

EURAXESS NORTH AMERICA

Contents

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1 EURAXESS Country in Focus: THE CZECH REPUBLIC - Land of extraordinary possibilities



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1.1 Innovation Past and Future

2% of GDP is spent on R&D, which is the most in CEE region, increasing every year

R&D personnel amounts to 12,8 per 1000 FTEs (full time equivalents)

0,77% of the world's scientific papers are written in the Czech Republic (for about 0,14% of the world's population)

From the country that introduced the soft contact lens to the world and successfully developed the compounds on which current anti-AIDS drugs are based, Czech companies have already left a large footprint on ground-breaking technologies in the areas of hologram production, nanofibres, speech recognition, hyaluronic acid, cybernetics, stem-cell research and astrophysics, as the Czech Republic has with one of the densest concentrations of astronomical observatories in the world. Building on this outstanding background, Czech R&D is moving ahead rapidly, with a large increase in the number of innovative local companies matched by unprecedented growth in the number of international companies engaging in technology-intensive R&D activities here.

1.2 Smart Support of Smart Projects

The innovation environment of the Czech Republic is further enhanced by the Czech government and EU support. In 2004 the country became a member of the European Union, which spurred a fundamental increase of support for science and research. Along with its access to EU Structural Funds, the country has been able to surpass the EU average investment in R&D, reaching 2% of GDP in 2014. Comprehensive national policies are another key element of the country's excellent R&D environment. The National Research, Development and Innovation Policy of the Czech Republic 2016-2020 shall ensure the competitiveness of the Czech economy in conjunction with other strategies such as the Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation. The Key



Enabling Technologies (advanced materials, nanotechnology, micro- and nano-electronics, photonics, advanced manufacturing technologies and industrial biotechnology) identified in the strategy are not the only strength of the Czech Republic, as start-ups are springing up across various sectors. The country is also keeping up with the latest trends, such as the Industry 4.0 concept, which is expected to encompass the upcoming economic transformation towards cyber-physical production systems.

1.3 Skilled and Educated People

The Czech Republic is home to some of Europe's oldest and largest technical universities, such as the Czech Technical University in Prague, which dates back to 1707 and currently has nearly 21,000 students. At 93%, the Czech Republic has the second largest proportion of adults completing at least upper secondary education in the OECD (OECD, 2015). The ability to draw extensive aid from European Union Structural Funds for the period 2014 to 2020 for the purpose of fostering R&D and enhancing the country's R&D infrastructure will help to ensure that the Czech Republic remains in the vanguard of skills provision.

1.4 R&D Funding in the Czech Republic



- **Czech Science Foundation** (www.gacr.cz)
 - o Support for fundamental research
- **Technology Agency of the Czech Republic** (www.tacr.cz)
 - o Support for applied research and experimental development

1.5 Research Excellence in the Czech Republic

New European Centres of Excellence focus mainly on international collaboration and contribution to applied results. You can find some examples below:



- **The Central European Institute of Technology (CEITEC)** is a multidisciplinary science centre focused on life sciences and advanced materials and technologies whose aim is to establish itself as a recognised centre for basic as well as applied research (www.ceitec.cz).
- **Extreme Light Infrastructure (ELI)** is part of a new generation of large European research facilities with the main goal of creating laser equipment with unique parameters (www.eli-beams.eu)
- **CzechGlobe - Global Change Research Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences** is a public research institution and European Centre of Excellence investigating the ongoing global climate change and its impact on the atmosphere, biosphere and human society through the use of the latest techniques and instrumentation (www.czechglobe.cz).



IT4Innovations
national
supercomputing
center

- The IT4Innovations national supercomputing center conducts research and provides state-of-the-art technologies and services in the fields of high performance computing and embedded systems (<http://www.it4i.cz>).

