

Academia Discussion

Andreas Gsponer (Austrian Academy of Science)

Maximilian Babeluk (Austrian Academy of Science)

Yannick Dengler (U. Graz)

Early Career Researchers in Particle Physics in Austria

23.05.2024

ECFA ECR Working Groups

- Career Prospects WG and Diversity WG:
→ “2022 ECFA Early-Career Researchers Panel survey on career prospects and diversity”
- Instrumentation WG
- Future Colliders WG
- Software + Machine Learning in Instrumentation WG
- If you are interested to join participate in a WG, please let us know!

2022 Survey on Career Prospects and Diversity

- Focused on the sociological aspects (work environment, diversity), as well as career prospects and lived experience of ECRs
- Survey ran until May 2023, 759 responses
- We want the survey results to serve as a basis for discussion

Results of the 2022 ECFA Early-Career Researchers
Panel survey on career prospects and diversity

The ECFA Early-Career Researchers Panel: Career Prospects and Diversity
in Physics Programmes Working Groups

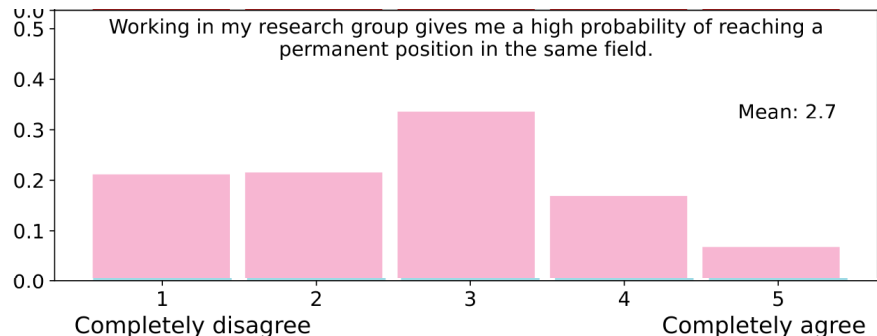
April 3, 2024

<https://arxiv.org/pdf/2404.02074v1>

Career Prospects in Academia

- Most ECRs are unsure if their work will allow them to reach a permanent position
- Obtaining a job in the private sector much more achievable

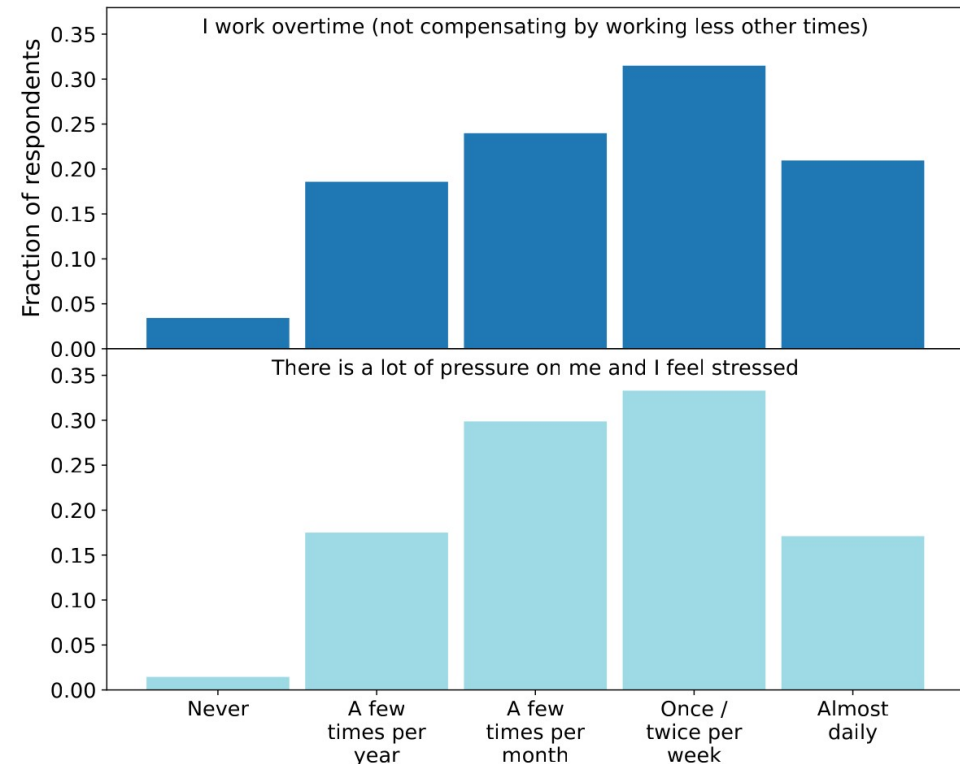
What is your opinion?



