

EURAXESS Korea
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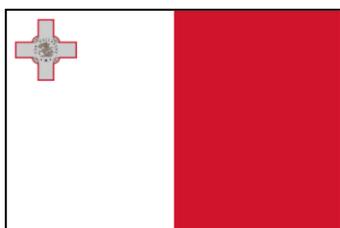
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EURAXESS –
Researchers in Motion
is an initiative of the European
Research Area (ERA) that
addresses barriers to the
mobility of researchers and
seeks to enhance their career
development.

This pan-European effort is
currently supported by over 40
countries, of which we will
profile one in each of our
quarterly EURAXESS Korea
newsletters. In this edition, we
will zoom in on Malta

EURAXESS Members in Focus: Malta



[Research and Innovation
Landscape of Malta](#)

[VIDEO]



Malta at a glance

The Republic of Malta is an island country situated right in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea, yet close to the European mainland. With its rich history, dating back to 5,000 BCE, Malta is often referred to as an open-air museum. Along with its history and heritage, Malta offers 300 days of sunshine, sea-sculpted shores, azure waters and delicious Mediterranean cuisine. The island's lifestyle is modern and welcoming, providing a good base for families. Malta has excellent local and international public and private education, with all schools teaching in English. English is one of the two official languages, along with Maltese.

Malta is considered as one of the safest countries in the world, especially when it comes to natural disasters and crime according to the 2018 edition of the World Risk Report.

In recent years, Malta has experienced above average economic growth and has been ranked as the fastest growing economy in the Eurozone for the first half of 2018.

With efficient support features in place, the island is also an attractive place for business. The government understands that a healthy private sector and an overall pro-investment climate contribute to the country's sustainable development.

Moreover, Malta is on its route to becoming a leading innovation island. It has made important strides in key technological areas by establishing the first regulatory framework for Block Chain, Cryptocurrency and Distributed Ledger Technology.

EURAXESS Malta has produced a video that gives a brief overview of the Maltese science, technology and innovation landscape.

Watch the video [here](#).

Maltese Policy, Strategy and Funding opportunities

The [Malta Council for Science and Technology](#) (MCST) is the governmental body responsible for Research and Innovation (R&I), space, science and technology in Malta. MCST is responsible for the [National R&I Strategy](#), the [National Action Plan](#) and the [National Space Policy](#).

Being the official contact point for the EU Framework programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020) and the PRIMA initiative, MCST is also the managing body of the national funds for research, namely the FUSION programme and the Space Research Fund. MCST has a team of National Contact Points ready to assist you in finding relevant partners, applying for funding or resolving your project related queries.

MCST regularly publishes calls for proposals under various funding mechanisms, some of which are highlighted below:

[FUSION](#), a National Funding Programme, is supported through Malta Government funds and managed by the Malta Council for Science and Technology. The main objectives of FUSION are: to raise the level and profile of locally funded research; to ingrain research and innovation at the heart of the Maltese economy; to spur knowledge-driven and value-added growth and to sustain improvements in the quality of life.

[IPAS+](#) provides researchers with two options:

- Option A aims to foster mutually beneficial international relationships between local R&I-performing academic or private entities and foreign counterparts.
- Option B provides opportunities for Maltese entities intending to submit a Horizon 2020 (H2020) proposal as the coordinator of a consortium to engage a service provider (local or foreign) who will be supporting the applicant through proposal writing and submission.

The [Space Research Fund](#) provides financial support for research, development and innovation in the downstream Satellite Earth Observation (EO) sector, specifically projects that deal with the processing and exploitation of data collected through EO satellites.

Malta's research landscape



The [University of Malta](#) (UM) is the highest teaching and research institution in Malta and was founded in 1769. It is a publicly funded institution and caters for 11,000 students which include over 1,000 international students from 92 different countries and comprises over 1,000 academics, and approximately 800 technical and administrative staff. The UM is made up of 14 Faculties and a number of interdisciplinary Institutes, Centres and Schools. The UM is actively participating in MSCA projects and proposals.

The [Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology](#) (MCAST) is a vocational education and training institution. Established in 2001, MCAST offers 180 full-time and over 300 part-time vocational courses ranging from certificates to Master degrees.

[Malta Enterprise](#) is the country's economic development agency, tasked with attracting new foreign direct investment as well as facilitating the growth of existing operations. The agency has developed various R&I incentives for the promotion and expansion of industry and the development of innovative enterprises.

