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EURAXESS India Newsletter is a quarterly electronic publication. It provides information about conducting research in Europe or with European partners and gives insights for Indian and European researchers who are interested in the European research landscape.

Please email to india@euraxess.net for any comments on this newsletter, contributions you would like to make.

Editor Dr Samrat S. Kumar, Country Coordinator, EURAXESS India.
1 EURAXESS country in focus: Romania

Whereas probably the most known thing about Romania is the legend of Dracula, Romania is much more than that. Think medieval towns, time-capsule villages, delicious cuisine, picturesque monasteries, virgin forests, majestic mountains, a blossoming art community, impressive landscape and, of course, high-quality education and excellent research facilities.

The Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitisation (MCID) is responsible for the overall research, development and innovation (RDI) policy described in its National Research and Innovation Strategy. While the Romanian Academy coordinates fundamental research in 14 sections, carrying out programmes of national interest via its institutions, MCID oversees the policy side with the help of the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), the Romanian Space Agency (ROSA) and the Institute for Atomic Physics (IFA).

The main funding instruments of the National R&I Strategy are the Romanian National Plan for Research, Development and Innovation (PN3), the Core Programmes and the Operational Programme Competitiveness – Axis 1 (POC-AP1).

Together, PN3 and POC-AP1 allocate competitive, project-based funding through a set of tailored programmes to address the specific needs of the distinct R&D performers and their technology readiness levels, and to support inter-sectoral and cross-border collaboration. Proposal selection is based on peer review, complying with the international principles of evaluation.
Four consulting bodies help MCID develop, monitor and implement RDI policies: the Advisory Board for Research Development and Innovation, the National Council for Scientific Research, the National Council for Technology Transfer and Innovation, and the National Council for Ethics of Research, Technology Development and Innovation.

The RDI system in Romania consists of 263 public R&D organisations (56 public universities, 46 national R&D institutes, 65 research institutes and centres of the Romanian Academy, and another 96 public research institutes and centres), as well as about 600 private companies declaring their R&D activities. Meanwhile, the Network for Technology Transfer and Innovation (ReNITT) has around 50 specific organisations (technology transfer centres, technology information centres, technology and business incubators) and four science and technology (S&T) parks.

The RDI sector employs 43,973 people nationwide\(^1\). This includes 18,249 (41.5%) with a PhD or postdoctoral degree, 37,393 (85.0%) with a higher education degree, and the remaining 6,580 (15.0%) possess secondary education certificates. The vast majority of Romanian R&D staff members (31,271 or 71.1%) are active in the public sector, while the remaining 12,406 (28.2%) work in privately owned institutions. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the employees work full time; 27,168 (61.8%) are categorised as researchers, 6,195 (14.1%) as technical staff, and the remaining 10,610 (24.1%) are listed as ‘other’.

**Scientific visa**

In Romania, a long-stay visa for scientific research activities, identified by the symbol D/CS, is granted to foreigners once approved by MCID and the General Inspectorate for Immigration.

Currently, 29 research organisations\(^2\) are licenced under the Scientific Visa Directive (Directive no. 801/2016), hosting researchers from third countries including Moldova, China, Algeria, Turkey, USA, South Korea, Japan, Canada, Mexico, Morocco, India, Egypt, Republic of Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Macedonia, and Colombia. They are carrying out research activities in universities/institutes across Romania and under various funding and programming environments, including the EU Horizon framework programmes, the Romanian National Research, Development and Innovation Plan, EU Structural Funds, and inter-organisational agreements.

Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) are a reference programme for doctoral education and postdoctoral training in the EU. They support the mobility of researchers between countries, sectors and disciplines, helping them acquire new knowledge, skills and competencies. MSCA also promote excellence and set standards for high-quality researcher education and

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\(^1\) Figures reported at the end of 2019

training in line with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers. During Horizon 2020 (2014-2020), €16.20 million was directed towards Romanian RDI organisations involved in MSCA projects. Colombia is among the top 10 nationalities of fellows working in Romania, while the USA is in the top 10 destinations of Romanian fellows going abroad via MSCA.

**Romanian entrepreneurial ecosystem**

Romania welcomes foreign investments by providing special tax incentives and ensuring an investment-friendly business climate. The most intense R&D activity is taking place in the automotive, IT and automation sectors.

The Romanian entrepreneurial ecosystem is increasingly dynamic and shows high potential. UiPath is the world-leading provider of robotic process automation (RPA) and artificial intelligence (AI) software, growing from around $1 million to over $100 million in revenue in less than 21 months. Following UiPath’s success, other start-ups grew rapidly. Most of the scale-ups operate in RPA, AI, cybersecurity, mobile technologies, and online applications.

