

# Baltic Science Network.

Connecting Through Science

## Overview of the Best Practices of Researchers' Mobility Programmes

Research and Higher Education  
Monitoring and Analysis Centre

## Further details on the publication

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## Project in brief

**Baltic Science Network** (BSN) serves as a forum for higher education, science and research cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR).

BSN is a policy network gathering relevant transnational, national and regional policy actors from the BSR countries. The Network is a springboard for targeted multilateral activities in the frame of research and innovation excellence, mobility of scientists and expanded participation. These joint activities are modelled with an overall aim to ensure that the BSR remains a hub of cutting-edge scientific solutions with the capacity to exploit the region's full innovation and scientific potential. The activities are modelled as examples of best practice which form basis of the policy recommendations drafted by the Network.

The platform is tailored to provide advice on how to enhance a macro-regional dimension in higher education, science and research cooperation. Recommendations jointly formulated by the Network members address the European, national and regional policy-making levels.

BSN is a flagship of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region under the Policy Area Education, Research and Employability, as well as one of two cornerstones of the Science, Research and Innovation Agenda of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

Disclaimer: This working paper is based on input from stakeholders and BSN partners and does not necessarily reflect the views of all participating Member States and organisations.

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## Introduction

This working paper presents an overview of the best practices related to researchers' mobility. These practices have been identified by respondents who took part in „Survey on challenges to researchers' mobility in BSR“ conducted by MOS-TA in 2016. Preliminary results of this survey were presented during the transnational workshop “Researchers' mobility in Baltic Sea Region: where do we stand and how to move forward?” that was held on 10 February 2017 in Vilnius. A summary of the best practices related to identified researchers' mobility programmes are compiled in this working paper.

This working paper consist of:

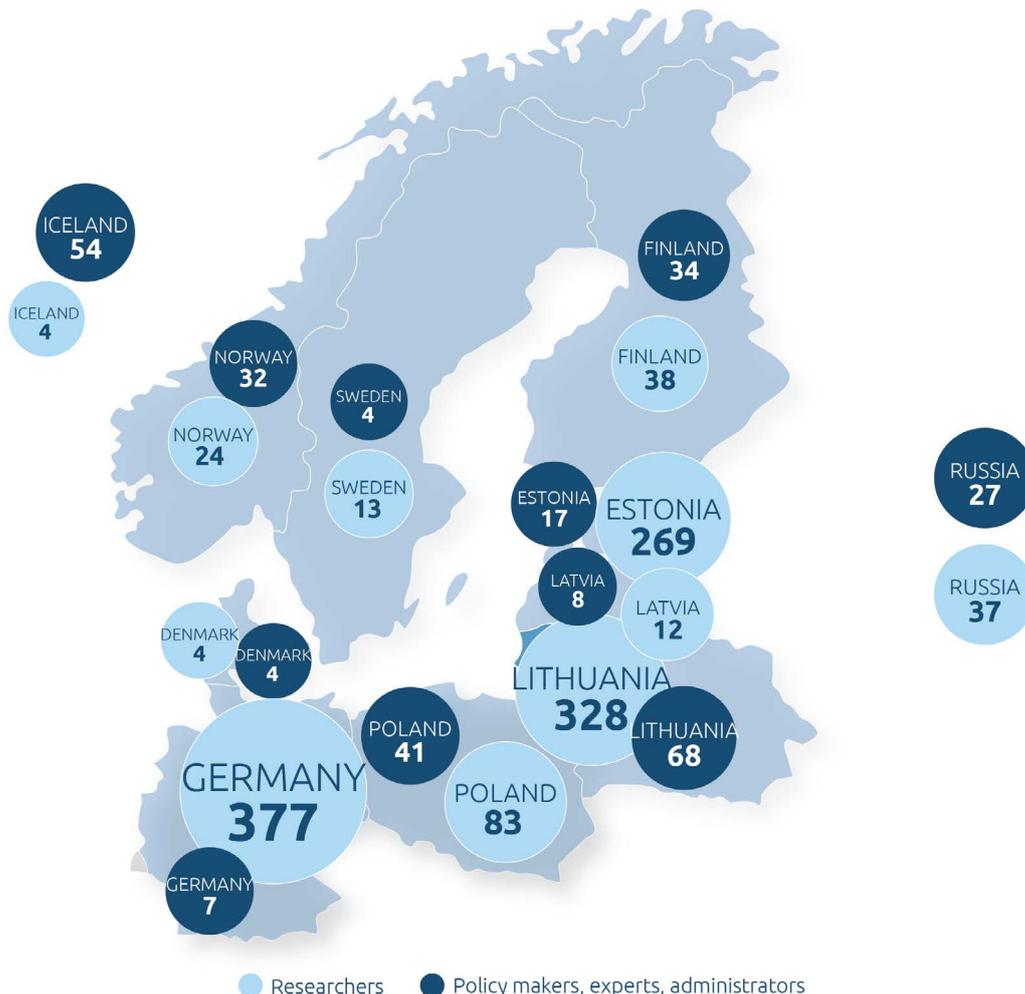
- Brief overview of results of the „Survey on challenges to researchers' mobility in BSR“;

