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Issue 9

EURAXESS Links Network Newsletter

Dear Readers!

With the arrival of spring comes many new things, including new insights and updates on the latest events and happenings surrounding research in and concerning the European Union. Thus, with this in mind we warmly welcome you to the May 2015 edition of the EURAXESS Links Network Newsletter.

In this edition, attention is given to the role of innovation in the European Union, with a focus on the various forms it takes and the type of support available for its fostering. We begin with an overview of the EU's innovation strategy, which is then followed by a focused section on the various ways this strategy is implemented.

Additionally, we highlight the upcoming EU innovation conference due to take place on 22-23 June in Brussels. This year's conference will be on innovation in the European Research Area (ERA) under the banner "A New Start for Europe: Opening up to an ERA of Innovation". And rounding out our reporting on innovation will be a look how ERA-NETs contribute and nurture innovation. Here, we have placed the cooperation between India and the EU in the spotlight, with attention focused on a discussion of "frugal innovation" and what that means for both the EU and its Third Country partners.

For upcoming events and activities in your EURAXESS Links communities, please refer to the events table at the end of the newsletter.

Happy reading!

Your EURAXESS Links Editorial Team



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EURAXESS Links Network Newsletter is a quarterly electronic newsletter edited by the EURAXESS Links Central Management team which provides information of specific interest to all EURAXESS Links community members.

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Please email euraxess@dlr.de for any comments on this newsletter or contributions you would like to make.

If you think any other colleagues would be interested in receiving this newsletter, or if you want to unsubscribe, please contact the EURAXESS Links Representative in your respective network community.

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1 In Focus – Innovation in the ERA

1.1 Overview of Innovation and Innovation Union Strategy

Challenges Facing Europe:

- weaknesses in public education and innovation systems
- poor availability of finance
- costly patenting
- outdated regulations and procedures
- slow standard-setting
- failure to use public procurement strategically
- fragmented efforts among member countries and regions

As an entity, Europe faces many challenges which take on a number of different forms. Jobs, or rather the lack thereof and specifically for young people, an ageing population, lack of sufficient and reliable resources and climate change to name a few. To address these challenges, the European Union relies on innovation as a tool to generate social and economic growth. In the last few years, innovation has gained even greater importance due to the financial crisis, not only as a means of combatting economic difficulties now faced by European society, but also as a way of moving Europe forward towards a more sustainable future. But what is innovation and how does the European Union seek to harness it for the benefit of its people?

What is innovation?

The word innovation refers specifically to the process by which something—a product, an activity—is created in new or significantly altered way, with this alteration being some type of improvement over what came before. However, in the context of the European Union, innovation also carries the idea that this process of “new” creating also inherently adds value to the different social spaces—markets, governments and communities where it occurs and is implemented.

Furthermore, innovation is ubiquitous. It is everywhere; a common aspect of everyday life appearing in forms as mundane as one’s smartphone or online banking services. Yet for innovation to arise and thrive, certain conditions are required, like reducing governmental bureaucracy, updating or eliminating outdated processes and procedures and good access to financial resources (i.e. funding).

Innovation Union—A Strategic Approach

Within the European Union, innovation is directly addressed and supported by the [Innovation Union initiative](#). This initiative is at the heart of the Europe 2020 strategy and names innovation as an overarching policy objective to be achieved through medium to long-term actions. Initiated in 2010, the Innovation Union is a “broad, balanced approach to innovation” and one of seven flagship initiatives under [Europe 2020](#) (appearing under the Smart Growth pillar). This ten year strategy has three main aims:

- **Make Europe a world class performer in science**
- **Revolutionise the way the public and private sectors work together**
- **Remove bottlenecks—create an internal market for skills, patents, venture capital, innovation procurement and standard setting**



As the European Union's strategic approach to innovation, the initiative focuses European efforts, including cooperation with Third Countries, in meeting the large-scale human and environmental challenges mentioned above. This is done through public sector intervention, designed to motivate the private sector into activity and remove barriers that hinder ideas from coming to fruition and the market.

