Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We were delighted to recently welcome you both in-person and online to our Annual Meeting of the European Scientific Diasporas in North America. The hybrid format allowed us to stay connected to members throughout North America, Europe, and around the world, while engaging in deep conversations face-to-face in Washington, DC.

As we look to 2023, we are excited to travel the U.S. and Canada to attend conferences and expos, as well as give talks at universities and other innovation centers to promote all things related to European research funding and collaboration.

We wish you a happy start to the New Year and encourage you to reach out and connect with us!

—Your EURAXESS North America Team
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# Country in Focus: Cyprus

**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 41 countries. Here we focus on Cyprus.

## CYPRUS’ RESEARCH and INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

### R&I Overview

The Cypriot Research and Innovation (R&I) ecosystem is a relatively young but fast-developing ecosystem. The responsible authority for R&I in Cyprus is the [Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy](https://www.rmp.gov.cy/), while other stakeholders (e.g. the Chief Scientist, and the [National Board for Research and Innovation](https://www.nobi.gov.cy/)) are also contributing to the formulation of R&I Strategy and Policy. Moreover, the [Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF)](https://www.rif.org.cy/) as well as the EURAXESS Bridgehead Organization (BHO) in Cyprus are responsible for Policy Implementation.

The Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) is the national authority in charge of supporting and promoting research, technological development, and innovation in Cyprus. It was established in 1996 and its wide range of activities covers:

- National Funding Programs
- European Funding Programs
- Innovation Services

Find out more: [https://www.research.org.cy/](https://www.research.org.cy/)

### Innovate Cyprus

Innovate Cyprus is the National Strategy Framework for Research and Innovation for the period 2019-2023. It has a total of nine Strategic Pillars (SPs) and Strategic Enablers (SEs), which reflect the fundamental elements that contribute to achieving its Vision (SE1: Governance, SE2: National R&I Strategy, SP3: Research Excellence, SP4: Knowledge Transfer & Commercial Exploitation, SP5: Innovative Entrepreneurship, SE6: Cultural Change, SE7: International Dimension, SE8: Communication, SE9: Digital Transformation). The main goal of the Strategy is to expand the productive base of Cyprus’ economy via the knowledge-intensive sectors.

### Research Excellence

Despite its small size and population, Cyprus has **three** public and **seven** private Universities, **seven** Research Institutes and Research Performing Organizations, **six** Centers of Excellence (funded by the EC under the Teaming Program), and a number of **Public** Research Institutions. Four of these Universities and Research Institutes in Cyprus have received the **HR Excellence in Research** award.
There are currently 4,196 researchers employed in Cyprus (2020 data [Cyprus Statistical Service]), of which more than a third hold a PhD degree. Of all the researchers currently employed in Cyprus, 352 are not Cypriot nationals (including EU and third-country nationals). Furthermore, Cyprus has a high growth rate in regard to the country’s full-time equivalent (FTE) researchers.

Overall, Cyprus had one of the highest average annual growth rates in Research & Development (R&D) expenditure (10.7%) over the period 2000-2020, scoring well above the EU average (4%). Total R&D expenditure in Cyprus in 2020 was estimated at €184.8 million, equal to 0.85% of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP); in 2019, this expenditure was €164.4 million or 0.71%. In 2020, 23% of funding for research activities was absorbed from national funds, 43.5% from the private sector and 21% from international funds (including EU funds) (2020 data [Cyprus Statistical Service]).

The largest share of R&D in 2020 expenditure was allocated to natural sciences (€82.2 million), while engineering and technology absorbed €60 million, social sciences €19 million, medical sciences €9.6 million, agricultural sciences €7.4 million and humanities €6.5 million (2020 data [Cyprus Statistical Service]).

National RTDI Framework Program RESTART 2016-2022
The RESTART 2016-2022 Program is a multiannual framework of Programs for Research, Technological Development and Innovation (RTDI) Support in Cyprus, co-funded by national and European funds and implemented in conjunction with other national initiatives and programs. The total budget of the RESTART 2016-2020 Program amounted to €151.2 million.

The structure of the Programs was centered on three Strategic Pillars:
- Pillar I: Smart Growth
- Pillar II: Sustainable RTDI System
- Pillar III: Transformation of RTDI System

The new Framework Program for RTDI of Cyprus is currently under review and will be announced by the RIF soon (https://www.research.org.cy/).

Cyprus’ Participation in European R&I Programs
Cyprus has participated in the EU Framework Program for R&I since 1999. In Horizon 2020, Cypriot organizations have participated in 736 projects, receiving funding of more than €319 million. The success rate of Cyprus in participating H2020 projects was 13.39%, scoring higher than the EU average (11.95%). Thus far, 174 Cypriot organizations have participated in Horizon Europe and have secured a total funding of €50 million.

