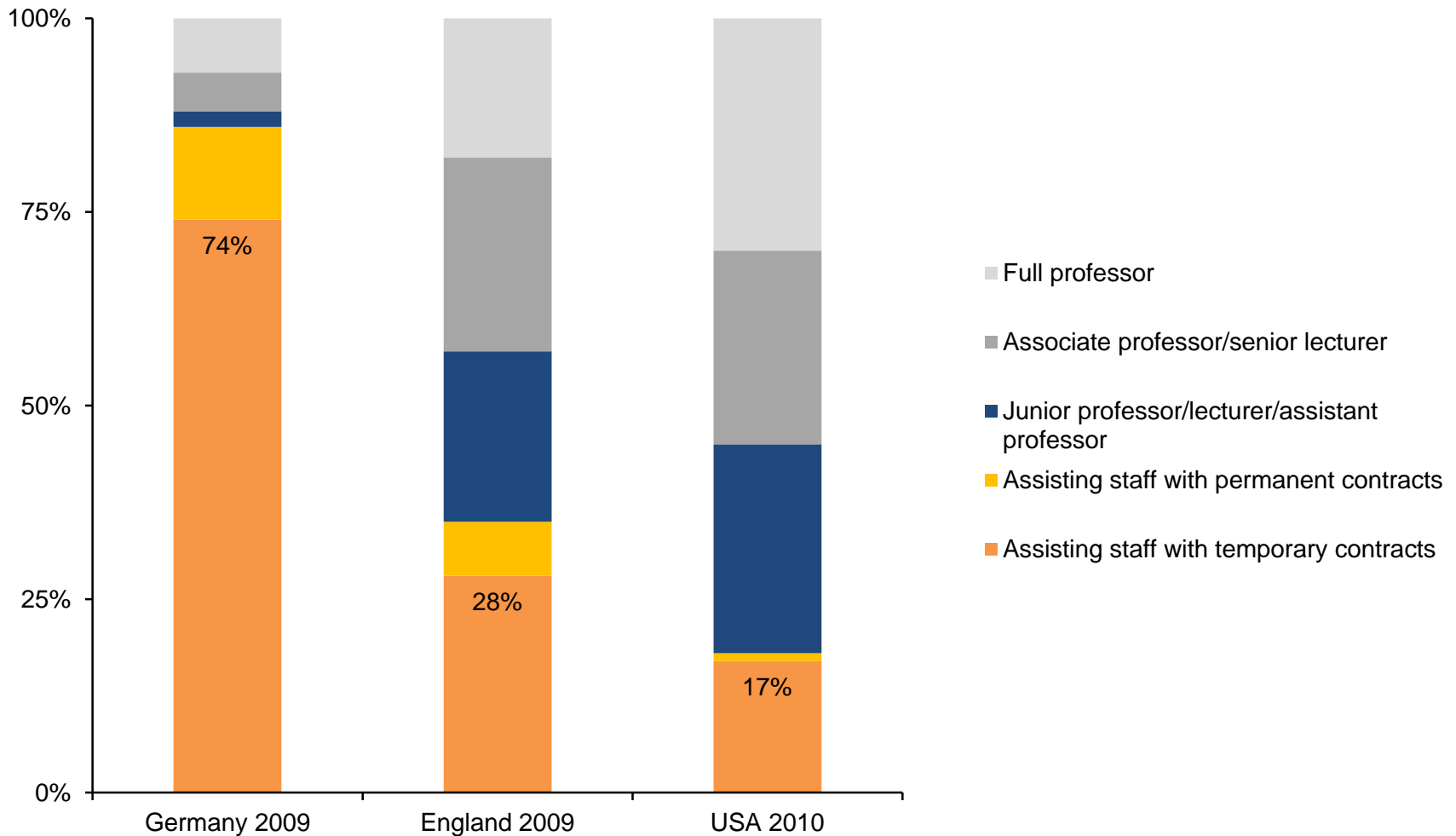
Aspects of current academic position	R1 (PhD)	R2 (Postdoc/ Fellow)	R3 (Asst./Ass oc. Professor)	R4 (Professor)	Average
Intellectual challenge	94	92	93	95	93
Job location	90	92	89	89	90
Level of responsibility	89	85	87	93	89
Reputation of employer	91	90	87	87	88
Degree of independence	89	78	87	92	87
Contribution to society	80	81	87	90	85
Dynamism	86	82	84	88	85
Social status	78	78	80	84	80
Job security	62	57	75	89	73
Mobility perspectives	70	65	59	66	64
Opportunities for advancement	66	55	60	67	62
Benefits	54	55	52	53	53
Salary	59	49	52	54	53
Average	77	74	76	81	77