1.6 Where can I find out more?

Czechinvest



The Investment and Business Development Agency CzechInvest is here to advise and help all foreign partners looking for cooperation in R&D and offers a concise overview of the Czech R&D landscape via its website. <http://www.czech-research.com/>

Government Office for Science, Research and Innovation

The main objectives of the Section are as follows: science policy unification; setting up of the rules for transparent funding of institutions engaged in science, research and innovations; identification and support of excellence in science and the expansion of international scientific cooperation. <http://www.vyzkum.cz/>

The Czech Academy of Sciences

The Czech Academy of Sciences (the CAS) is set up as a complex of 54 public research institutions. The Academy employs over 8,000 employees, more than a half of whom are researchers with university degrees. <http://www.avcr.cz/en/>

EURAXESS Czech Republic

EURAXESS Czech Republic provides information and assistance to researchers who are coming to work in the Czech Republic. EURAXESS helps researchers and their families to plan and organize their move to a foreign country, providing assistance in all matters related to mobility. www.euraxess.cz

1.7 Cooperation with the United States

The Czech Republic is a partner country in the National Science Foundation Programme PIRE (Partnerships for International Research and Education) – the partner institutions in the Czech Republic are Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TA CR) and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Governments of both countries also cooperate on research of advanced nuclear reactors (molten salt technology).



2 European Scientific Diasporas in North America series

Hellenic Bioscientific Association of the USA – HBA of USA

There is a large number of Greek scientists in the USA working in the field of Biomedical sciences, and many of them play a key role in the development of the field. At the same time a large number of Greek scientists and aspiring students in Greek Universities seek avenues of collaboration with foreign institutions to further their research and career. The interactions between these parties is essential to enable, initiate, grow and flourish collaboration that cannot only lead to discoveries but also help both sides to develop their vision. Collaboration and scientific outreach is also imperative for the success of the Greek institutions. Our association aspires to provide a platform for systematic development and support of these with the aim to foster innovation and discovery that tends to go hand-in-hand with the economic recovery and development.

The HBA-USA was created in 2005 as an initiative of bioscientists in Boston with the goal to promote and facilitate interactions between scientists of Hellenic origin in the USA and in Greece. These efforts resulted in the establishment of the Scientific Teaching Exchange Program and numerous events and activities to connect the vibrant scientific community, which currently has more than 450 members across the United States.

Through the HBA-USA, the board members hope to bring the two sides in contact, to spark and initiate long-term collaboration and exchange programs. The association's mission is to enable and facilitate interactions among Greek biomedical scientists between Greece and the USA through four main avenues:

1. **Science Teaching Exchange Program (STEP):** Professors from US institutions visit Greek universities for a lecture and one-on-one discussion with graduate students, giving feedback on their research, guidance to their experiments and even the possibility to visit a US lab to execute part of their work.
2. **Mentorship Program:** The program aims to build a strong, sustainable network where distinguished Greek or Greek-American scientists and entrepreneurs of the USA will mentor young Greek or Greek-American students and scientists in the field of biomedical sciences. The program is designed to help students and young scientists in Greece or the USA to find a mentor in the USA who could guide them and help them with important career decisions. The mentors of the program are established scientists in different biomedical fields or medical doctors, and they currently work in either academia or industry.
3. **Scholarship Program:** The program intends to recognize and support biomedical scientists of Greek origin during their transition from the undergraduate studies to graduate school in an institution at the USA.



Given to students of Greek universities to come and preform part of their research or continue their academic career in US institutions.

4. **Symposia, Meetings and Events:** Symposia, local meetings, panel discussions and career events are held throughout the year where Greek biomedical scientists can meet, get informed, discuss and network. Through these interactions we broaden our reach, enlarge our network and assist our members to find new paths of collaborations.



The invited speakers and moderators of the Career Event held at the Embassy of Greece in Washington DC on 8 December 2016. The speakers discussed and shared their experiences about traditional and non-traditional career pathways in the biomedical field.



Presentation of the HBA-USA and panel discussion held at the Embassy of Greece in Washington DC in November 2015. All participants agreed on the importance of establishing a mentoring program from established Greek scholars to support Greek students and young professionals. As a result, the HBA-USA Mentoring program has been developed and launched the following year.

The HBA-USA newsletter is issued quarterly per year to update its members on events held by the association, on career and grant opportunities and on news coming from prominent Greek and Greek American bioscientists.

The HBA-USA board is happy to answer any questions and discuss possibilities for collaboration. You can visit the updated website at <http://www.hbausa.com>



Martine Reicherts began her career as a lawyer in Luxembourg. She joined the European institutions in 1984 and has worked in a wide range of senior positions, mainly within the European Commission – the executive branch of the EU.

