

Agustin Calvo: Securing Researchers' Futures with RESAVER

Agustin Calvo, Growth and Engagement Manager at RESAVER, helps ensure research staff across Europe have access to occupational pensions. With 25 years' experience in strategy and business development, he drives RESAVER's mission to support researcher mobility, attract talent, and provide financial security from day one.

Q1, Tell us a bit about yourself?

I am a Spanish telecommunications engineer with over 25 years of experience in strategy and business development, driving growth and innovation across diverse sectors and international markets. I am passionate about the power of research and partnerships to create meaningful social impact and build a better future.

Q2, Tell us a bit about RESAVER, its aims and aspirations?

RESAVER is an initiative of the European Commission within the European Research Area (ERA) policies aimed at attracting and retaining talent and promoting the mobility of researchers within the EU. It is a non-profit, pan-European occupational (company-sponsored) pension fund for organisations in the European Economic Area with research activities and their employees. RESAVER's goal is to ensure that all research-related staff in the EEA have access to an occupational pension to complement their state pension.



Photo: Agustin Calvo

Q3, What is your role in RESAVER, and why is it important?

As Growth and Engagement Manager, I am responsible for enrolling as many research-related organisations in Europe as possible into the RESAVER pension fund, so that their employees can benefit from the RESAVER pension scheme. For organisations that already have an occupational pension plan, our goal is to complement it—particularly for short-term contracts or international staff who may not be covered. For start-ups, spin-offs and SMEs in the research sector that do not offer any complementary pension scheme, RESAVER is here to provide that solution.

Photo: UCC Staff
Together4Pensions
Wednesday Vigil

Q4, What would you like RESAVER to know, and why is RESAVER important for researchers?

Researchers are very vocational; they usually do not give much importance to matters beyond their work, and, in addition, research careers tend to be highly mobile. Over time, when retirement arrives, many researchers realise they have gaps in their pension history and that their retirement income is much lower than expected. Had they known that pension contributions made in the first 10 years of their career can account for up to 25% of their retirement income, they would have prioritised this earlier and asked their employers to provide them with pension coverage. RESAVER is here to ensure that they can receive that coverage from their first day at work and throughout their entire career, wherever they work in Europe.

Q5, Ideally, what would you like RESAVER to achieve within the EU? Or what is the EU trying to achieve through RESAVER?

Ideally, all organisations in the EEA should provide a complementary pension to their employees. In the research sector, RESAVER is an additional option to ensure that staff who are not already covered by an occupational pension scheme can be included, so that researchers working in Europe have financial security in retirement. This security is another reason to help young people make the decision to pursue a research career, to attract and retain talent, to enable continued mobility across the EU, and overall, to contribute to strengthening research as a powerhouse that guarantees Europe's future and improves the lives of all.

Q6, What are the real, tangible benefits for Researchers in Europe?

With RESAVER, employees can receive pension contributions from their first day of employment. Their employer contributes to their pension, and they can also make their own additional contributions. Since RESAVER was designed for researchers, who are often not financial experts, it is easy to manage through the MyRESAVER online platform. It includes a default life-cycle investment strategy which gradually shifts toward more conservative investments as the retirement date approaches. Moreover, employees can continue contributing to the same pension fund when they move to other EU countries, and if they wish to transfer their savings to another occupational pension scheme, they can do so at no cost.

Q7, Do you have any advice for researchers reading this article?

My advice to researchers reading this interview is to take a moment to think about the kind of lifestyle they want in retirement. RESAVER—and any other complementary pension scheme—is a tool to help them get closer to that goal. They should make sure they are covered by one.

Q8, What are your plans for the future of RESAVER, and yourself?

Our plans for the future are to progressively extend RESAVER's coverage to all research-related staff and countries in the EEA.



Photo: Agustin Calvo

Today, RESAVER is operational in nine countries: Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Cyprus. We plan to continue adding new countries every year. My aim is first to ensure that all organisations with research activities in the EEA know and understand what RESAVER is and how easy and cost-effective it is to join. Then, we will focus our work on ensuring that all staff working in research in Europe understand the importance of being covered by an occupational pension scheme—and that RESAVER can be a solution for them.

Q9, Is there anything else you would like to add?

RESAVER is officially a Cross-Border Institution for Occupational Retirement Provision (IORP) hosted in Belgium and fully compliant with the EU IORP II Directive. This means that, in order to begin RESAVER operations in a new country, all we need is one local organisation to request to join. Once that happens, we start the process with the regulators in Belgium and the new country to ensure full compliance with local Social and Labour Law in order to be formally approved as an occupational pension fund there. This process takes only a few months, so if we want to be operational in Ireland, we simply need the first Irish organisation to request it. I'll just leave this here.