Research careers in higher education



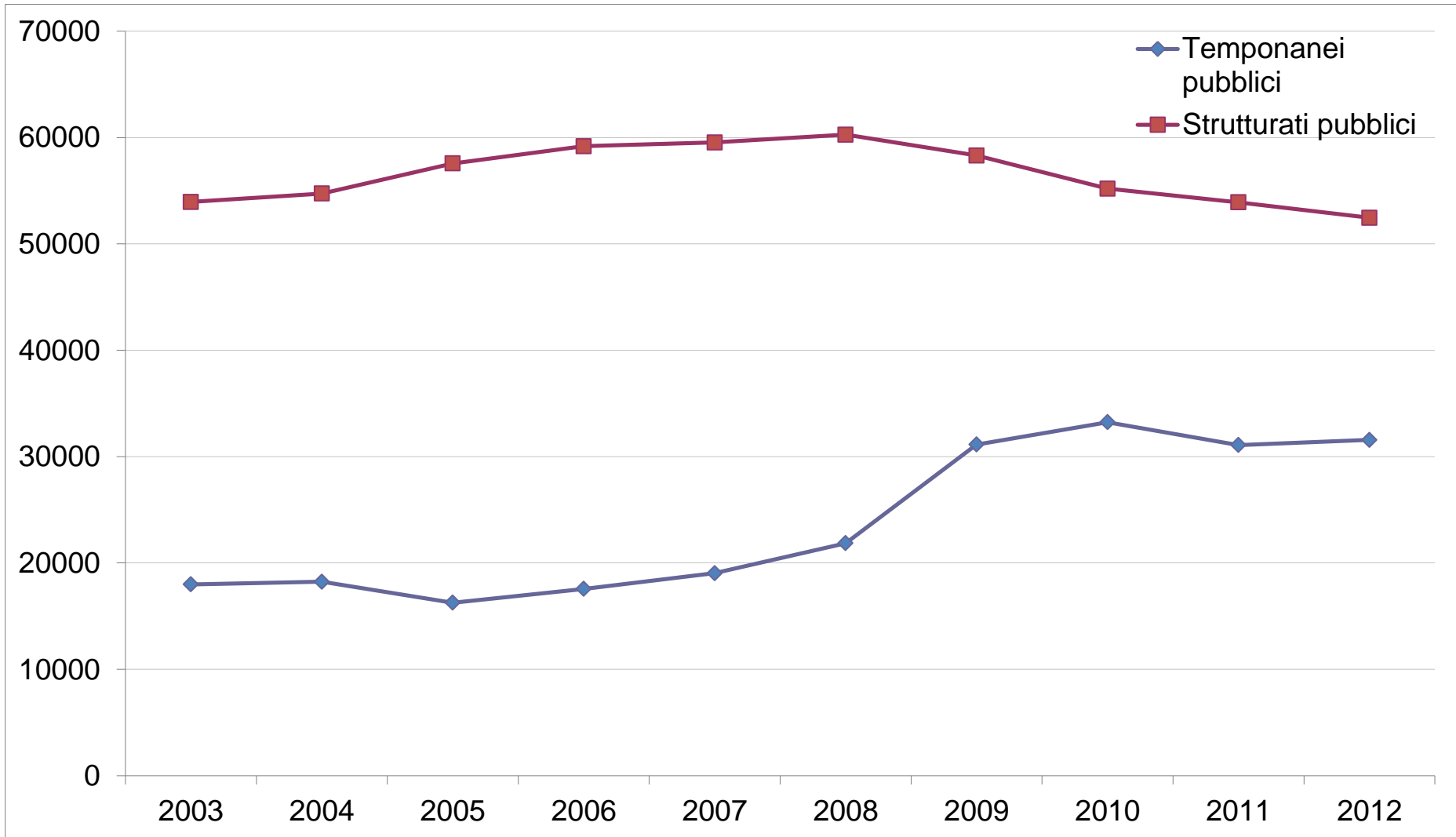
Research career or research contract?