- Short description of the best practices related to researchers' mobility identified by the survey respondents;
- More detailed analysis of the latter practices paying special attention to these elements of mobility programme: geographical origin of programme, programme duration, focus group, eligible nationalities, geographical coverage, mobility direction and possibility to move outside academic sector.

The purpose of this paper is to provide inspiration and external input to partners and involved stakeholders when implementing other activities of the project by sharing ideas, experiences, and learnings from best -practice from other countries.

## Mobility survey results

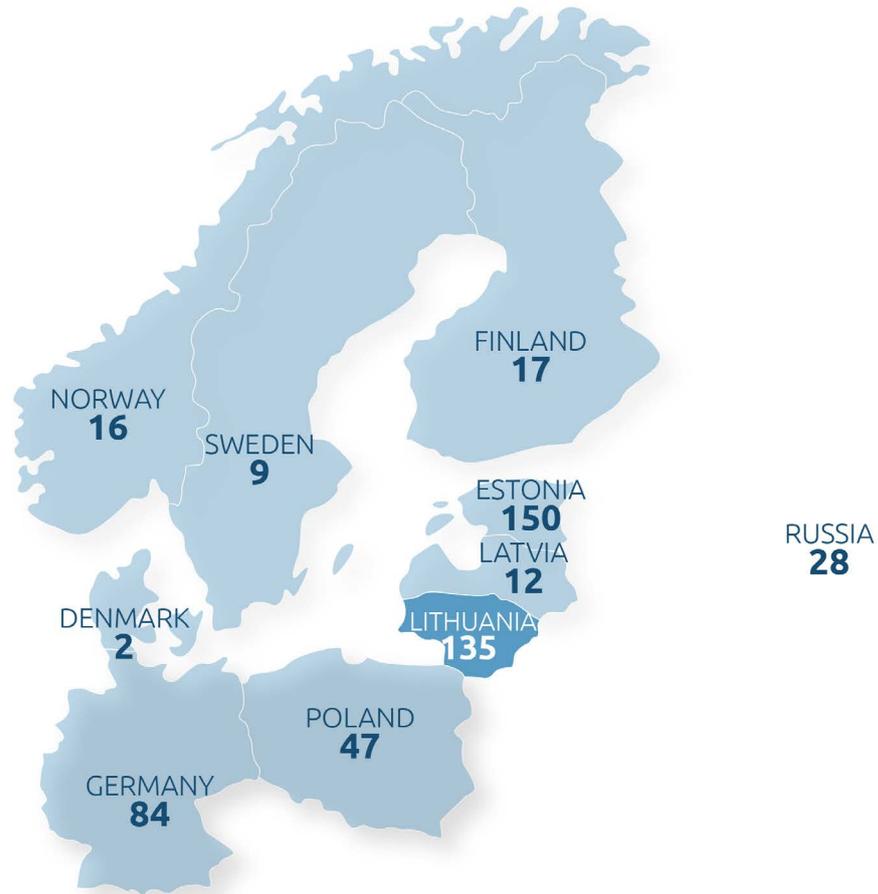
**Figure 1.** Number of responses to the survey received from different countries