In September 2015, Martine was appointed Director-General at EAC, overseeing the Commission's policies in education, culture, youth, languages, and sport. She is responsible for strategic management of various flagship European programmes, including Erasmus+, Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions and Creative Europe, which together have a total annual budget of some €3.5 billion.

3 Meet Martine Reicherts, Director-General DG Education and Culture, European Commission | On Erasmus+ and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

Directorate-General Education and Culture (EAC) plays a key role in putting European Union (EU) policy into practice, contributing in particular to developing a knowledge-based Europe and reconciling a competitive economy with an inclusive society. EAC uses EU flagship programmes, particularly Erasmus+ and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA), to foster equity and excellence in education, cross-border cooperation and cross-fertilisation between education, research and innovation. Mobility of individuals is a key component.

Q: What does the Directorate General Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission have to offer researchers and HEIs outside Europe?

A: Erasmus+ has four main actions offering opportunities for students, researchers and university staff. They are fully funded by the EU and provide good conditions for those selected.

'International credit mobility' allows higher education institutions (HEIs) to develop partnerships for mobility of students, researchers and staff between 'Programme' and 'Partner' countries. The Programme countries are the 28 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; all other countries are Partner countries. The mobility project is on the basis of bilateral agreements setting out the mobility flows between the HEIs involved.

[Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees \(EMJMD\)](#) are high-quality and highly integrated international Master degree programmes, with EU-funded scholarships attracting the brightest students worldwide. Three Programme country HEIs must be involved but there are also opportunities for HEIs from any country to join consortia offering EMJMDs.

Cooperation projects allow for [capacity-building in higher education](#), meaning EU-funded support to modernise and reform higher education institutions and systems in eligible Partner countries. High income and industrialised countries (such as Japan, Singapore, the USA or Canada) are not eligible for this action.

[Jean Monnet activities](#) develop excellence in teaching and research in EU or European integration studies worldwide. This may be of particular interest to EURAXESS Worldwide readers as a special budget is earmarked this year for applicants from a small number of countries including India and Japan.



[Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions \(MSCA\)](#) focus on research excellence, starting with doctoral training but including individual projects for experienced researchers. The programme supports research projects which implement the triple "I" dimension (International, Inter-sectorial and Inter-disciplinary). It covers all disciplines and is also open to non-academic partners, such as industry, libraries, hospitals, etc. Within Horizon 2020 (2014-2020), MSCA will support 65,000 researchers including 25,000 doctoral candidates.

Calendar of open actions:



[Erasmus+](#)

International Credit Mobility

Closes: 2 February 2017 at 12:00 Brussels time (for projects starting on 1 June 2017)

Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

Closes: 16 February 2017 at 12:00 Brussels time (for projects starting between August and October 2017)

Capacity Building in Higher Education

Closes: 9 February 2017 at 12:00 Brussels time (for projects starting in October 2017)

Jean Monnet activities

Closes: 23 February 2017 at 12:00 Brussels time (for projects starting on 1 September 2017)

How does DG EAC promote European integration studies and research abroad?

DG EAC promotes European integration studies and research worldwide through '[Jean Monnet activities](#),' part of the Erasmus+ programme. Jean Monnet activities also foster dialogue between the academic world and policy-makers. Professors in subject areas related to the European integration process (typically law, economics, social sciences, international relations, or history, but also less traditional areas such as medicine or hard sciences) can apply for a Jean Monnet grant to support specific activities.

The EU relies on webinars, mass and social media, conferences, workshops and fairs to reach out to target audiences but word of mouth is equally important. A researcher or academic explaining to colleagues and peers how to apply, what the scope for activities is and what benefits these can bring in terms both of funding and visibility, can be a great ambassador for us.

In some non-European countries, HEIs cannot (legally speaking) setup courses or programmes with more than one other HEI. Therefore JMDs are quite difficult to setup since they require two or more European HEIs at least. But there is an alternative to that through the use of the bilateral action International Credit Mobility under Erasmus+. Could you tell us more about how it works, and what are its main specificities?