Overtime and Stress

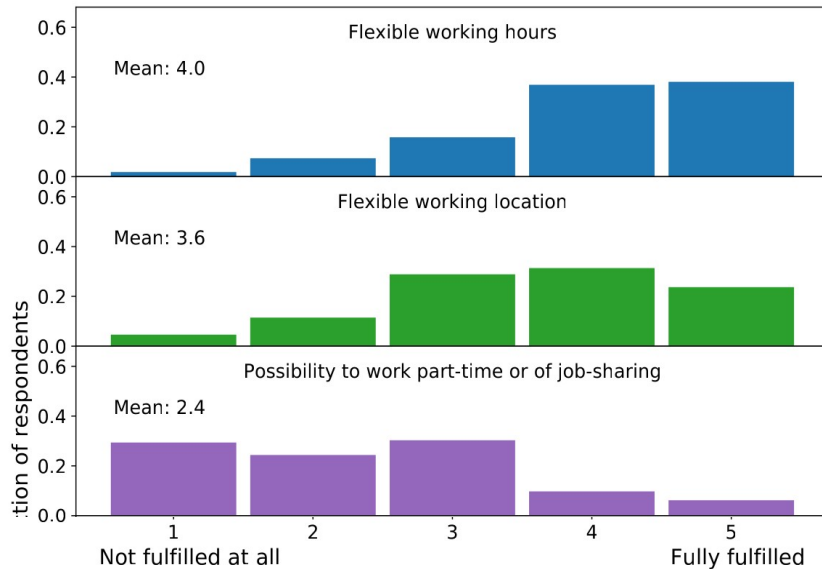
- Majority of ECRs polled feel stress and work overtime at least once a week
- Pre-docs in Natural Sciences work **14 hours** of overtime per week on average in Austria
[Forschung und Lehre, 2/19](#)
- Overtime mostly driven by ECRs themselves or external pressure?
→ “self-exploitation”