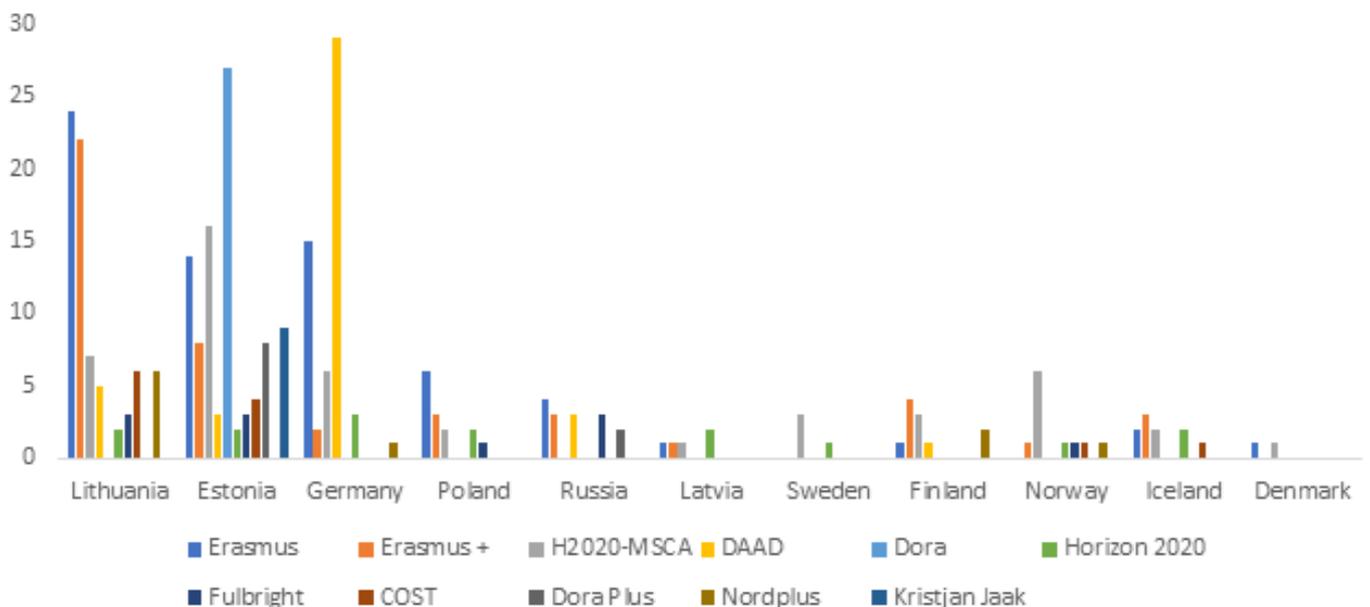
1485 respondents from different BSR countries took part in this survey. The aim of this questionnaire was to get information from different focus groups – researchers, policy makers and administrators - on the major challenges to researcher

mobility within BSR region. This questionnaire also contained request for respondents to present their opinion on the best researchers' mobility practices existing on the global scale.

**Figure 2.** Number of the best researchers' mobility practices indicated by respondents from BSR countries



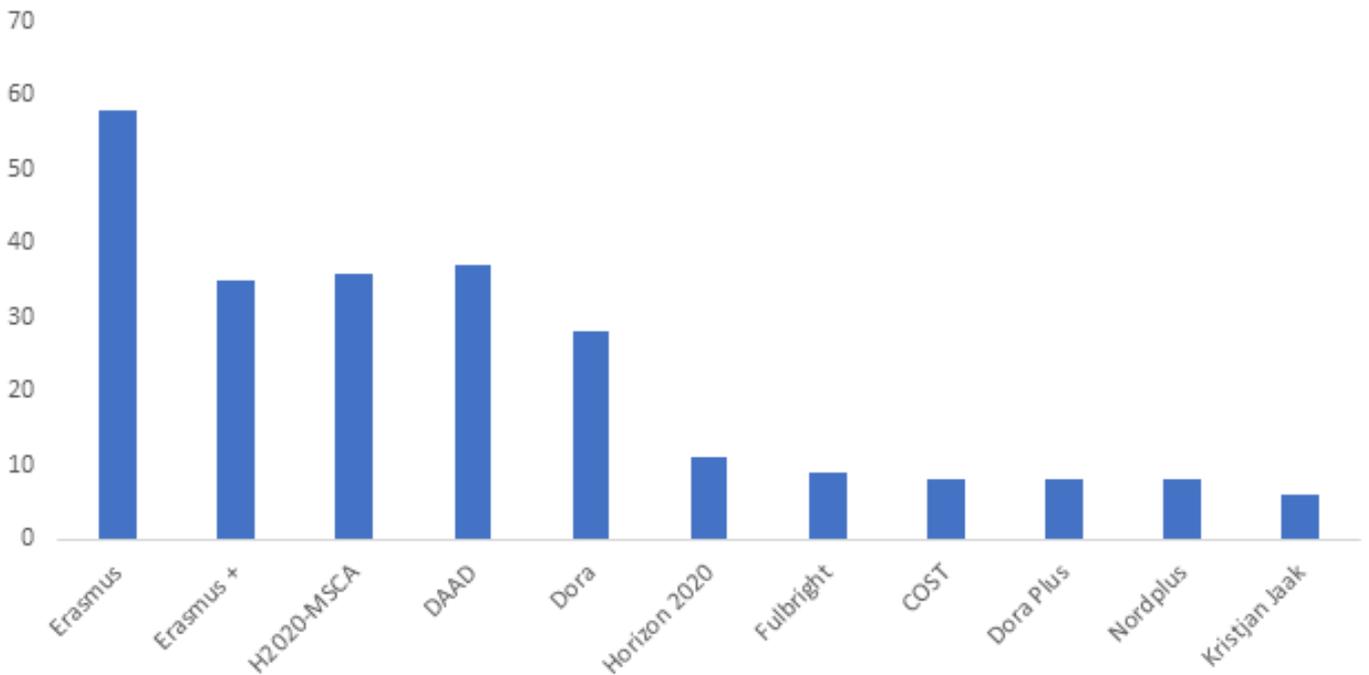
**Figure 3.** Best mobility practices indicated by respondents representing countries