National Contact Points for EU Framework Program
RIF hosts all the National Contact Points (NCPs) for Horizon Europe (HE). NCPs provide highly professional support services, including dissemination of information and on-the-ground advice to interested parties. Specifically for HE programs targeting researchers’ mobility, such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), NCPs can provide personalized assistance to potential candidates.

More information on Cyprus’ Horizon Europe NCPs can be found here.

CYPRUS as a WIDENING Country
Cyprus is one of the Widening Countries in Horizon Europe, which are countries with comparatively less advanced R&I systems. Although all organizations eligible to take part in HE can participate in HE Widening Actions (‘Widening Participation and Strengthening ERA’ Program), only organizations based in Widening Countries can participate as coordinators.
One of the Widening Actions, with a particular focus on both the mobility of excellent researchers and the widening component, is the ERA Fellowships Call. This Call provides researchers applying to MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships with a host institution in one of the Widening Countries (including Cyprus) with an additional funding opportunity. More specifically, in the application for MSCA-PF, the fellows indicate whether, if unsuccessful, they want to apply for the ERA Fellowship. If the proposal fails to reach an adequate place in the ranking to be funded through MSCA-PF, it is automatically resubmitted to the ERA Fellowships Call.

Innovation Facts & Figures

Innovation performance has increased very strongly over time in Cyprus. In 2022, Cyprus has been ranked as a Strong Innovator on the European Innovation Scoreboard with a performance score of 106.9% of the EU average. Cyprus’ performance is increasing at a much higher rate (37.9%) compared to the rate of the EU (9.9%). According to this scoreboard, Cyprus’ relative strengths are:

- Public-private co-publications
- Innovative SMEs collaborating with others
- International scientific co-publications
- Population with tertiary education
- Trademark applications.

Cyprus also ranks 27th globally among 132 economies on its innovation performance (Global Innovation Index 2022). Furthermore, according to the same metric, Cyprus ranks first, in a tie with Japan, in Patent families and Mobile app creation.

Entrepreneurship

According to the National Report Entrepreneurship in Cyprus 2019/20, physical infrastructure and commercial and legal infrastructure are two of the strongest advantages of the Cypriot entrepreneurial ecosystem. Physical infrastructure in Cyprus (i.e. roads, utilities, communications, water disposal) along with good access to communication (i.e. telephone, internet, etc.) can offer good support for new and developing firms in Cyprus. Cyprus’ commercial and services infrastructure includes highly trained human resources staff plus many legal offices and top accounting firms. Its legal infrastructure also features an attractive and balanced tax regime.

Lastly, Cyprus scores well on early-stage entrepreneurship, as the rates are above the EU average ones for the period 2015-19 (OECD data 2020).

Funding for Innovation

The main funding source for Innovation in Cyprus is the Research and Innovation Foundation.

Its National RTDI Framework Program (see above) includes specific funding opportunities in place to support innovative entrepreneurship in Cyprus. The SEED Program, for example, aims to boost the rapid development of dynamic and innovative start-ups that wish to generate internationally competitive products/services and to mobilize private investment funds. The PRE-SEED Program is designed to support the creation and early-stage development of innovative start-ups.
Support for Innovation

**Enterprise Europe Network Cyprus** offers free of charge and integrated support services to Cypriot enterprises who wish to invest in entrepreneurship, knowledge, research, technology and innovation. There is only one angel investment network in Cyprus, namely the **Cyprus Business Angels Network (CYBAN)**. Its mission is to connect the most innovative and fast-growing companies in Cyprus to smart equity finance.

There is also a **Startup Visa** scheme that welcomes skilled and talented entrepreneurs from countries outside of the EU and the EEA to enter, reside, and work in Cyprus in order to establish/operate/develop a startup with a high growth potential.

**RESEARCH COLLABORATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES**

The Republic of Cyprus has established several **Bilateral Agreements/Protocols/Memoranda of Understanding** in the fields of Research, Development and Innovation (or in related areas) with a number of third countries. With specific regard to EURAXESS Worldwide countries, the following collaborations are currently in place:

- Agreement on Science and Technology between Cyprus and the **USA**
- Agreement between Cyprus and **China** for Science, Technology, and Innovation Cooperation
- Agreement on Economic, Industrial and Technical Cooperation between Cyprus and **Egypt**

As an example, under the national **RESTART 2016-2022 Framework Program**, a specific Call for Proposals was announced on **International Collaboration - Dual Targeting** to strengthen the collaboration of Cypriot organizations with highly reputable research organizations established in advanced third countries (USA, China, Canada, Brazil, etc.). The Call's aims were to expand the networking of Cypriot organizations, and the implementation of joint research aiming to improve the quality of life and competitiveness of the Cypriot economy.