Academic staff by contract level, Germany, England and USA





Permanent employees vs. Temporary contracts Public Universities Trend 2003-2012





RICERCARSI

6,2

The average number of temporary contract signed

10,4%

The percentage of whom has signed between 13 and 30 temporary contracts



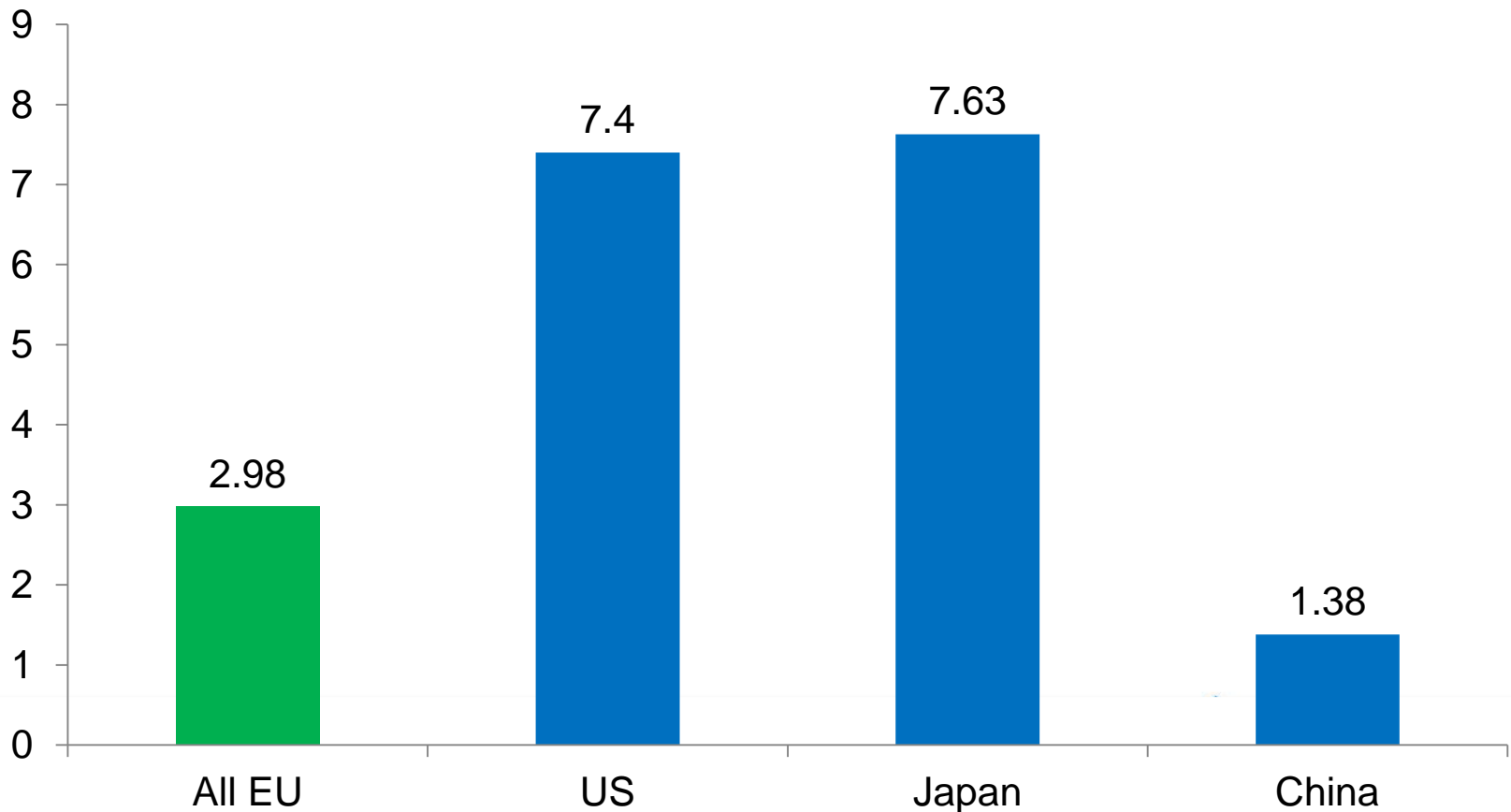
**16% does not work
in university
anymore**