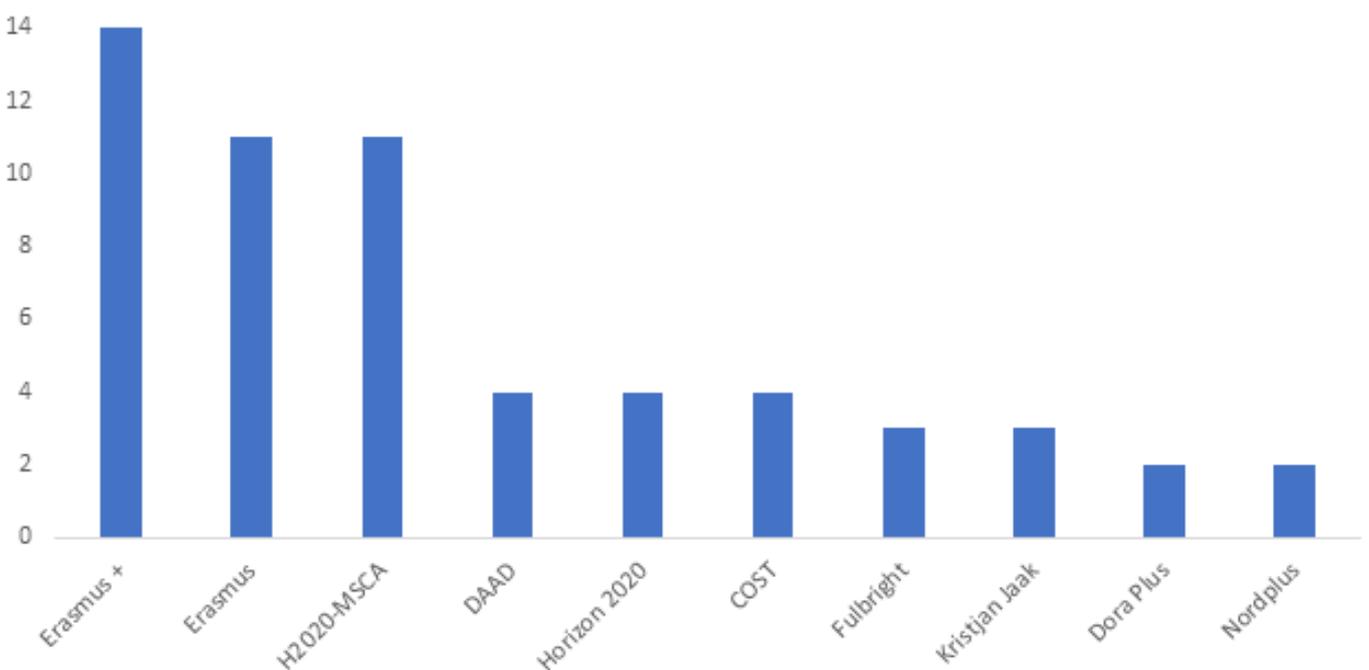
The survey benefited extensively from high responsiveness of respondents based in Germany, Estonia and Lithuania. Respondents from Estonia and Germany most frequently indicated their national

researcher mobility programmes as the best mobility practices. Whereas respondents from Lithuania indicated transnational - Erasmus and Erasmus plus - as the best researchers' mobility practices.

