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**EURAXESS members in focus: France – A decade of change**

**With a total of 63 Nobel prizes and 16 Field medals, France is a country recognised for the excellence of its scientific research. Among the most recent winners are Esther Duflo (Economy) in 2019, Gérard Mourou (Physics) in 2018 and Jean-Pierre Sauvage (Chemistry) in 2016.**

France ranks sixth for its world share of scientific publications and fourth in the European patent system. It is very active in the fields of transport technologies, other special machines, mechanical components, chemistry, as well as nuclear technology and space research. It is also the third beneficiary country of the contributions allocated by the European Commission through the Horizon 2020 framework programme for research and innovation.

**Research and Development in France**

In France, it is the [Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI)](https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/), which designs, develops and implements the national research and innovation agenda.

To meet scientific, technological, environmental and societal challenges, a national research strategy has been in place since 2013, which is in keeping with European orientations on these issues. This strategy is revised every five years under the guidance of the minister in charge of research and innovation. Its aim is to maintain a high-level commitmment to basic, curiosity-driven research while establishing a level playing field for other stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, such as the industrial sector and businesses, civil society and lawmakers.

A large part of French public research is carried out in higher education institutions. Its organisation relies principally on a two-tier system with universities on one side and national research organisations on the other. Collaboration between the two kinds of entities is achieved in so-called ‘mixed research’ units (UMR), i.e. laboratories whose management and monitoring is shared by one or more organisations and/or universities.

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| **Capital**Paris **Major cities**Bordeaux, Grenoble, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Montpellier, Nantes, Nice, Rennes, Strasbourg, Toulouse **Language**Français **Political system**Republic **Currency**Euro **Area**244,340 sq mi (632 834 km2), 213,010 sq mi (551 695 km2) of which are considered metropolitan France**Promotional page about France:** <https://www.france.fr/en> **EURAXESS France** <https://www.euraxess.fr/> **CPU**<http://www.cpu.fr/presentation/presentation-of-the-cpu/>  |

Research is also largely carried out in private companies. Out of the 300,000 researchers in France, 62% are employed in firms. The sectors employing the most researchers are: IT, the automobile industry, aeronautics and space technology as well as publishing, audiovisual and broadcasting. Domestic spending on research and development in France amounted to € 50.6 billion in 2017. This represents 2.21% of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP), placing France in 5th place among all OECD countries.

**Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

Over the past decade, higher education and research insitutions have expanded on programmes to encourage entrepreneurship stemming from public research and innovation. A large number of measures and incentives have been set up, in particular through the Investments for the Future Programme (PIA). With €57 billion at its disposal, the programme is designed to help France face the challenges of tomorrow (competitiveness, environment, health, etc.) and to increase its growth potential by investing in higher education and training, research, industry and SMEs, sustainable development and digitisation.

For more information, please visit <https://nest-com.com/comprendre-lecosysteme-de-linnovation-france/>.

**Funding and Recruitment Opportunities**

Research funding

Block funding to research laboratories is jointly allocated from universities and public research organisations while project-based research is mostly funded through independent agencies, such as the National Research Agency (ANR). The ANR supports research projects selected after a peer-reviewed competitive process. In 2018, 1,471 projects were funded at an average of €350,000 per project.

As to private research, it is first and foremost funded by *Bpifrance*, a public investment bank supporting state and regional policy aimed at developing and strenghtening the R&D actions carried out by SMEs.

Two more mechanisms specifically targeted at research and innovation include:

* CIFRE contracts which allow a company to benefit from financial aid in order to hire a doctoral student in a company for a three-year contract.
* The research tax credit, which enables companies to be refunded to up of 60% of their initial investments, specifically if they hire early career researchers.

Recruitment opportunities

Several specialised sources can help researchers identify research jobs and research scholarships for their stay in France:

* [EURAXESS Jobs](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/jobs/index), the European Portal, (click on France)
* [ABG (L’Intelli’Agence)](https://www.abg.asso.fr/en/)
* [Campus France grant search engine](http://campusbourses.campusfrance.org/fria/bourse/#/catalog?lang=fr), listing all the grants and scholarship programmes available from national institutions, local governments, corporations, foundations and institutions of higher education

**Important Information for Incoming Researchers**

The 42 EURAXESS Centres, coordinated by the Conference of University Presidents (CPU), involve about 130 people working on a daily basis in their universities or research organisations in order to help international researchers coming to France and support them during their stay, and after.

In particular, they offer free and personalised assistance to them and their families in order to:

* **Prepare their stay:** assistance on entry, residence and work procedures (visas, work permits, residency permits...)
* **Help them settle in France**: assistance in finding accommodation, healthcare coverage, bank account...
* **Help them with daily administrative procedures:** registering for social security, family benefits, taxes, pensions...
* **Facilitate integration:** French language classes, cultural activities, sports, babysitting and schooling...

More than 60,000 researchers from some 144 different countries have already benefited from the services of the EURAXESS France network.

EURAXESS Centres are distributed across the whole French territory: find your nearest[**EURAXESS Centre**](https://www.euraxess.fr/information/centres/search/country/france-1104) **here.**

**EU Council Presidency**

France will be holding the EU Council presidency from January to June 2022.

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EURAXESS – *Researchers in Motion* is an initiative of the European Research Area (ERA) that addresses barriers to researchers mobility and seeks to enhance their career development. This pan-European effort is currently supported by 42 countries, each of which will be profiled in our quarterly e-newsletters.