1 in 3

Use very little or don't use
at all the professional skills
learned working in the
university

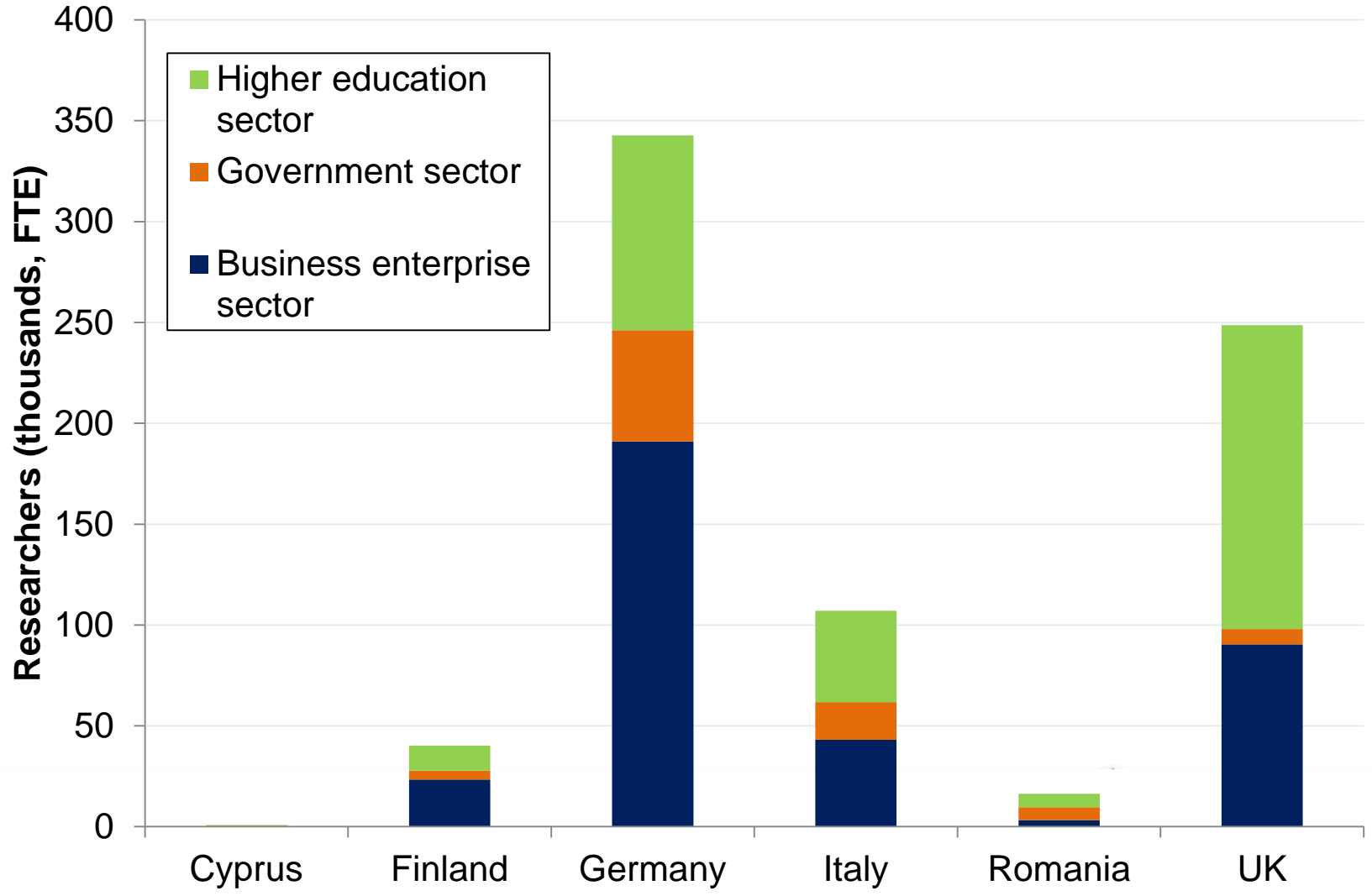
Do we focus too much on the supply side?