Overtime and Stress



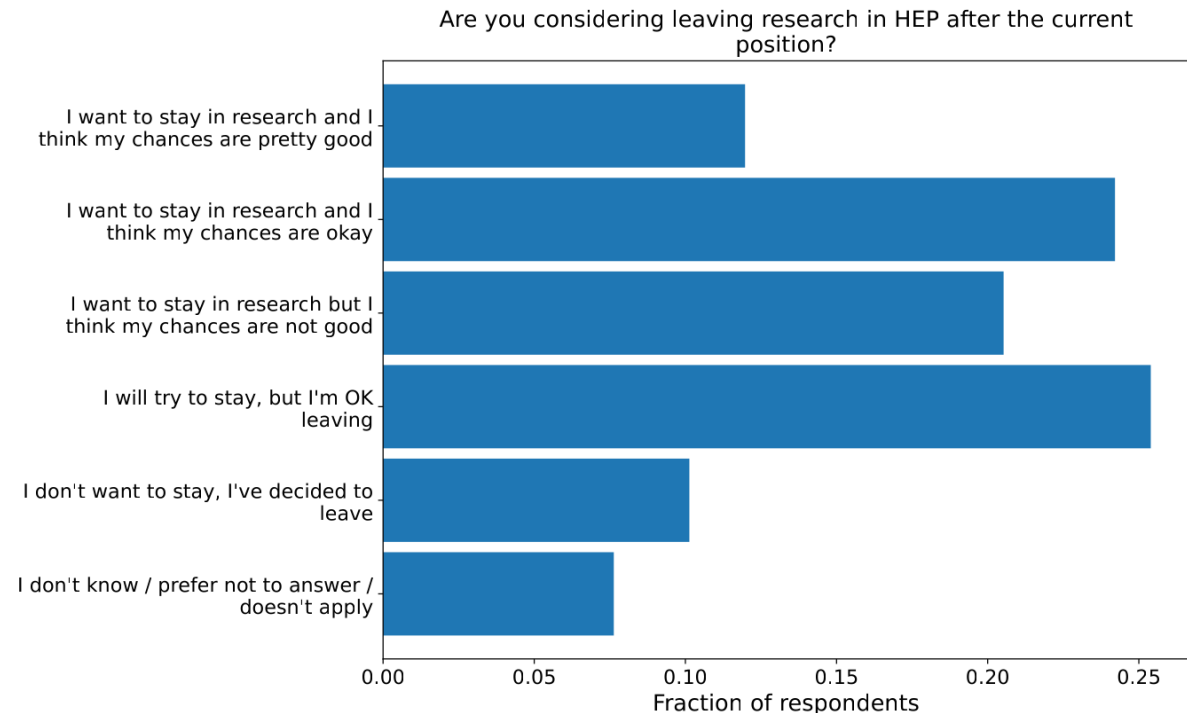
Working Conditions and Environment

- Flexible work hours and working locations are mostly OK (do you agree?)
- Main issues : No possibility of long term planning and possibility working part time



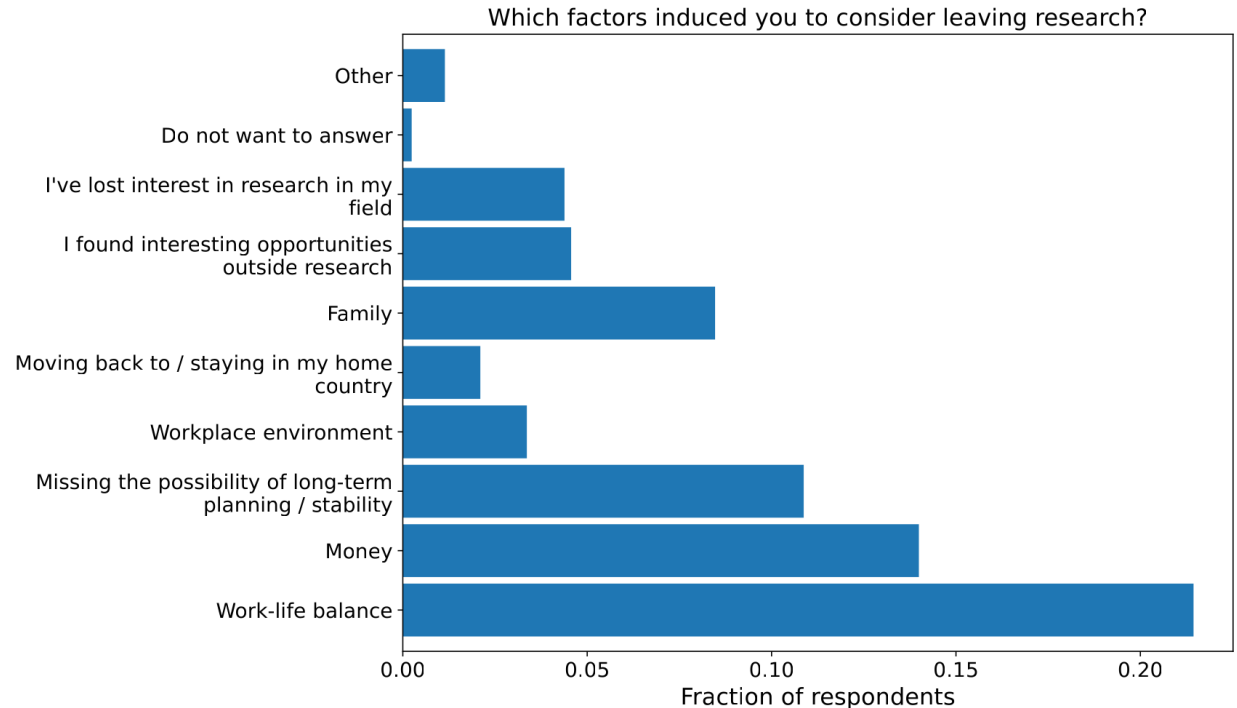
Staying in Academia

- 57% percent want to stay in HEP, but only 10% feel confident about finding a new position
- Who here would like to stay in Academia? (and how do you estimate your chances?)