**Information for incoming researchers:** EURAXESS Cyprus

**Connect with EURAXESS Cyprus:**

RIF coordinates as **Bridgehead Organization** all the EURAXESS activities in Cyprus, while also hosting one of the national **EURAXESS Service Centers**, offering information and advice to mobile researchers, including both foreign researchers who wish to work in Cyprus and Cypriot researchers wishing to work abroad.

There are 11 additional **EURAXESS Service Centers** in Cyprus:

- CYENS Centre of Excellence
- Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics
- Cyprus University of Technology
- Frederick University
- Open University of Cyprus
- The Cyprus Institute
- UCLan Cyprus
- University of Cyprus
- European University Cyprus
- ERATO THENES Centre of Excellence
- Cyprus Maritime and Marine Institute (CMMI)
2 Getting Mentally Prepared for the Move Abroad

Health and Wellness

Moving is among the top causes of life stress alongside grieving, marriage troubles, job loss and financial insecurity. Moving to another country takes that to another level. Doing it with your partner and children in tow can be disastrous if unprepared. As one of the most mobile professional groups, researchers no doubt know the importance of physical planning when making such a big move, but what about psychological readiness?

There is no such thing as a stress-free move. The sheer scale of the activity, the logistical steps and things to remember can be overwhelming. Researchers planning to move to another country usually have a fair amount of time to make the necessary physical preparations. They can also usually count on some support and guidance from their host organization, program sponsor and peers for many of the administrative aspects. But less attention is given to the mental wellbeing side, which experts agree must go hand-in-hand with the practical measures.

Neglecting mental preparations can cause additional stress on mobile researchers and their accompanying families. That stress can build and feed longer-term anxieties which threaten to derail the experience for everyone. It can affect the researcher’s performance on the job, undermine marriages and family unity, and ultimately lead to health problems.

According to WebMD, “More than half of Americans say they fight with friends and loved ones because of stress, and more than 70% say they experience real physical and emotional symptoms from it.”

Common signs of too much stress, WebMD continues, include headache, fatigue, irritability, sleeping problems, difficulty concentrating, upset stomach, weight changes, and reduced sex drive. Among the longer-term medical and physical implications are high blood pressure and heart concerns, hair loss, skin problems, flare ups of asthma and arthritis, and clinical depression.
Understanding stress

Stress and anxiety stem from internal and external pressures. Deadlines at work, a constant stream of emails demanding attention, dealing with bureaucracy, planning a complex project or activity... these are external demands on our attention that drain emotional energy. Our responses differ according to our personalities and resilience, an internal mechanism which is more developed in some people, and less in others.

Those who tend to internalize more of these stressors are usually aware of it and go to extra lengths to plan ahead in order to reduce the tension. Whether it is arriving an hour before everyone else for a flight or generating detailed checklists or Excel sheets ahead of a big move, the measures are a way of mitigating the risks and minimizing the fear and uncertainty associated with the events in play.

Other forms of internalized stress can stem from primitive reactions, past experiences (even traumas), fixed ideas of how things should be done, and unrealistic expectations of situations and people. The sense of foreboding that accompanies big changes, such as births, deaths, marriages, divorces, new jobs and, yes, moving house, is a major cause of anxiety especially among those more prone to it.

Being aware of the triggers and having insight into your own ability to process stressful events is a good first start to dealing with them in a healthy way, the experts say. Knowing that these traits may also present in your partner and children, who are facing these new challenges, is a proactive way of heading off potential mental health issues associated with a move abroad.

How can you tell whether they are coping? The first and best way is simply to ask. Discuss the grand ‘adventure’ openly and don’t sugar-coat the challenges or magnitude of the move. The mobile researcher needs to include the whole family in the preparations, and preferably even the primary decision as to whether to accept the new placement in the first place. If there is opposition from the start it will be much harder to get everyone onboard as the more tricky and stressful stages unfold.

Visualizing the move

Imagine scenarios, visualize how the new life abroad will look for the different members of the family. Map out the likely challenges and how each person might respond.

Little Jonny has to leave his football team and doesn’t know if he can join a new one mid-season in the new town. Carlos has had to take a demotion or even quit his job in order to accommodate his partner’s career move. Will he cope with being a home dad? The eldest daughter Janine will enter an international school system with a different curriculum and teaching style. Everyone is going to miss their friends, cousins, grandparents and of course the dog who had to be billeted with an uncle during the research exchange.