The Innovation Union accomplishes its aims through use and reference to ten key elements:

10 Elements of the Innovation Union

1. European Innovation Partnerships
2. 25 innovation indicators listed in the Innovation Union Scoreboard
3. European Commission-led measures to improve access to financing
4. ERA completion measures, including better researcher mobility and transferability of pensions
5. European Design measures
6. More support for social innovation
7. Commission-led proposals to increase Member States' financial support of public procurement of innovation products and services
8. Legislative actions to speed up and modernize standard setting
9. Modernisation of European intellectual property (i.e. patents) management
10. Better use of structural funding for innovation by Member States

Because of its broad nature, the initiative views innovation that is social in nature to be as important as innovation occurring and arising from business environments. Thus, social innovation and its ability to "bring about the behavioural changes required to tackle major social challenges" ranks high amongst the European Union's priorities.

1.2 "A New Start for Europe: Opening up to an ERA of Innovation": Preview of Upcoming EU Innovation Conference, 22-23 June 2015

On 22-23 June in Brussels, the European Commission will hold a conference on innovation in the European Union. "A New Start for Europe: Opening up to an ERA of Innovation" will bring together close to 500 participants stemming from key research and innovation organisations to discuss current European Union policies related to three interconnected topics: Open Science, the European Research Area and Innovation. The overall objective of the conference is to learn from ongoing efforts and practices as a way of shaping future research and innovation policy in Europe. Also in attendance will be Carlos Moedas, Commission for Research, Science and Innovation.



Open Science

As a way of improving access to the results of research activities for the benefit of broader society, the European Commission champions an [open science](#) approach. In particular, the Commission supports open access practices (i.e. publication of articles in open source journals) to improve knowledge circulation and, thus, innovation. This support is most clearly reflected in the “Science with and for Society” work programme, which is part of Horizon 2020.

At the conference, open science will be directly addressed in light of ‘[Science 2.0: Science in Transition](#)’, a consultation to take place with researchers and representatives from academia, research organisations and publishing. This consultation is based on a survey conducted from July to September 2014. Science 2.0 will focus on the ongoing evolution in standard practices surrounding the conducting of research and organising science. The consultation seeks to better understand the potential the evolution in research and science organisation brought about by digital technological advances and the globalisation of the scientific community has to offer Europe.

European Research Area

During the conference, the topic of the European Research Area will be engaged through discussion of the progress made towards its completion and the soon to be published ERA Roadmap 2015-2020. This Roadmap, set for public release in 2015 will guide Member States in implementing ERA at the national level.

Innovation

Innovation as a topic will be covered through discussion of the Innovation Union, with a particular focus on citizen innovation, which will look at and seek to understand how people solve problems on their own and the valuable innovation that results from these behaviours. This will be followed by an exchange on improving the research and innovation (R&I) ecosystem within Europe. And finally, funding for innovation and its practitioners will be reviewed.

For more information, including schedule, list of speakers and to register, please click on the link [here](#).



1.3 ERA-NETs and Innovation

What is an ERA-NET?

ERA-NETs are policy instruments of the European Commission designed to strengthen and develop the coordination and networking of national and regional research and innovation programmes of European Union Member States and Associated Countries and Third Country partners. Such schemes, as they are formally referred to, have been in place since the Sixth Research Framework Programme in an ever-evolving form.¹ ERA-NETs appear in two main forms: thematic and INCO ERA-NETs.²

INCO ERA-NETs are a special form of ERA-NET to the extent that the international cooperation fostered occurs primarily between Member States and Third Country partners.

These cooperations aim to accomplish the objectives of:

1. Enabling national systems to tackle and take on tasks and challenges they normally would not be able to do independently, collectively;
2. Overcoming the fragmented nature of national research programmes, by improving the coherence and coordination of European research programmes

Furthermore, through their implementation, ERA-NETs directly contribute to the construction and further realisation of the European Research Area.

ERA-NETs in Action—India and the case of INNO INDIGO

INNO INDIGO is a horizontal ERA-NET with India and the successor project of New INDIGO (2009-2013), which successfully implemented schemes for EU-India transnational calls for proposals (New INDIGO Partnership Programme). Calls within the project have developed from simple networking and mobility funding, to those focused on the funding of research projects open to small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) involvement. Through these activities, EU-India STI cooperation has developed a well working process through the regular publication of joint transnational calls. The applied call mechanisms prove to be applicable even with changing funding partners, thematic scopes, funding amounts and funding instruments.