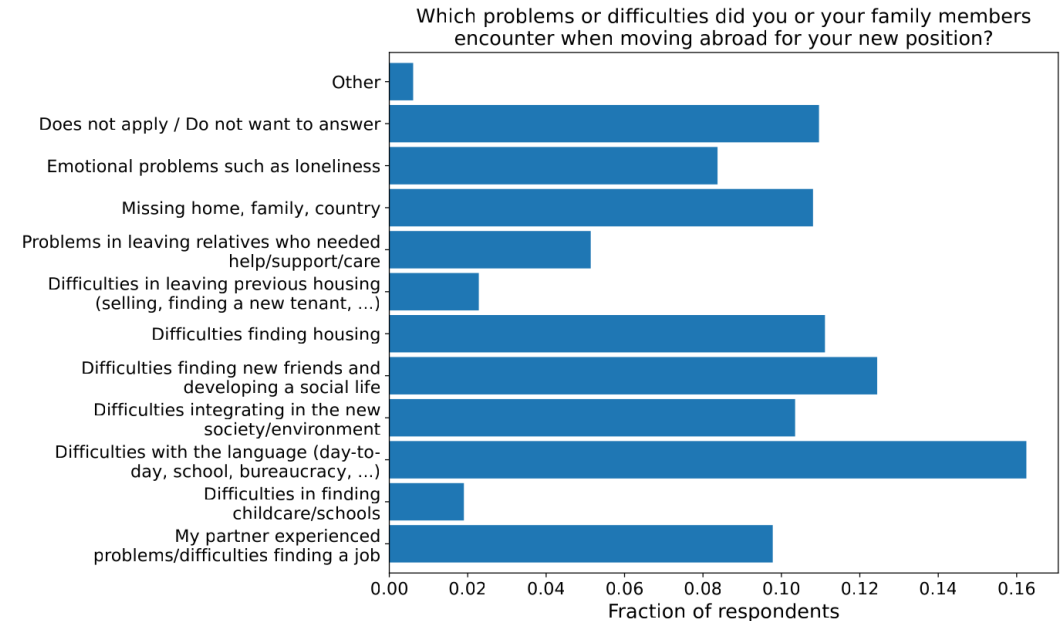
Leaving Academia

- Largest factor is work-life balance
- Money second, but closely followed by lack of long-term planning
- Do you agree?
- Some examples specifically mentioned:
 - Stress due to frequent moving
 - Shorter contracts → harder to pursue “high-risk” research
 - Administrative overhead for writing job / grant applications
 - Harassment, bullying and discrimination.



Professional Mobility (i.e. Moving between Countries)

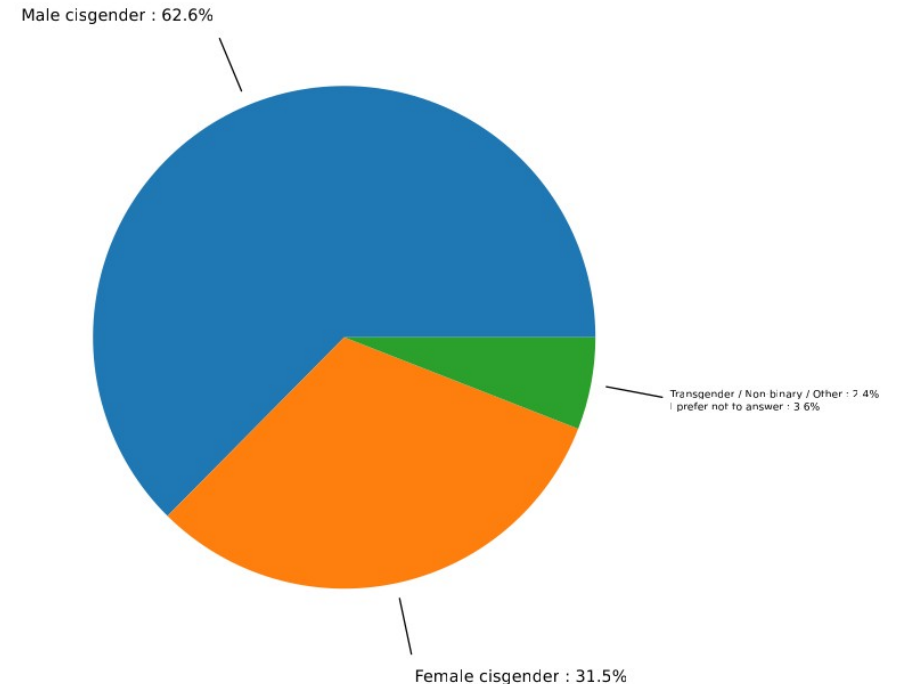
- Almost 80% of respondents moved for a new position
- Moving abroad poses challenges: Language, bureaucracy, social contacts, relationships; but also opportunities!
- Do you think professional mobility *should* be necessary to succeed in an academic career?



Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion

- 21% of respondents reported receiving abusive treatment / discrimination
- Gender based discrimination:
At ECR level, 2:1 ratio of cis male:female
- However, for senior positions this is ratio is much worse (“leaky pipeline”)

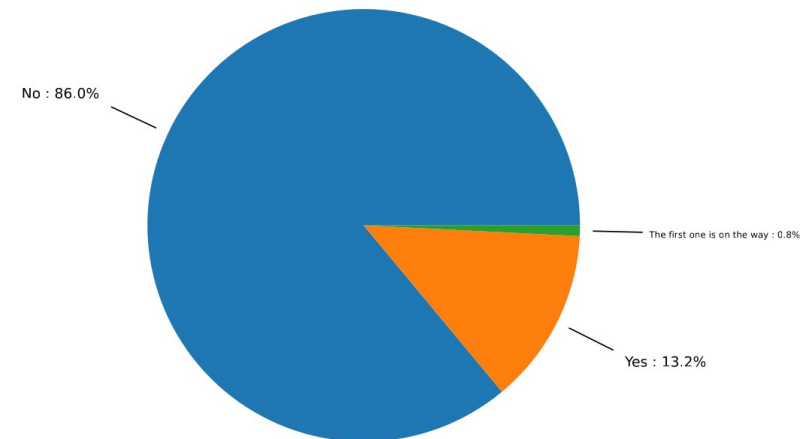
What gender do you identify with? (759 answers)



Reconciling an Academic Career with Family/Children

- Moving abroad with children poses a special challenge
- Taking a break from academia can impact career prospects (especially for short-term contracts)

Do you have children? (759 answers)



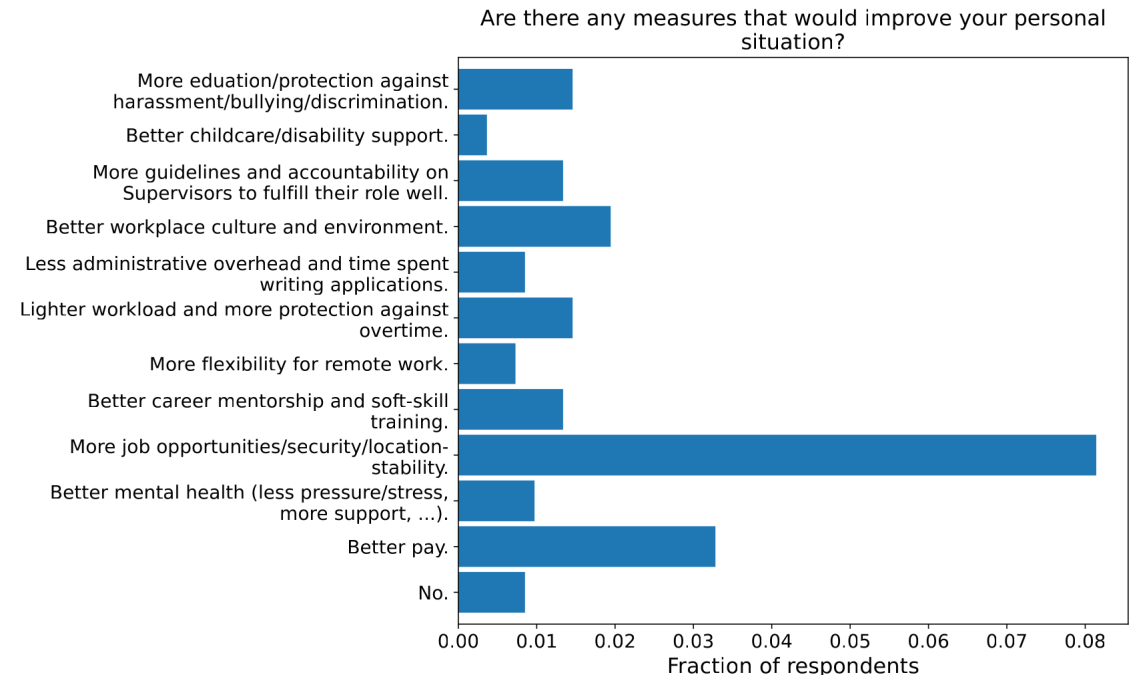
What can be done?