These are the sorts of worries and issues that the whole family will be facing if and when they decide to relocate for one person in the family to pursue their dream or advance their career. If everyone is not filled with the same sense of adventure and
shared ambition, resentment could build and relationships tested especially when faced with a foreign setting far removed from the usual home-comforts and connections.

Everyone needs to be prepared for this and take active steps to build a family trust circle with full honesty embedded in the whole process. Without it, intense feelings of anxiety can develop into a sense of isolation, foreboding and even depression for families who are underprepared for the challenges of moving house and country.

**Coping mechanisms**

**AXA**, a major insurance and health group, carried out a survey which revealed expats in Europe face higher than average levels of anxiety and depression. Safety concerns, stress in the workplace, and dealing with illness were all exacerbated while abroad.

“Understanding how other expats look after their general health and wellbeing, as well as what some of the common concerns are, can help you prepare for your time abroad, so you can make the most out of the opportunities it brings,” notes AXA.

More widely, expats with experience of depression have shared their coping mechanisms which include joining a gym, more sightseeing with family and friends, building relationships, communicating and expressing themselves better, keeping busy, and practicing mindfulness.

For younger children, special effort is needed to help them understand the basics of the move – the why, when, what, where, how questions. Why mum and dad are moving. When it will happen and what that means concretely (i.e. living in a different house, dealing with hotter/colder weather, eating different foods, adapting to unusual cultural habits...). Sometimes kids pick up on or mirror their parents’ increased anxiety, so experts warn to watch for tell-tale behavioral signs, such as altered sleeping, eating, speaking, and playing habits.

Older children face their own difficulties dealing with unfamiliar social and cultural settings, having to make new friends and adapt to different surroundings and study practices. Parents need to prepare the children for these challenges well in advance, constantly asking them how they feel, what they need. Good communication is paramount, and needs to be channeled towards the individual child’s needs and strengths, the experts recommend – see the next piece for more advice and guidance for families and couples dealing with anxiety and cross-border issues.

**Doing your homework**

Above all, you don’t want to leave anything to chance with such a significant change affecting you and your family.

A visit to your country’s foreign office website for official information about another country is an advisable first step before even accepting the post. The country page will often include health, safety and security advice, and sometimes issues warnings of what to avoid or be aware of once you are there.

Some states may recommend travel to a country be taken with a degree of caution or not at all. Clearly, it is up to the individual and their concerns for their family whether to proceed under those circumstances. Host organizations will often have a liaison office or someone responsible for helping the incoming researcher/professor/fellow/worker
settle in and navigate the red tape. This may or may not include family services, so the individual needs to be sure what sort of assistance they can expect from their host organization and country.

Of course, being mentally fortified for such a massive adventure goes alongside physical preparations. In practice, that means putting together and checking off the long list of administrative steps for the new job, meeting the requirements of the host country or program, but also the pragmatic things that need doing to set the family up in a new location.

The following is a very basic list of some of the important things to confirm before moving abroad:

1. Check the country’s life quality, safety, health, and general status on key issues (human rights, gender, religion, etc.) is compatible with your values and needs
2. If possible, visit the country/location as reconnaissance for the move with the family or at least do lots of internet research (schools, rentals, transport, etc.)
3. Explore financial impacts including the cost of moving, conditions of the relocation package, and general cost-of-living changes
4. Choose a relocation service with proven capabilities delivering to your destination
5. Join expat fora and relevant networks such as EURAXESS Worldwide to get a feeling for what to expect, and ask as many questions as you can (including those put forward by your partner and children)
6. Put together a realistic to-do list of steps before (months/weeks/days), during and after the move, and factor in contingencies (unexpected scenarios); use proforma guidelines found online to help with this
7. Study how best to fit in with the local culture (language, customs, food, etc.)
8. Prepare the ground for trailing partners and children (schools, activities, etc.)
9. Brush up on local laws/rules and requirements, especially important for moves outside the EU
10. Confirm travel, documentation, health, insurance, and other essential administrative details long in advance

There are also useful websites and templates dedicated to moving house, such as Todoist Sukoshi Zutsu style of breaking down the tasks into bite-sized actions, or the Klaxoon visual optimization approach.

**EURAXESS Worldwide at your disposal**

The EU’s EURAXESS network has been created to give outgoing and incoming researchers and their families peace of mind during this important stage in their lives and careers.