Innovation in Romania is of great importance because it is regarded as a creative driver and an economy booster. Human talent and R&D are crucial factors for enhancing innovation. Public expenditure on education and intensive staff training also stimulate innovation in high-performing economies.

From 2014 to 2020, Romania launched its strategy[^3] for strengthening entrepreneurship through policy measures focused on improving access to finance, responsive administration and entrepreneurship. The strategy addresses inclusiveness, job-creation in rural areas, entrepreneurship education and support programmes, aiming mainly at the vulnerable or disadvantaged social groups. Romania is thus addressing a legacy of disparities between rural and urban communities by supporting entrepreneurship and job-creation in underprivileged areas.

In 2019, Romania reported over 1.38 million entrepreneurs, which is the highest number in decades. The fact that 37.5% of them were women shows Romania’s progress in gender equality as well as other inclusion criteria (SBA, 2019).

Special programmes and recommendations have been delivered to foster entrepreneurship among women, Roma and refugees in the country.

[^3]: The Romanian Governmental Strategy for Development of SMEs and Business Environment (RGSDSMEBE) 2020 (OECD, 2018)
Entrepreneurship programmes were designed for socio-economically disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.  

**Study in Romania** – [www.studyinromania.gov.ro](http://www.studyinromania.gov.ro)

Romania is an excellent place to study. Diplomas are recognized all over Europe and beyond. In addition, the Diploma Supplement (DS), issued automatically with a graduation diploma, is bilingual and thus ensures transparency of learning outcomes and improves employability.

In 2020, there were 91 accredited Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) – 54 public and 37 private universities – with a wide choice of university programmes.

The Study in Romania team has recently released a video to promote Romanian higher education. It is accessible on the [Study in Romania YouTube account](http://www.youtube.com).  

The UEFISCDI agency has developed systems to increase the accuracy, transparency, security, volume and usefulness of higher education and research data. One tool offered is the National Student Enrolment System (RMU), as part of the EU-funded ‘EBSI4RO: Connecting Romania through Blockchain’ project, in partnership with the University Politehnica of Timisoara (UPT). EBSI4RO is implementing a credentials system for digitally verifying diplomas and qualifications using blockchain technology. It also handles so-called micro-credentials such as proof of informal learning.

**Brainmap** – [www.brainmap.ro](http://www.brainmap.ro)

Another important UEFISCDI initiative is the online community of researchers, innovators, technicians and entrepreneurs, Brainmap, which assembles more than 42,000 Romanian and foreign experts into a single human resources (HR) portal for research, innovation and entrepreneurship. The platform is searchable by expertise, country and institution, and it facilitates the selection of experts involved in evaluation processes organised by UEFISCDI.

**EERIS** – [https://eeris.eu](https://eeris.eu)

Engagement in the European Research Infrastructure System (EERIS) is the first Romanian online platform connecting research infrastructure owners with potential clients (researchers and company representatives). Developed by UEFISCDI, the portal is a gateway for booking services provided by public and private Romanian research infrastructures. Since 2020, the platform has also accepted registrations from research infrastructures and organisations from abroad.

The platform’s ambition is to build on the services and promote the infrastructures and available equipment both at national and international

*http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess*
levels. EERIS is being upgraded using blockchain technology by implementing reputation management tools that will enhance direct collaboration between researchers and research institutes online using an algorithm for trustworthy service contracts.


The Extreme Light Infrastructure Nuclear Physics (ELI-NP) is one of the most prestigious research infrastructures in the world due to its state-of-the-art equipment. Implemented by the National Institute and Nuclear Engineering Horia Hulubei (IFIN-HH), ELI-NP has been designated by the Nuclear Physics Collaboration Committee of the European Science Foundation as a major facility in the Nuclear Physics Long-Range Plan.

ELI-NP is building a team of dedicated, talented people willing to contribute to the operation and performance of laser-matter interaction experiments using the most powerful laser in the world.

Open positions for early-stage and experienced researchers interested in working in an innovative, dynamic environment are posted here: [www.eli-np.ro/jobs.php](http://www.eli-np.ro/jobs.php)

**Danubius – [www.danubius-ri.eu](http://www.danubius-ri.eu)**

The International Centre for Advanced Studies on River-Sea Systems (DANUBIUS-RI) is a pan-European distributed research infrastructure supporting interdisciplinary research on river-sea systems. DANUBIUS-RI’s mission is to facilitate scientific excellence in this complex field, offering state-of-the-art research infrastructure and providing integrated knowledge to sustain and protect river-sea systems.


The coordination of EURAXESS Romania is ensured by UEFISCDI and The Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitisation. The EURAXESS network in Romania has nine support centres: Banat University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Timisoara; Institute for Macromolecular Chemistry ‘Petru Poni’ Lasi; Lucian-Blaga-University of Sibiu; Bucharest University of Economic Studies; University of Bucharest; ‘Gheorghe Dima’ Music Academy; Valahia University Targoviste; North-West Regional Development Agency, Cluj-Napoca; and Chamber of Commerce and Industry Brasov.