¹ Although ERA-NET schemes are currently part of Horizon 2020, they will not be renewed beyond their current runtimes.

² INCO refers to “international cooperation”.



The main objectives of the project include:

- Involvement of SMEs/Industries as well as Clusters/Networks of Excellence/Competence
- Supporting “innovation” as a task mainly assisted by the “regions” in Europe and India and addressing regions as funding partners
- Motivating funding organizations in Europe and India to participate in joint calls for proposals
- Becoming a common platform for European and Indian funding organisations to finance jointly research and innovation, especially for EU countries that do not have bilateral programmes with India and develop visions on new forms of collaboration
- Translating political decisions from different sources (EU MS, India Government, Regions, SME-Associations, SFIC and the GSO³) into practical and tangible funding mechanisms.

Within the lifetime of INNO INDIGO, the implementation of three calls for proposals will take place. Beyond the preparation and implementation of joint calls, a central aim of the project is the outreach of INNO INDIGO and facilitate the networking of funding organizations in Europe and India.

INNO INDIGO offers opportunities for interested funding organisations to participate in all steps taken towards the implementation and management of EU-India transnational calls. Experiences from the past five years are used to further enhance EU-India cooperation, as well as to support and further develop bilateral as well as multilateral activities. Additionally, various new elements are addressed in the INNO INDIGO (e.g. how to bring ideas to market, how to support young researchers, how to develop new forms of collaboration etc.). Furthermore, INNO INDIGO also considers input from other relevant sources like the Indian government, the European Commission or European Union Member States and Associated Countries (also in the context of the GSO).

As the various approaches of joint funding utilised prove, new EU-India funding mechanisms are technically feasible, attractive, add value to the collaboration and their results are positive. The next step is to increase the relevance of the mechanisms to create higher impact and outreach aimed at the development of a persistent, non-project-based institutional implementation.

³ GSO stands for “Group of Senior Officials”, which is comprised of members from EU Member States and Indian ministries. For more information please see [here](#).



2 Highlights of EURAXESS Links

2.1 Charter and Code Anniversary celebration on 3 March

On 3 March 2015 the EURAXESS initiative celebrated a major milestone. Ten years earlier, the European Commission introduced the Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers as a way to ensure good working conditions for researcher and their employers in Europe.

During the event, 206 deans and rectors of universities throughout Europe, which have adopted the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers, received special acknowledgement in the form of the “HR Excellence in Research Award” from the European Commission. Below are some images commemorating the event:

An up-close image of the HR Excellence in Research Awards handed out during the anniversary ceremony





A proud recipient of one of this year's awards from Laboratório Nacional de Energia e Geologia, Portugal



Former RTD Commissioners Janez Potocnik (left), Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation Carlos Moedas (center) and Philippe Busquin (right) speaking at the Code & Charter 10th anniversary celebration



New from China Events:

EURAXESS Links China: Researchers' Night 5.0: LIGHT

On Thursday 9 April 2015 in House Café in Haidian District, around sixty researchers from Europe, China and beyond gathered together to network and make new contacts in a regular outlet for the Beijing international research community.

This time, we chose to align the evening with *The International Year of Light*. The global UN initiative has been chosen as a theme thanks to its interdisciplinary nature, cutting across all research disciplines.



"Light has revolutionized medicine, opened up international communication via the Internet, and continues to be central to linking cultural, economic and political aspects of the global society. IYL 2015 programmes will promote improved public and political understanding of the central role of light in the modern world."⁴

After a short introduction of EURAXESS and invitations to future events, we had the chance to hear three outstanding speakers introducing "LIGHT" from various points of view.

Professor Richard de Grijs from Kavli Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics at Peking University first enchanted the audience with a captivating presentation outlining the purpose of this UN initiative. He introduced why the theme is relevant in all disciplines including social science, humanities, arts and culture.



Engaged and happy attendees at House Café taking advantage of the networking opportunities provided by the Researchers' Night event.

The next presentation by Mr Koen Schamp from P&G Innovation Center in Beijing, titled "Shining Light on Our Laundry" presented us light from the chemistry side of laundry detergents, and how important the notion of white and bright clothes plays in our lives, across different cultures.