The [Malta Life Sciences Park](#) (MLSP) provides an international class facility for life sciences and information technology development. The MLSP is designed to promote research and development and to spur the growth of the life sciences sector in Malta, building on the base that the country developed in the pharmaceutical industry during the last decade.

Based at the University of Malta, [TAKEOFF](#) is Malta's first technology business incubator. The programme is specifically designed to help innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs create successful science, technology, engineering, creative media and knowledge-based startup business – taking them from idea to investment and, well, to takeoff.

Malta is also home of a number of private companies which main core is research and development in various sectors.

Upcoming developments:

- Construction of new center of excellence for aircraft maintenance which will include ground breaking facilities.

EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion is an initiative of the European Research Area (ERA) that addresses barriers to the mobility of researchers and seeks to enhance their career development. This panEuropean effort is currently supported by over 40 countries, of which we will profile one in each edition of our quarterly e-newsletter.

- A state-of-the-art laboratory dedicated to medical cannabis research is being set up in Malta as a result of a memorandum of understanding between Malta Enterprise and the La Sapienza University of Rome.

EURAXESS in Malta – ready to support you!

[EURAXESS Malta](#) is hosted by the [Malta Council for Science and Technology](#) and is ready to assist you if you choose Malta as your host country or you would like to cooperate with Maltese researchers!

[PlumTri](#) acts as a platform that facilitates networking and knowledge sharing amongst stakeholders in the Mediterranean, involved in the spheres of research and innovation and serves as a 'one-stop-shop' for information on relevant funding opportunities and events in the EuroMed region.

Be part of Malta's Research and Innovation landscape!



Hot topic: European Research Council Grants & actions post 2020

Introduction to ERC grants

The **European Research Council (ERC)** is a funding organisation for frontier research. It aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by funding the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age, and supporting their innovative ideas. Researchers from anywhere in the world can apply for ERC grants provided the research they undertake will be carried out in an EU Member State or Associated Country. ERC grants are becoming more and more internationally recognised as awards for scientific excellence.

Research projects funded by the ERC can last up to five years and can cover frontier research in any scientific domain, including social sciences, humanities and interdisciplinary studies. The grants may help both emerging research leaders ('ERC Starting Grants' and 'ERC Consolidator Grants') and already well-established and recognised scientists ('ERC Advanced Grants' and 'ERC Synergy Grants'). Up to 50% of your time can be spent outside of Europe, for example in Korea, to work on the research project. In addition to the individual grant schemes, a collaborative (2-4 co-PIs) programme, called Synergy, rewards high level collaborative projects with up to €10 million funding for 6 year projects.

There is one call per year for each category. The upcoming deadlines are: 16 October 2019 (Starting Grants); 4 February 2020 (Consolidator Grants); 26 August 2020 (Advanced Grants). 5 November (Synergy Grants)

Further materials on ERC grants:

[Grants details, Possibilities from Korea, Tips & tricks for application, Interviews of grantees on EURAXESS website](#)
[Official ERC website](#)

How ERC Changed the European Funding Landscape

[excerpts from a speech given by the ERC President Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon at the Symposium of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm, Sweden]

First one must get a basic understanding on the European funding landscape itself, and how it compares to others. [...] The situation in Europe [is] like this: "Europe is a global scientific powerhouse. It has all the necessary ingredients to shape a prosperous and safe future: 1.8 million researchers working in thousands of universities and research centres as well as in world-leading manufacturing industries, a suite of increasingly inter-connected research infrastructures, a thriving ecosystem of small and



medium-sized enterprises and an increasing number of hotspots for start-ups. With just 7% of the world's population and 24% of global GDP, it produces around 30% of the world's scientific publications." [...] "But compared to other major economies, Europe suffers from a growth deficit which, together with the experience of uneven progress, fuels social disenchantment and political divisions across the continent. At the heart of Europe's slow growth lies its innovation deficit. Europe does not capitalise enough on the knowledge it has and produces." So here we have a straightforward statement of an old idea known as "The European Paradox".

[...] The European Union's answer to this situation has been the creation, more than 30 years ago, of the Framework Programme for Research and Development. The idea was that such a programme can address the fragmentation and lack of critical mass in Europe by setting up large-scale collaborative projects in priority areas. This effort has been ongoing since the 1980s. However, one can see that this type of funding does not address the structural weaknesses in the EU research system. Actually, after some time, this action reached its limit because of its somewhat artificial character and also of the clientele-prone aspect of the setting it created. This state of affairs triggered in 2000 the launch of the European Research Area (ERA) and the Lisbon Strategy, starting a period of reflection among the European scientific and policymaking communities on how to revise the strategy to best support research and innovation at EU level.