We are very aware that different countries have different approaches and different traditions but what we want to see overall is an ever-closer recognition of diplomas and credits for periods of study spent abroad. In the case of the Erasmus Mundus joint degrees, our basic rules are based on the higher degree of academic cooperation existing in Europe, where we have close links between HEIs and a 'European Higher Education Area' which provide comparable learning outcomes and academic certificates. If the legal structure in a non-European Partner Country does not allow its HEIs to join EMJMD consortia, it is possible to use the 'international credit mobility' route to establish cooperation and mobility flows with the Erasmus+ Programme Countries. For students, this can mean periods of study of 3-12 months in Europe which must be recognised as part of their home degree programmes – we are talking about any level of study here, undergraduate, graduate or even doctoral, and there are opportunities for staff including postdocs to spend 1 week to 2 months in a partner HEI. The arrangements are made between the HEIs but there is almost limitless scope.



Calendar of open actions:



[Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions](#)

Innovative Training networks

Closes 10 January 2017

Individual Fellowships

Opens 11 April 2017; closes
14 September 2017

*Research and Innovation
Staff Exchange*

Closes 05 April 2017

COFUND

Opens 05 April 2017; closes
28 September 2017

Participation of women in Erasmus+ and MSCA actions: Which percentage of the total Erasmus Mundus grantees and Marie Curie Actions (2007-2013) are female? What is DG EAC doing to attract promising female students and researchers?

We do not set quotas but we do encourage consortia selecting students for scholarships to take gender and geographical balance into consideration and Erasmus+ also makes special provision for certain disadvantaged groups so that access reaches beyond the privileged few. Just to give one indication, last year there were 1347 Master students selected from over 24,250 applications. 673 of these were men, 674 were women, although there were actually more than 14,250 male applicants and only 10,000 female. In MSCA, the share of female researchers is just under 40%, which is relatively good, taking into account that women account for just 33% of the research population in Europe.

Do you have any tips for potential Higher Education Institutions in EURAXESS Worldwide countries wanting to apply for an Erasmus+, Jean Monnet or a MSCA call? Where can they look for European partners?

Yes. I would say that there is real competition for Erasmus+ funding because it achieves what it sets out to do: develop innovative approaches and support modernisation and internationalisation of higher education, and support the best students, researchers and staff worldwide. But the EURAXESS Worldwide countries are the ones with highly developed HEIs and highly qualified researchers, meaning both Europe and our Partner Countries can benefit from the contacts. Putting together a good proposal takes time and effort but success is not only its own reward, it is a well-funded step ahead in this interconnected and fast-changing world. European partners are also looking for opportunities to develop cooperation and close partnerships, whether through personal contacts made at seminars or conferences or previous joint activities, including via EURAXESS and the Participant Portal. These days, higher education and research are serious businesses: they are our future and that of all our young people and creative minds. And so, supported by our EU programmes, they deserve all the time and effort we can make together.

Thank You Director-General Martine Reicherts and

Congratulations for Marie Curie's – now renamed Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions' (MSCA) [20th Anniversary!](#)



4 In case you missed it....

4.1 Event Outlook

Event	When	Where	Organized by	Link
American Society for Microbiology Biothreats Conference	6-8 February 2017	Marriott Hotel, Washington, DC, USA	American Society for Microbiology	Link
AAAS 2017 Annual Meeting	16-20 February 2017	Boston, MA, USA	American Association for the Advancement of Science	Link
European Research Council's 10 th Anniversary Information Session	21 February 2017	Washington, DC, USA	Spanish Scientists in the USA & EURAXESS North America	
MIT European Career Fair 2017	25 February 2017	Cambridge, MA, USA	MIT European Club	Link

About EURAXESS North America

EURAXESS North America is a network of thousands of European and non-European researchers, scientists, and scholars throughout North America (USA and Canada). This multidisciplinary network includes members at all stages of their careers. It allows them to connect with each other and with Europe, ensuring that they are recognized as an important resource for European research, whether they remain in North America or return to Europe.

For further information about EURAXESS North America, please visit: <http://northamerica.euraxess.org>.

To sign up for membership in our network, please go to our [website](#) and click on *Sign up and become a member for free* button. Membership is free!

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