Last presentation by Dr Jianrong Deng from National Astronomical Observatories touched upon the topic of detecting cosmic rays. Through her work, Dr Deng seeks for signatures of new physics beyond the standard models, such as new particles, new interactions and new dimensions.

If you want to help her discover answers to some fundamental questions of Nature, such as the origin of cosmic rays, the nature of dark matter, new natural symmetries, and possible extra dimensions of space-time, go and download the CRAYFIS app that helps you detect cosmic rays on your phone.

⁴ <http://www.light2015.org/Home.html>



Professor Richard de Grijs
(below)

To measure cosmic rays we need huge equipment that can measure the small particle over wide geographical area. These rays are basically light and the cameras in our smartphones are essentially just light sensors. The CRAYFIS team got the ingenious idea to crowdsource the data collection by utilizing our smartphones. By downloading their app you are effectively participating in creating the biggest COSMIC ray sensor in the world. The app only runs in the background when the phone is plugged in and isn't being used. Just join at <http://crayfis.io/>.

Afterwards, guests could enjoy plentiful food and drinks prepared by the House Café personnel - and we were chatting and exchanging information and experience until late evening hours.

The Researchers' Nights are jointly organized by EURAXESS, ThinkIN China, Understanding Science. The free events are open to PhD students, post-docs and senior researchers from Europe, from China and beyond. We hope to help bring Beijing's researchers from Europe and China together, and help them develop new contacts, networks, and collaborations.



3 Forthcoming EURAXESS Links Events and Activities

Country/ Hub	Title of Event/Activity	Date/Venue	Audience	Objectives	Link to the Event
ASEAN	“Advancing your Research Career in Europe: Funding and Fellowship Opportunities for Researchers in Southeast Asia.”	22-23 June 2015 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Researchers and research administrators	To provide detailed information to researchers in Southeast Asia on European funding and fellowship opportunities. Ten European funding agencies will participate.	
ASEAN	“Inauguration of Mobility Ambassadors for Southeast Asia.”	24 June 2015 Bangkok, Thailand	Marie Curie Alumni	To establish a Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA) Southeast Asia Chapter	
ASEAN	“Advancing your Research Career in Europe: Funding and Fellowship Opportunities for Researchers in Southeast Asia.”	TBA	Researchers and research administrators	To provide detailed information to researchers in Southeast Asia on European funding and fellowship opportunities. Ten European funding agencies will participate.	
Brazil	Workshop on scientific communication	27 May (TBC) São Paulo	Researchers, science communicators, journalists,	Launch of submission period for EURAXESS Science Slam 2015	
Brazil	Tour of Brazil organized by the EU Delegation and Member States	28 May 2015 Manaus (AM) Other dates and cities TBD	EU and local researchers, students, local stakeholders such as local funding agencies, universities	Enlarge the scope of existing cooperation and open new cooperation avenues in the context of Horizon 2020, with a focus on Brazilian States which normally are not	



				visited	
China	2015 Research and Innovation Tour: Where Europe and China Connect –in Urumqi	9 June Urumqi (TBC)	Researchers, academics, and related professionals from local universities and research centres		
China	2015 Research and Innovation Tour: Where Europe and China Connect –in Chengdu and Chongqing	7-8 July Chengdu and Chongqing (venue TBC)	Researchers, academics, and related professionals from local universities and research centres		
India	EURAXESS Science Slam India 2015 – <i>Pre-selection</i>	Online video submission period: mid-June to mid-September 2015	Researchers from all disciplines and all nationalities based in India	To provide a platform for researchers based in India to showcase their innovative ideas and science communication skills	Link
Japan	EURAXESS Links Japan Tour 2015: Hokkaido University stage	25 May 2015 Sapporo	Students, Researchers, Managers, Administrators	Information on European programmes, mobility opportunities, feedback from mobile researchers/ networking	
North America	2015 CONGRESS of Humanities and Social Sciences	30 May-5 June 2015 Ottawa, ON, CANADA	Researchers from the field of social sciences and humanities	Mini-Destination Europe event and a joint booth with the ERA-Can+ project partners	Link to the conference