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**A dedicated platform for international researchers**

EURAXESS WORLDWIDE is a networking platform and reliable source of information and ideas on research and innovation jobs, funding and hosting opportunities in Europe, helping talented European and international researchers explore and create transnational ties with researchers, employers and scientific communities, and develop careers within the global R&I system.

Contact your nearest branch: [euraxess.ec.europa.eu/worldwide](http://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/worldwide)
HOT TOPIC: EU spells out its global R&I approach in a changing world

Whether it is tackling climate change, health crises or marine pollution, global challenges require a global research and innovation (R&I) approach that is open, reciprocal and focused.

On 18 May, the European Commission issued a Communication on its ‘Global Approach to Research and Innovation’, Europe’s strategy for international cooperation in a changing world, and aimed at making our societies green, digital and healthy.

Science takes place in a complex geopolitical setting with often competing demands on scarce resources and time. To achieve the best results and avoid fragmented effort, the EU pursues open, multilateral, and reciprocal engagement with international partners and associates. Its experience is that working together like this is the best way to tackle pressing global challenges.

“Openness has always been a cornerstone in our cooperation with the rest of the world,” remarked Margrethe Vestager, Executive VP for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age, on the new Communication. “Our response to the pandemic has shown the benefits of more open science, of sharing data and results for the benefit of people in Europe and the rest of the world.”

Europe seeks to engage with partners and strengthen multilateral alliances with those who share its values – i.e. academic freedom, gender equality, research ethics, open science and evidence-based policymaking – and respect international norms in a range of important areas, such as:

- Marine cooperation (i.e. the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance, and the North-South Pole dimension)
- Breakthrough energy technologies
- R&I policy for fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food systems
- Use of digital technology in the fight against climate change and environmental challenges
- International digital partnerships matching the four pillars of the 2030 Digital Compass
- Health security, preparedness and the health system

Team Europe approach

This resoundingly global approach to R&I underscores Europe’s commitment to reaching levels of openness needed to drive excellence, pool resources to achieve scientific progress and develop vibrant innovation ecosystems.

But it takes more than EU or public funding and support to ensure that international researchers can cooperate freely across borders, according to Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Science Commission of the European Union, 2020.
and Youth. “We also [need] a clear framework that creates a level playing field on issues like ethical and people-centred research, the fair treatment of intellectual property, and reciprocal access to research programmes.”

Whether it is tackling the pandemic or cooperating with low- and middle-income countries dealing with endemic problems, multilateral platforms and EU-backed projects show how the Union can galvanise scientific knowledge and communities towards the best outcomes.

For example, the ‘Africa initiative’ under the new seven-year framework programme, Horizon Europe, seeks to strengthen cooperation with African countries. The Commission also intends to present guidelines for dealing with foreign interference on EU research organisations and higher education institutions, thus safeguarding academic freedom, integrity and institutional autonomy.

The Commission also plans to encourage initiatives modelled on a ‘Team Europe’ approach, combining the efforts of the Union, individual Member States and European financial institutions. Synergies with other EU programmes such as Global Europe, the neighbourhood, development and international cooperation instrument, are also an important element of the overall approach, according to the Communication.

The good news for the EURAXESS Worldwide community is that Horizon Europe is open to researchers and innovators from around the globe who are encouraged to team up with EU partners in preparing proposals. It includes dedicated actions to strengthen international cooperation and supports multilateral initiatives in areas such as clean and renewable energy, ocean research, earth observation, and infectious diseases.

**Background and more info**

In 2012, a Commission Communication set out the first strategy for international cooperation in R&I, including relations with third countries, and underpinned the international reach of Horizon 2020. The introduction of more than 30 International Cooperation Flagships under H2020 boosted R&I exchanges with regions such as Africa, Canada, Japan, South Korea, China, India, and others.

Almost a decade on, the new Global Approach to Research and Innovation takes over from the previous strategy to meet today’s significantly changed global context, and to align the EU’s international cooperation with its current priorities.

Global Approach to Research and Innovation Communication / Q&A / Factsheet
3 In focus: Interview with Dr. Nanasaheb Thorat, two times winner of the MSCA Fellowship

How did you get to know about the MSCA Individual Fellowship and what motivated you to apply?

During my master degree I first came to know about the Marie Curie Fellowship. After finishing my PhD in the year 2014 I have joined South Korea for Postdoc research, where my fellow colleagues introduced me about the MSCA. The mobility and freedom of research work, which is core concept of MSCA, impressed me to apply for the fellowship.

You cracked the code twice - what would you say made it easier the second time of application for the fellowship?