Business sector researchers per 1,000 labour force



Source: Deloitte, 2013

Do we focus too much on the supply side?



Specific issues

Country	Challenges
Cyprus	Very limited opportunities for research in the private sector Research culture is only just being established Limited funding for postdoc opportunities
Finland	Low outward and inward mobility Serial use of fixed-term contracts Status of PhD students
Germany	Restrictions to academic career progression ECRs find it difficult to change career paths ECRs feel undervalued in academia
Italy	Gelmini reform (2010) Cuts to HEI budgets affecting ECR opportunities Significant increase in fixed-term and casual contracts
Romania	History of underinvestment in research Reliance on EU funding Low salaries
United Kingdom	High level of competition for ECR posts Union level of concern about 'casualisation'

Supporting ECRs – EU initiatives

- European Charter for Researchers
- Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers
- HR Strategy on Researchers (HRS4R)
- European Framework for Research Careers
- RESAVER



Practical actions to address ECR challenges (1)

- Recognising duties and achieving an appropriate balance between teaching and research
- Supportive mentoring and line management
- Increasing visibility of research opportunities and providing support with proposals
- Improving transferrable skills (and awareness of these)
- Mobility grants to improve international networks



Practical actions to address ECR challenges (2)

- Improving collaboration and relationships between universities and industry and research institutes
- Increasing demand for higher-level skills in industry
- Improving awareness of careers outside HE and managing expectations about careers in HE
 - Monitoring PhD and postdoc career progression
- Considering representation of ECRs within academic governance structures
- Increasing trade union membership among ECRs
- Specified time for training and development



The role of trade unions - examples

- **FLC (Italy)** – funded research on experiences of early career researchers
- **UCU (UK)** – Involved in development of the Concordat. Provides resources on understanding contracts and navigating early career stage, surveys to identify key issues, ‘anti-casualisation week’
- **FUURT (Finland)** – Network for early stage researchers, reduced membership fees, member surveys to understand key issues, and seminars on careers in academia
- **GEW (Germany)** – Templin Manifesto for better working conditions, advice on social security for PhDs



Useful links

Vitae – UK researcher development

www.vitae.ac.uk

EURAXESS (Researchers in Motion)

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/useful-information/policy-library>

MORE3 study – mobility and career paths

www.more3.eu

Toscano, E. (2014), Challenges facing early career researchers in Italy. Presentation to conference 'Supporting early career researchers in higher education in Europe', London, 21 November 2014.





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