**Figure 4.** The best mobility practices indicated by researchers



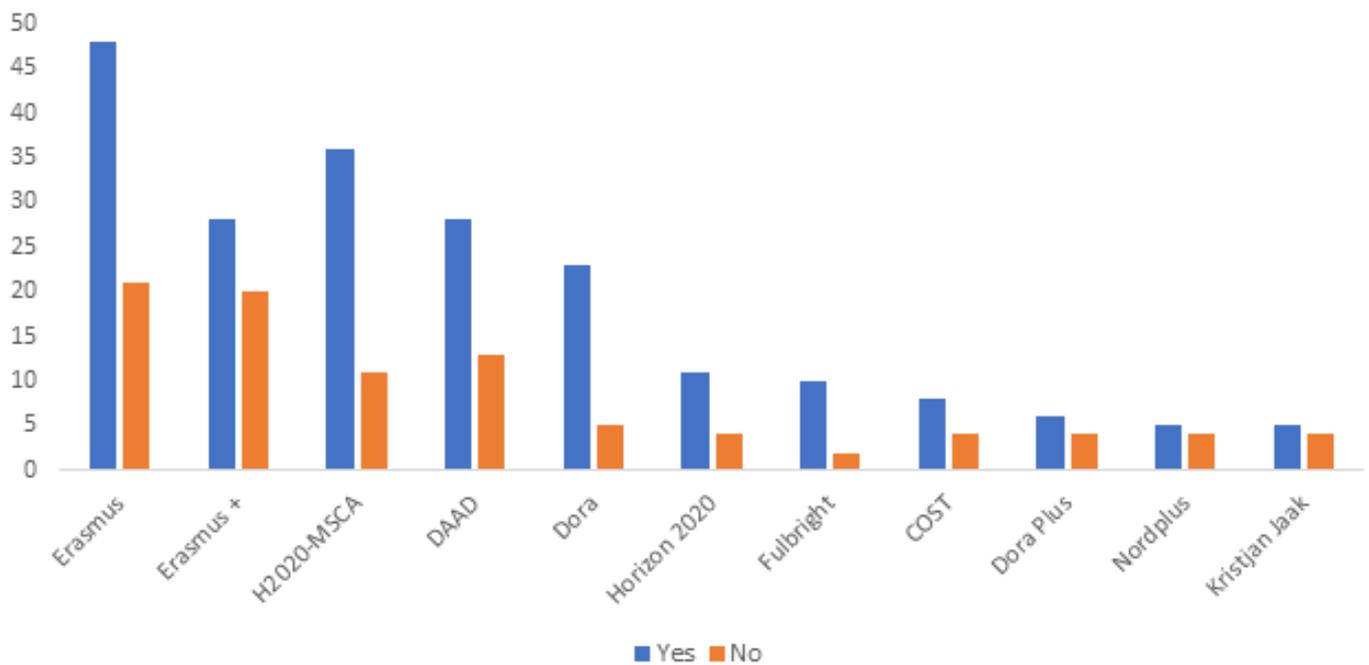
**Figure 5.** The best mobility practices indicated by policy makers, experts and administrators



When comparing the best mobility practices related to researcher mobility indicated by different groups of respondents it is evident that there

are no substantial differences between these two groups when it comes to expressing position on the best practices of this kind.

