

In Madrid, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2003

The undersigning organizations of this manifesto proclaim that:

The Spanish Government, and successive workgroups of the Science and Technology Ministry (MCyT), have not succeeded in the implementation of a good scientific policy during the years that they have been in office. In sight of the results, the creation of a new Science and Technology Ministry has only brought bureaucratic problems. We've already been under the command of two Ministers, and have witnessed the serial demission of many relevant officers appearing to be due to the lack of initiative that they had to bear. The resolutions and payments of proyect grants and fellowships have suffered unbearable delays and a large amount of this budget hasn't been expended, thus being this department in severe need of investment. The percentage of GDP dedicated to Research and Civil and Military Development in our country (0,96%) is the lowest in the OECD countries, is under the EU average (1,94%), and quite far from the average 3% that the EU targeted by the Barcelona European Council for 2010.

We declare that this lack of attention to science in Spain highly affects the human resources working in the research area. Among them, the so-called Research Personnel in Training and Improvement (PIFP) or, after the EU denomination, Early Stage Researchers (ESR's) are in a critical situation. ESR's form an heterogeneous group including graduated students in their PhD training in many different situations (granted, with contracts that doesn't fit their real work nor theiEr diploma, or without a regular income), PhD researchers, and other professionals without a well defined status. This human group constitutes more than half of the staff of many research centres. Moreover, next to the half of the Spanish scientific papers published in relevant journals are signed in first place by an ESR<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, they carry out a basic task for the scientific system of this country. In spite of this, the national and regional authorities persevere in keeping these qualified workers in a situation that denies any juridical and professional relationship with the organisms they work for, without the main rights that any worker has in Spain, masking real jobs as training fellowships. Unfortunately this situation may be maintained from 6 to 10 years, often combined with periods more or less longer in which the job is not remunerated. Furthermore, if we analyse the situation of ESR's in the countries that surround us, we discover the evidence that Spain is in the last positions of the European chart (*The situation of the Early Stage Researchers in Europe*, FJI-Precarios and Eurodoc, <http://www.precarios.org/docs.php3>).

We also want to point that the innitiatives proposed by the Spanish Government have been conceived with little skill and without any reliability, and that

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<sup>1</sup> *Estudio bibliométrico de la producción científica del Personal Investigador en Formación y Perfeccionamiento en España*. Documentation Commission of the Federación de Jóvenes Investigadores – Precarios, (<http://www.precarios.org/docs/productividad1.2.1.html>).

haven't still been carried out. For three years now, the Federación de Jóvenes Investigadores-Precarios (FJI-Precarios), an organization that represents and defends the ESR's, and also other groups concerned for this professional group, has been claiming and has reported data about their situation and scientific production. In response to these claims and unilaterally, the central Government announced to the press in November 2001 the elaboration of a Statute that would regulate the role of the fellow researchers, conferring them only some of the worker's rights that a contract intrinsically has. In spite of the fact that the Government didn't waste time to make a public announcement of the imminent approval of the document<sup>2,3,4,5</sup>, this Statute, which would surely improve the situation but does not convince the parties concerned, keeps on going from one Ministry to another without being approved. Taking into account that this document was qualified as a rapid provisional solution, we consider that this delay is absolutely unbearable. The explanation given by the Government, that the delay is due to the need of joining the willing of any Ministry integrated into the Interministerial Science and Technology Commission (CICYT) is clearly a bad excuse, as according to some experts from these Ministries, in an affair like this, the CICYT is to follow the MCyT's guidelines. Even some Regional Administrations have expressed their will to adhere this Statute yet with no legal duty, not without a previous critique the lack of contemplation of all the workers rights in the draft made by the MCyT.

In our opinion, it is important to highlight the limited will for dialogue of the MCyT main officers: despite that the group of fellow researchers is the more concerned in Spain for the eventual implementation of this document, the FJI-Precarios hasn't been at any time taken into account in the development and amendments of the document, and the information given has been extremely poor. In fact, after repeatedly requesting the document, we have only had access to it through third parts, and the detailed suggestions about the document that were made to the MCyT under their demand, haven't been considered, in spite of the clear and severe lacks that of this Statute, because it doesn't consider the basic rights of unemployment allowance and holydays, and let the ESR's outside the protection of the Spanish Workers' Statute (and its subsequent effect on syndical representation, direct participation in the organisms they work for, etc.)

Last, we would like to denounce the more severe situation of the postdoctoral researchers, which after reaching the highest educational degree recognized by the Spanish Universities, are some times unremunerated and in most of the cases granted. The whole Spanish scientific community has unanimously claimed that every postdoctoral researcher should have a contract, and, in addition, all the political parties (including the Partido Popular in government) and the trade unions have declared that the postdoctoral grants should be turned into contracts, so it's hard

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<sup>2</sup> Speech of the Science and Technology Minister, Anna Birulés, to the Senado, may the 22th, 2002. **Diario de Sesiones del Senado, año 2002, VII Legislatura, Núm. 91.**

<sup>3</sup> Speech of the congressist Tomás Burgos to the Congreso de los Diputados, december the 10th, 2002. **Diario de sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados, año 2002, VII Legislatura, Núm. 212.**

<sup>4</sup> Speech of the Science and Technology Minister, Josep Piqué, to the Senado may the 7th, 2003. **Diario de Sesiones del Senado, año 2003, VII Legislatura, Núm. 135.**

<sup>5</sup> Speech of the Science and Technology Minister, Josep Piqué, to the Congreso de los Diputados, may the 28th, 2003. **Diario de sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados, año 2003, VII Legislatura, Núm. 245.**

to explain why the Government hasn't done anything to implement actions that would change the present situation. In this sense, the only contribution of the Science and Technology Ministry is the creation of the Ramón y Cajal Program that would allow a little number of researchers (with an average age of 35 and large postdoctoral experience) to be "privileged" with a contract during the next five years and without ensuring their later integration into the research system. It should be pointed that, if this has to be considered as a step forward in the rough present situation, the last chance for application has been already released and the Spanish scientific community doesn't know what is going to happen with the future reintegration of PhD holders into the scientific system.

For all these reasons, having received constant promises that didn't become real and realizing that the authorities' idleness, the FJI-Precarios calls for a protest demonstration, (place and hour), asking for:

- A definitive regulation of the ESR status through the substitution of the present fellowship system into laboural contracts including every social right, and without a reduction in the number of research personnel.
- The announcement of a sufficient law by a document that would cover the public and private organisms, to end with the unnecessary and unfair heterogeneity in the working conditions of these professionals.
- For the increase of the budget dedicated to research in Spain, as well in the human resources section as in the infrastructural and project section, to allow the creation of a Research and Development network that would bring Spain to the level of the most developed countries.