The emerging debate emphasised the central importance of basic research to the relative performance of the innovation systems of the US and Europe. The idea of a mechanism for funding basic research carried out by individual researchers at EU level therefore gradually gained traction. [...] One could arrive in 2007 at the creation of the European Research Council (ERC), the first simple science driven funding mechanism at EU level functioning in the least bureaucratic way. It was designed to raise the attractiveness of the European research system, give younger researchers room to develop their most ambitious projects and help Europe produce the very best cutting-edge science in new and rapidly emerging fields: [...]

- The ERC is having a visible impact through its strong benchmarking function, due to the fact that scientific quality is the only criteria for the selection of proposals;
- Since now researchers know that to get an ERC grant one has to come up with a truly exciting idea, this leads a number of them, in particular younger ones, to try and formulate what they really dream of working on;
- The ERC Scientific Council has constantly put considerable emphasis in building up the next generation of researchers by dedicating 2/3 of its resources to researchers in the early part of their career; putting trust in younger people;
- ERC panels take the ERC's aim for high risk/high gain research seriously, deciding often to support projects that may have been refused at national or regional levels as too risky;

- The ERC has convincingly shown that more space must be reserved to a bottom-up approach, so [...] that the next framework programme Horizon Europe is a priori built away from the silos;

[In conclusion] one can reliably claim that the ERC has had a major impact on the European funding landscape. And one of its actions has been to change the narrative of European research policy. It is now proven unjustified to decouple research and innovation and focus on only one aspect.

Impact of ERC-funded research confirmed by independent study

The European Research Council carries out annual analyses of finalised ERC projects, in order to monitor the impact of the research it supports. In the 2018 exercise, published today, a total of 225 ERC projects were evaluated by independent peer-review panels. 16% of projects were assessed as having made a scientific contribution, and 59% as major scientific advance. Taken together, 75% of the projects demonstrate the high potential of the curiosity-driven research funded by the European Research Council. The outcome is consistent with three previous studies, in which 72%, 73% and 79% of projects were evaluated as breakthrough or major advances.

To carry out this review, 25 peer-review panels evaluated 225 completed ERC projects funded under the European Union's 7th Framework Programme (FP7). The projects were randomly chosen from a pool of 631 projects completed two years prior to the study, in all three ERC scientific domains – Life Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities, and Physical Sciences and Engineering.

Read the full [study](#)

ERC plans for 2020: More than €2.2 billion for Europe's excellent researchers

The ERC is today announcing its biggest ever annual injection of funding in blue-sky research. €2.2 billion will be made available in 2020 to support some 1,100 top researchers. As in previous years, most of the funding (61%) is earmarked for early- to mid-career scientists and scholars. The funding will in also support jobs for an estimated 8,000 postdoctoral researchers, PhD students and other research staff employed in ERC-funded teams.

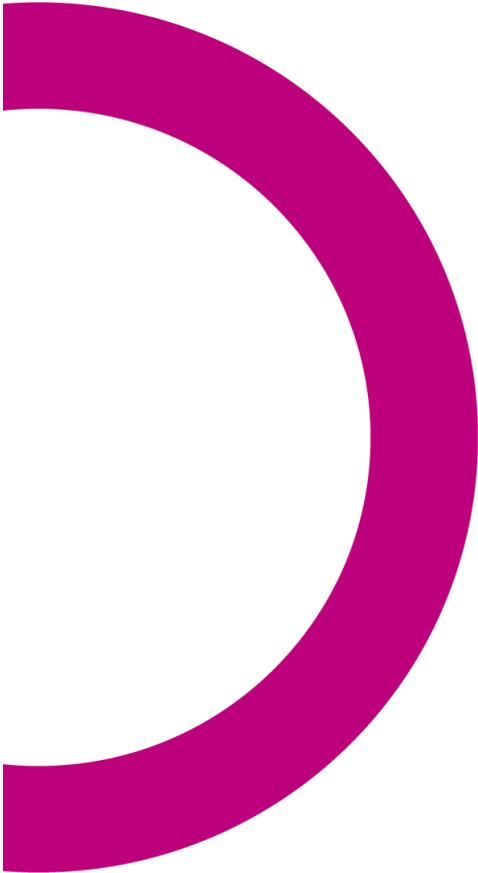
Besides adjustments to the recently re-introduced Synergy Grant, the ERC Scientific Council decided to align the ceilings of the amounts that applicants can request to cover extraordinary costs exceeding the normal grant ceilings of Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grants. Previously, Advanced Grant applicants could request up to €1 million in additional funding, while Starting and Consolidator Grant applicants could request up to €500 000 and €750 000 respectively. The ceiling is now €1 million for all

Source: [ERC](#)

For more information on the ERC, check its 2020 Work Programme:

[ERC 2020 WP:](#)

of the three grants, while it remains €4 million for Synergy Grant. This decision aims to better reflect the actual costs of doing research across scientific disciplines especially when it comes to major experimental and field work costs.