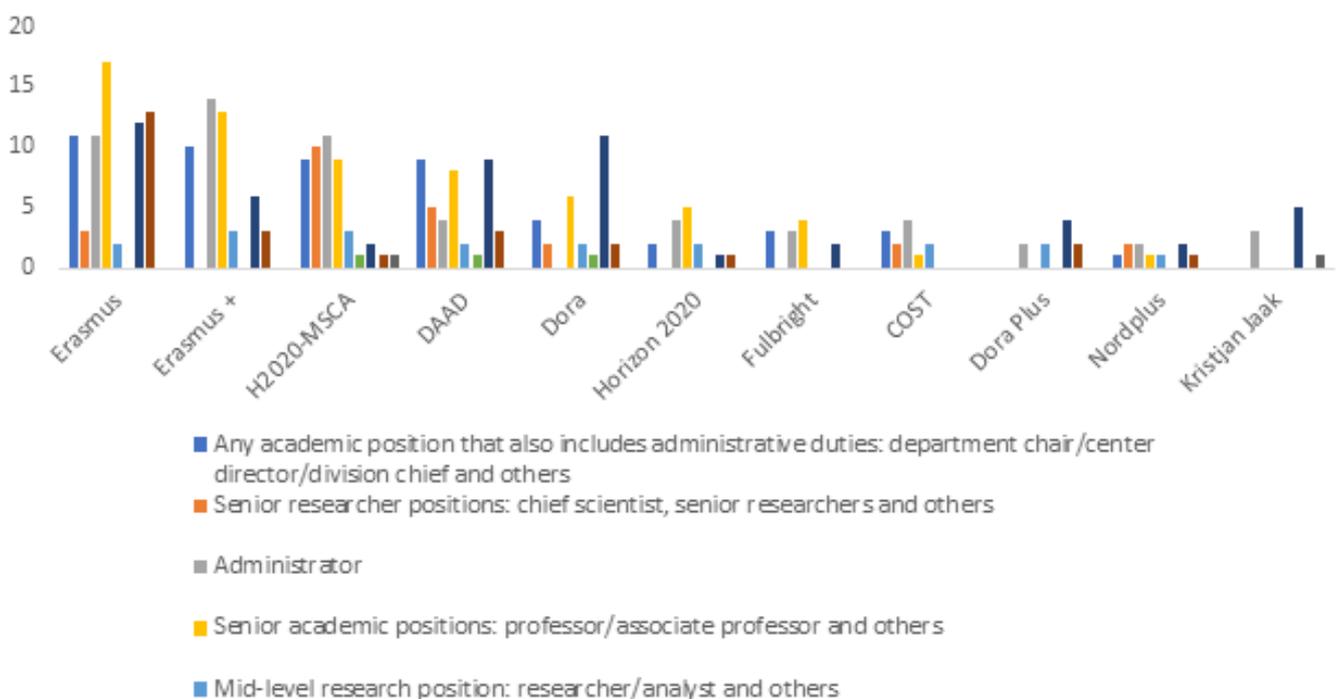
**Figure 6.** Participation in academic or professional mobility activities and identification of the best researchers' mobility practices



Both groups of respondents, i.e. the one consisting of respondents who participated in academic or professional mobility activities and the second involving those respondents who did not engage in such activities, indicate that the best practice related to researchers' mobility are Erasmus and Eras-

mus+. Such national mobility programmes as Dora Plus, Kristjan Jaak and transnational programme Nordplus are equally acknowledged as good practices of researcher mobility by both groups of respondents.

**Figure 7.** The best mobility practices identified by researchers holding different positions within HEI



When comparing different research mobility schemes senior academic position holding researchers indicated Erasmus as the best programme, whereas Erasmus+ received the highest scores from administrators. Similar evaluation came from all respondents holding an academic position that also includes administrative duties. In this case, Erasmus

was indicated as the best researcher mobility programme. Senior researchers indicated Erasmus and Erasmus+ programmes as best researcher mobility practises, whereas researchers holding mid-level research positions – Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA), and junior researchers – Erasmus and Dora.

## Mobility programmes

**Table 1.** Short description of researchers' mobility programmes indicated by survey respondents

Title of the programme	Short description of programme
<b>COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)</b>	COST - Europe's longest-running (over 40 years) intergovernmental framework consisting of 36 countries dedicated to fostering cooperation in science and technology. COST is based on bottom-up approach, multidisciplinary, intersectoral cooperation across all science and technology sectors. COST is also known as COST Actions that are set up for specific objectives and centered around creation, dissemination and application of knowledge. COST does not fund research activity itself. COST is supported from EU Framework Programme Horizon 2020.
<b>DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service)</b>	DAAD is considered to be the world's largest funding organisation for the international exchange of students and researchers. DAAD is a self-governing organization consisting of German universities (239 universities and 105 student unions). DAAD operates a network of 71 branch offices and information centres worldwide. Since it was established in 1925, the DAAD has supported well over 2 million scholars in Germany and throughout the world. DAAD is federally and state funded as well.
<b>Dora, Dora Plus</b>	Dora Plus is an Estonian governmental programme aiming at internationalising Estonia's science and research. This programme was launched in 2015. It is intended to operate until 2023 with the support of EU Regional Development Fund. The predecessor of Dora Plus programme was Dora Scholarships Programme. The latter programme was launched in 2008 and operated until 2015.
<b>Erasmus, Erasmus+</b>	The Erasmus Programme (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students[1]) is a European Union (EU) student exchange programme running for 30 years in 1987. Erasmus+ , is the new updated version of this programme that combines and encompasses all the EU's current schemes for education, training, youth and sport. It was started in January 2014.
<b>Fulbright</b>	The Fulbright Programme is an international student exchange programme sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.
<b>H2020 (Horizon 2020)</b>	H2020 (8th Framework Programme) is the biggest EU funding initiative (2014-2020) for fostering research and innovation. It focuses on frontier research, promising disruptive discoveries and knowledge transfer from academia to the market. Horizon 2020 serves as the instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness.
<b>H2020 MSCA (Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions)</b>	Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions provide grants for all researchers regardless of their career stage. These grants are focused on support for research training, especially innovation skills. Programme is based on bottom-up approach and funds global intersectoral mobility. MSCA is funded from EU Framework Programme Horizon 2020.
<b>Kristjan Jaak Scholarship</b>	The Kristjan Jaak Scholarships programme is a governmental support scheme initiated in cooperation with the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. The main objective of the programme is to advance the internationalisation of Estonian higher education institutions and support the employability of their graduates. Kristjan Jaak Scholarships provide mobility grants to the Master and PhD students and early stage researchers. The grants are open to the applicants from all scientific domains.