- Long term planning and job opportunities seems to be the most important issue by far

Some recommendations by the ECR survey:

- Provide longer job contracts
- Try to avoid fostering a culture where professional mobility is a prerequisite for a successful career.
- Avoid a work culture where unpaid overtime work is required or encouraged.

What do you suggest?

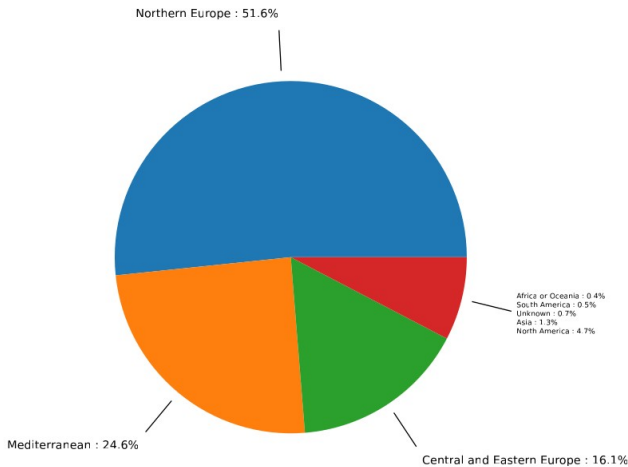


Any other topics?

Survey Respondent Demographics

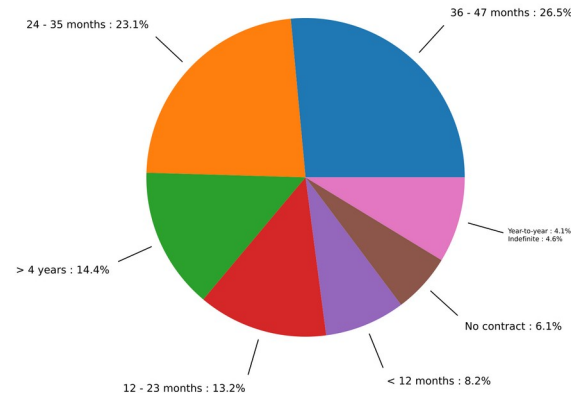
- 50% of respondents in northern europe, 25% mediterranean countries, 15% eastern europe
- Only 14% have a contract duration longer than 4 years
- Even split between PhDs and Postdocs (constituting 80%)

In which country are you currently employed? (759 answers)



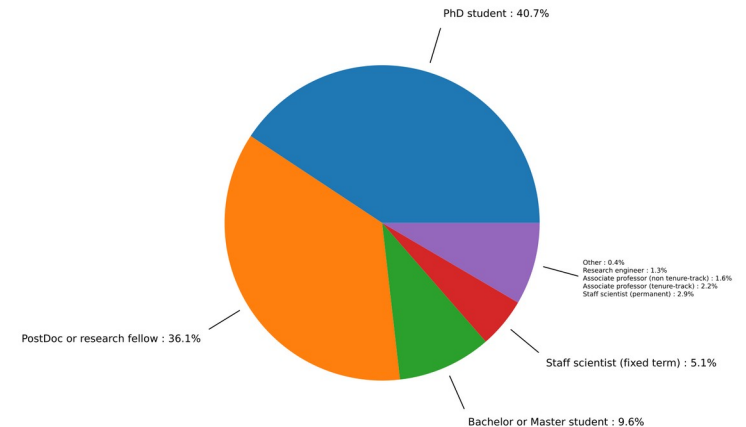
Country of Employment

What is the duration of your current contract in total? (759 answers)



Contract Duration

What is your current position? (759 answers)



Current Position