EU Insight – a glance at Horizon Europe

The European Commission has published its proposal for Horizon Europe, an ambitious €100 billion research and innovation programme that will succeed Horizon 2020. Set to launch in 2021, Horizon Europe will build on the achievements and success of Horizon 2020, bridging the past and the future of research and innovation in Europe.

The European Commission is proposing a total budget of €100 billion for 2021-2027 for Horizon Europe and the Euratom Research and Training Programme. The new Framework Programme is intended to be the most ambitious research and innovation funding programme to date, described by Commissioner Carlos Moedas as “the biggest increase in absolute amounts ever.”

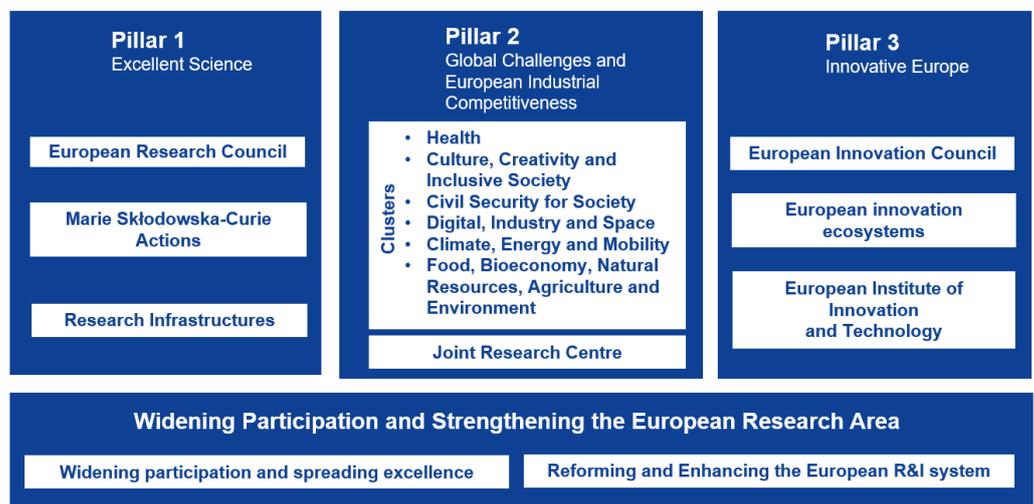
The continuity: three pillar structure

The Open Science pillar (€25.8 billion) supports frontier research projects defined and driven by researchers themselves through the European Research Council (€16.6 billion), funds fellowships and exchanges for researchers through Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (€6.8 billion), and invests in world-class research infrastructures.

The Global Challenges and Industrial Competiveness pillar (€52.7 billion) directly supports research relating to societal challenges, reinforces technological and industrial capacities, and sets EU-wide missions with ambitious goals tackling some of our biggest problems. It also includes activities pursued by the Joint Research Centre (€2.2 billion) which supports EU and national policymakers with independent scientific evidence and technical support.

The Open Innovation pillar (€13.5 billion) aims to

At a conference entitled "International R&D: Horizon Europe and the world" Jean-Eric Paquet, Director General of DG Research and Innovation, outlined the Commission's plans for participation of non-EU-countries in Horizon Europe. Association agreements to the Framework Programme, allowing countries to participate in EU research under the same conditions as Member States, will be much wider than in the past. Making Horizon Europe open for international collaboration is “a top priority” for the Commission.



Preliminary structure of Horizon Europe – Source:

[European Commission](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess)

<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess>

make Europe a frontrunner in market-creating innovation via the European Innovation Council (€10 billion). It will help develop the overall European innovation landscape, including by further strengthening the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) to foster the integration of business, research, higher education and entrepreneurship (€3 billion).

Horizon Europe will continue to drive Europe's scientific excellence through the European Research Council (ERC) and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowships and exchanges and draw on the scientific advice, technical support and dedicated research of the Joint Research Centre (JRC). It will also add a new level of ambition and boost the scientific, economic and societal impact of EU funding.