<b>Nordplus</b>	Nordplus is considered to be the most important programme of lifelong learning in the Baltic Sea Region. This programme was initiated by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Nordplus covers eight Nordic and Baltic states and three autonomous regions Åland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland.
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**Table 2.** Description of researchers' mobility programmes identified by survey respondents

<b>Title of a programme</b>	<b>Geographical origin of the programme</b>	<b>Focus group</b>	<b>Duration of a program</b>	<b>Eligible nationalities</b>	<b>Geographical coverage</b>	<b>Mobility direction</b>	<b>Possibility to move between sectors (academia-academia; academia - outside academia)</b>
H2020 MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN)	EU	early stage career researchers	Fellowships: 3-36 months; Project duration up to 4 years	all nationalities	EU or associated countries	Outgoing	Academia-outside academia
H2020 MSCA Individual Fellowships (IF)	EU	experienced researchers	European fellowships: 2 years; global fellowships: 3 years	all nationalities	EU or associated countries	Ingoing/outgoing	Academia-outside academia
H2020 MSCA Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE)	EU	any career level researchers	1-12 months; project up to 4 years	all nationalities	3 different countries: two - from EU or associated countries; partners from elsewhere are welcome.	Ingoing/outgoing	Academia-outside academia
H2020 MSCA Co-Funding of Regional, National and International Programmes (CO-FUND)	EU	doctoral students and experienced researchers	2-3 years	all nationalities	Depends on national or regional cofunded researchers' mobility programme	Ingoing/outgoing	Academia-outside academia
H2020 ERC Starting grants	EU	Early career scientists (2-7 years since completion of PhD)	up to 5 years	all nationalities (should spend 50 percent of total working time in EU Member or Associated Country).	Host institution must be based in one of EU Member States or one of the associated countries.	Ingoing/outgoing	Academia-outside academia

H2020 Consolidator Grants	EU	Researchers with 7-12 years experience since completion of PhD	up to 5 years	all nationalities (should spend 50 percent of total working time in EU Member or Associated Country).	Host institution must be based in one of EU Member States or one of the associated countries.	Ingoing/outgoing	Academia-outside academia
H2020 Advanced Grants	EU	Experienced researchers (significant research achievements in the last 10 years)	up to 5 years	all nationalities (should spend 30 percent of total working time in EU Member or Associated Country).	Host institution must be based in one of EU Member States or one of the associated countries.	Ingoing/outgoing	Academia-outside academia
Erasmus+	EU	Bachelor, Master or Doctoral students; staff	Studying abroad: 3-12 months; Traineeship: 2-12 months; Staff (teaching or training): Programme countries - from 2 days up to 2 months and between programme country and Partner country - from 5 days up to 20 months.	Programme and Partner Countries	Intra-European mobility and international mobility (programme countries and partner countries)	Ingoing/outgoing	Academia-academia (Organizations across all sectors involved in delivering formal and non-formal education (depends on the country it is based))
COST	EU	Any career level researchers	Up to 4 years	all nationalities	36 member countries	Ingoing/outgoing	Only higher education institutions (TBA)
Dora Plus	Estonia	Early stage career researchers, Master students and doctoral students (applicable only to students registered in the particular Estonian higher education institutions)	Short study visits up to 30 calendar days; PhD scholarships: 1 - 10 months.	The scholarship can be applied for by the Estonian citizens, by the persons staying in Estonia with permanent residence permit and foreigners who study at Estonian higher education institutions	Outbound - not specified; Inbound – researcher should not be a citizen of Estonia and must not have a permission to live in Estonia	Ingoing/outgoing	Academia - academia