Yes, I won MSCA-IF twice, first in the year 2017 at Wroclaw University of Science and Technology (Poland) and second in the year 2020 at University of Oxford (UK). First time I was in waiting list for almost eight months while in second time I got funded with score 96. Second time it is more difficult to get in the main list as the reviewers looking in the proposal will assess how I am advancing my career at second chance.

What have been the benefits of your MSCA Individual Fellowships?

MSCA is known for its core principals of mobility, advancing the career, out of the box research ideas, and support from the host institute. All these are the merits of MSCA that can advance fellows research and academic career. Compiling one’s own research idea, implementing research with freedom, competitive salary and research budget - these are real benefits having a MSCA fellowship.

What would you say the biggest challenge in the application process was? How did you overcome it?

Drafting the MSCA proposal is time consuming and dedicated work. Compiling novel research idea along with career and social impact are the most challenging task of the MSCA proposal. Support from the host supervisor and host institute is the most crucial to develop competitive and a winning proposal. At every stage my host supervisors and host institutes supported me for the proposal.

From your experiences, how does the research environment in the UK differ from that in India?

Europe is well known for its research and human resource policies. This is the main difference between other countries and European countries where research has humanity angle. Almost all hosting countries in Europe follow standards and ethics of the research as well as work life balance, this differs from other countries.

Dr. Nanasaheb Thorat is an outstanding Experienced Researcher currently working as a Marie Curie Fellow Research Scientist at the University of Oxford, Medical Science Division.

Dr. Thorat is a two-time winner of the World’s most prestigious fellowship, i.e. Marie Curie Fellowships. Dr. Thorat has published 80 International articles including 60 peer-reviewed journal research papers and articles. Dr. Thorat is the first Indian awardee of the European Commissions innovation Radar “Grand Prix of the Innovation Radar Prize 2020” and many other national and international acclaims on his name.
What are the most important experiences that you draw from your time in Europe? And why would you recommend Europe as a research and study destination?

European scientists always look for the end solution of the problem. Regardless of the publications, impact of journals, and other indexes European researchers are more focused towards end solution of every problem. Out of 9 COVID-19 vaccines that are currently being used vaccination across the globe, 6 vaccines were developed by European scientist and this is the result of focused research. This kind of research culture very much impressed me and hence I recommend Indian young researchers to apply for MSCA and get experienced with European research culture.

How do you think EURAXESS India can further promote research collaborations between Europe and India?

The European commission is widening its Horizon by many ways and involving researchers from non-associated countries such as India through its next Horizon Europe (2021-2027) program. EURAXESS India can play vital role by popularizing, advertising European research opportunities to young minds in India as well as EU-India joint research activities. Many European countries have joint research programs with India and that can be more visualized using the EURAXESS India platform.

UK continues being part of the new Horizon Europe as an associated country – do you foresee any impact in terms of collaboration now that it is not a first member country?

The UK association with Horizon Europe will not affect and as an associated member country UK host institutes and researchers will have similar benefits as in previous program.

Could you kindly share some tip to future applicants to the MSCA-IF?

1. Choosing best Host Supervisor is the key factor of the MSCA.

2. Not always big host names matters - sometime small group also equally important to advance the career and reviewers always looks the two knowledge transfer between fell to host and hot to fellow.

3. Societal impact of proposed research equally matters.

4. Identify own strengths and weaknesses and mention it in the proposal. How fellow will be overcoming his/her research and academic weaknesses through the MSCA fellowship must be highlighted in the proposal.

Supporting excellence in research: the MSCA European and Global Fellowships

With a budget totalling €6.6 billion over 2021-2027, the MSCA support researchers from all over the world, at all stages of their careers and in all disciplines.

The aim of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships is to equip postdoctoral researchers with complementary professional skills for their future careers through the implementation of a personalised research project. International, interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility is the central element here.

MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships enhance the creative and innovative potential of researchers holding a PhD and who wish to acquire new skills through advanced training, international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral mobility.

MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships are open to excellent researchers of any nationality.

The MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships call for proposals has opened on 22 June 2021 with a deadline of 12 October 2021.

For more information click here or copy the link:

4 In case you missed it...

Find latest EU Research and Innovation News and open Calls on our EURAXES India website.

About us

EURAXESS India is a networking tool for European researchers active in India and for Indian and international researchers wishing to collaborate with and/or pursue a career in Europe. EURAXESS India provides information about research in Europe, European research policy, opportunities for research funding, for EU-India and international collaboration and for transnational mobility. Membership is free.

Visit us at india.euraxess.org and join the EURAXESS India community.

EURAXESS Worldwide has dedicated teams in the following countries and regions ready to assist you: ASEAN (focus on Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam), Australia & New Zealand, Latin America and the Caribbean (focus on Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Colombia), China, India, Japan, Korea, and North America (USA and Canada).