Novel features in Horizon Europe

The European Innovation Council: one-stop shop to bring the most promising ideas from lab to real world application and support the most innovative start-ups and companies to scale up their ideas. It will provide direct support to innovators through two main funding instruments, one for early stages and the other for development and market deployment.

EU-wide R&I missions: ambitious, bold goals to tackle issues that affect our daily lives. Examples could range from the fight against cancer, to clean transport or plastic-free oceans. They will be co-designed with citizens, stakeholders, the European Parliament and Member States.

Open Science: will become the modus operandi of Horizon Europe. It will go beyond the open access policy of Horizon 2020 and require open access to publications, data, and to research data management plans.

A new generation of European Partnerships: Horizon Europe will streamline the number of partnerships that the EU co-programmes or co-funds with partners like industry, civil society and funding foundations.

Simpler rules: This will increase legal certainty and reduce administrative burden for beneficiaries and programme administrators.

- Continued principle of a single set of rules with further improvements
- Stable funding rates
- Further simplification of funding model
- Increased use of simplified forms of grants where appropriate (including lump sums)
- More dissemination and exploitation of research result

The proposed budget allocation of €100 billion for 2021-2027 includes €97.6 billion under Horizon Europe (€3.5 billion of which will be allocated under the InvestEU Fund) and €2.4 billion for the Euratom Research and Training Programme. The Euratom programme, which funds research and training on nuclear safety, security and radiation protection, will have an increased focus on non-power applications such as healthcare and medical equipment, and will also support the mobility of nuclear science researchers under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

Missions in Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe will incorporate research and innovation missions to increase the effectiveness of funding by pursuing clearly defined targets. This is in line with the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020 which delineated a need to make it easier for citizens to understand the value of investments in research and innovation; and to maximise the impact of investments by setting clearer targets and expected impact when addressing global challenges.

The Commission has engaged policy experts to develop studies, case studies and reports on how a mission-oriented policy approach will work. It has set up 5 mission boards, one for each mission area, that will help specify, design and implement missions in Horizon Europe:

- Mission Board for Adaptation to Climate Change, including Societal Transformation
- Mission Board for Cancer
- Mission Board for Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters
- Mission Board for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities
- Mission Board for Soil Health and Food

On 30 July 2019, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos Moedas [announced the names of the experts](#) who have been selected as members of the mission boards to work on five major European research and innovation missions. This follows the [announcement](#) of the Chairs of the mission boards made at the Informal Council for Research Ministers in Helsinki, Finland.

Each mission board consists of 15 experts, including the chair. They will identify the first possible specific missions on cancer, climate change, healthy oceans, climate-neutral cities and healthy soil and food by the end of 2019. In addition, for each mission an assembly will be established, gathering a larger number of high-level experts. The assemblies provide an additional pool of ideas, knowledge and expertise that will be actively called upon to contribute to the success of the five missions. Over 2100 individuals from across the EU and beyond applied to become member of a mission board. The selection process ensured that the boards are composed of creative and highly motivated experts from a wide range of backgrounds, including academics, innovators, civil society, industry, finance and end-users. A first discussion with citizens, stakeholders and experts from Member States will take place at the [European Research and Innovation Days](#) in Brussels from 24 to 26 September 2019.

For more information, visit the European Commission's official [Horizon Europe website](#)

Reminder: the public consultation on Horizon Europe's implementation is still open, until 4 October 2019!

[Survey link](#)

EURAXESS Korea Activities Update

On September 24, the EURAXESS Korea team organized an event focused on opportunities for mid-career researchers to go to Europe for several years as part of their career development plan. The event targeted high profile researchers who owned a PhD degree since at least two years, in every discipline including humanities and social sciences. This event provided a unique opportunity to learn about the European Research Council (ERC) grants, the multi-million Euro programme from the EU, and about grants and fellowships for researcher mobility from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden. Welcoming remarks were provided by Mr. Mr. Christophe Besse, Minister Counsellor and Head of Trade and Economy Section from the EU Delegation to Korea, followed by congratulatory remarks given by Dr. Jong-Deok Kim, Director from the Office of Global Programs of the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF).



EURAXESS Event - Research in Europe: Your Next Career Destination!

24 September, Courtyard Marriott Namdaemun, Seoul.

This event was a pilot of our Research in Europe Series. This series is aimed to highlight specific opportunities for Korean or Korea-based researchers to perform either a part of their research career in Europe, in academia or in private sector; or to collaborate in projects with European counterparts. Each edition will focus on a type of funding programme, or on a career level.