Kristjan Jaak Scholarships	Estonia	Early stage career researchers, Master students and doctoral students	Degree studies abroad - to defend thesis abroad; Study periods abroad: up to one year; short study visits up to 1 month.	The scholarship can be applied for by the Estonian citizens, by the persons staying in Estonia with permanent residence permit and foreigners who study at Estonian higher education institutions	Not specified	Outgoing	Academia - academia
Fulbright Scholar Programme	USA	Students, any career level researchers	Student, scholar programmes: up to 1 year	No restrictions applied	USA	Outgoing	Academia - academia
Nordplus Higher Education Programme	Nordic Council of Ministers	Students and pedagogical staff; (N.B. Doctoral students and researcher are not eligible for Nordplus grant. Unless they participate as, pedagogical staff).	3 years; student mobility: 1 to 12 months	all nationalities (employed at HEIs in the participating countries may be awarded a Nordplus grant for exchanges in another Nordic or Baltic country)	Only participants in the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Nordic countries of Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland, and the self-governed areas of Åland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland can be funded through Nordplus	Outgoing	Academia - outside academia
DAAD (DAAD - German Academic Exchange Service) P.R.I.M.E Post-doctoral Researchers International Mobility Experience	Germany	Any career level researchers	Up to 18 months	all nationalities	all destinations	Ingoing/ outgoing	Academia - academia

Leibniz-DAAD Research Fellowship Programme	Germany	International postdocs	Up to 12 months	all nationalities	Germany	Ingoing	Leibniz Institute
DLR-DAAD Research Fellowships	Germany	Doctoral students; Postdocs; Senior Scientists	Doctoral students: up to 3 years Postdocs: 6-24 months; Senior scientist: 1-3 months	all nationalities	Germany	Ingoing	DLR institutes
DAAD Postdoc Short-Term Research Fellowships	Germany	Early stage career researchers	3-6 months	German	all destinations	Outgoing	Academia - academia
DAAD FIT weltweit - Scholarships for Computer Scientists	Germany	Master, Doctoral students and Postdocs	Master and Doctoral students: 1-6 months; Postdocs: 3-24 months	German	Masters and PhD students: all destinations; Postdocs: ICSI or NII	Outgoing	Master and PhD students: academia-outside academia (research institutions, industry laboratories); PhD - academia-academia
DAAD Incomer Programme: DAAD Research Grants	Germany	Graduates and PhD candidates; Postdocs	Short-term grants: 1-6 months; one-year grants (7-10 months) and long-term grants: 3 years	all nationalities	Germany	Ingoing	Academia - academia
DAAD Incomer Programme: DAAD Research	Germany	Postdocs, assistant professors, lecturers	1-3 months	all nationalities	Germany	Ingoing	Academia - academia
Stays for Faculty and Scientists							
DAAD Congress Participation and Invited Lectures	Germany	Doctoral students; Early stage career researchers; experienced researchers	N/A	German	all destinations	Outgoing	Academia - academia
DAAD Exchange Involving Projects	Germany	Research groups: postdocs, senior scientists; academic staff	up to 2 years	restrictions based on bilateral agreements (29 countries)	based on bilateral agreements (29 countries)	Ingoing/outgoing	Academia - academia

## Concluding remarks

Survey respondents indicated a wide range of highly valued research mobility schemes. Most frequently they mentioned the pan-European research mobility programs such as Erasmus+, Erasmus and H2020 MSCA. One of the national mobility programs stands out in this case. German mobility schemes offered by DAAD are acknowledged as one of the best practices administered by the national government.

When analysing in more detail the mobility programmes indicated in the survey by respondents, it is evident that a wide range of mobility schemes are available for the researchers in BSR. These mobility schemes address the needs of researchers at various stages of their careers. They cover visits ranging from 1 month up to 5 years. In most cases mobility programmes envisage no major restrictions concerning nationality of researcher. Also, the mobility schemes in most cases cover both outgoing and incoming research visits. Moving between sectors (in other words, from an academic institution to a private enterprise) during the research visits, is allowed in some cases of EU sponsored mobility

schemes. National research mobility schemes, as well as transitional and international ones (funded not by EU) usually do not envision intersectoral mobility.

Considering such a wide spectrum of mobility schemes available for researchers from BSR, it is reasonable to raise a question whether special schemes designed to facilitate researcher's mobility within the BSR are necessary. To answer this question, the BSN workshop held in Vilnius provided further food-for-thought, for example, in terms of evaluation the researcher mobility within the BSR through such aspects as language barrier in terms settling the administrative matters at the hosting institution, city and state or family relocation considerations, as well as social security matters. Thus, continued macro-regional reflections are welcome and deemed necessary in order to introduce modifications in the existing mobility schemes or provide new solutions in order to accommodate the pending needs of researchers interested in pursuing further transnational cooperation within the BSR.