It draws on the support of some 600 centers, offering tips and advice on a wide range of issues, from living and employment conditions in different countries and their working/entry/visa requirements to how pension, health and insurance works for mobile researchers and their families.
Mental wellbeing is of course an important part of the “personalized assistance” that EURAXESS network and its worldwide hubs seek to support. Researchers share their experiences through formal and informal events, workshops, coffee clubs, and more.

This is on top of the network’s efforts to provide reliable news and insights about research and innovation policies, jobs, funding, and career development activities in Europe, as well as opportunities for international collaboration and funding schemes. Membership is free.

For more information and assistance during your move abroad, contact EURAXESS North America.

3  Q&A: Ask the Expert

Companion piece to article 2 in this newsletter

For this edition of the EURAXESS North America Newsletter, we spoke with Julie Rentmeesters, a cross-border family mediator based in Belgium, for some tips that mobile researchers could bear in mind while planning and carrying out a longer-term assignment abroad. Julie combines her background in law and mental health with specialist training in parental burnout and mediation to help families deal with the stress of life abroad and in general.

Family life can be stressful at the best of times, but what are the biggest issues you are seeing in cross-border settings?

As a cross-border family mediator, I see couples, parents and families when they are in a state of conflict. Parents that struggle to take care of their children as they are alone in Belgium, couples who separated, one parent who has moved back to their country of origin with the child (sometimes without the authorization of the other parent or the judge i.e. a case of child abduction).

Moving to a new environment, being a parent, and separating from your partner are very demanding psychologically and reconnect the person to their primitive memories. That’s why, in such cases, it’s really important to receive affective emotional support – care, compassion, reassurance and comfort when needed.

I’ve noticed with expats that loneliness is one of the major problems. Expats usually have lots of connections and a busy agenda but their relationships are often superficial. When they don’t feel well, family and friends are far away. That’s why some parents don’t see any alternative than moving back to their country where they can feel the support of their loved ones. Of course, it’s traumatic for all the family members when it’s not a common decision.

What sort of things do you usually counsel people in these situations? What can mobile researchers do to alleviate some of the anxiety for their partner and children before and during the move?
I observe in my clients that, apart from the administrative side, their move to Belgium (for example) is not well prepared. Usually, one of the partners has found a job in Brussels and the other follows. The excitement of a new life hides all the difficult aspects of an expatriation. It’s really important to prepare and discuss the move. Who is going to work? How long do you/we agree to stay? Who is going to take care of the children? The more one discusses the details of the future life, the easier the move becomes.

Moving is a very stressful experience in life and its effects are often underestimated. Moves reactivate rather primitive anxieties that exist when a baby establishes autonomy from its mother. It’s important to anticipate the support that the family members will need. Is it by visiting their home country more often? Is it with a daily Zoom call with friends? They need to visualize the separation and ways to alleviate the anxieties that spring form that.

Once abroad, can you propose some things families can do to help with the integration process. What should they prioritize?

It really depends on the duration of the stay abroad of course. Reflecting on and discussing the project is very important. Evaluate regularly if every member of the family is happy with the new life. Then it depends on everybody’s interest. I would recommend localizing the experience as much as possible; learn the language, meet the neighbors, participate in activities like sports with locals and get out of the expat bubble… All good occasions to create new friendships. And if they feel lonely, stressed, or anxious, they should not hesitate to consult a therapist.

Talking, expressing one’s feelings is key. It takes minimum a year to feel integrated into a new place. So, expect a range of feelings at the beginning; a clash between the excitement of the new life and the nostalgia of the country of origin is normal.

Marriages and close relationships with family back home come under strain in foreign settings. What should couples be on the lookout for and what do you advise they do if tensions are building?

Surprisingly, research suggests that the people most subjected to parental burnout are educated woman that don’t work and take care of the children.

Communication is very important with as few taboos as possible. The place and the role of the partner is really something that should be discussed and anticipated. Are the two partners still aligned with the move and experience? Are some changes needed? If tension is building (which happens in every healthy couple), they should not hesitate to consult someone about the problems before conflicts arise.

Depression and health issues abroad are worrisome for would-be mobile researchers and their families. What are the main signs to watch for and what steps should they take?

First, be on the lookout for unusual (new) behaviors like excessive alcohol or substance use, aggressiveness, violence, moods, etc. Sometimes we see something called
psychological decompensation after, for example, a trauma which reveals itself due to the stress involved with moving abroad.

*It’s important to find a professional that takes the expat dimension into account. Sometimes, a reconnection with the secure link (family, friends…) can help to reduce the symptoms. Affective support can be more efficient that taking medication, for example.*

Julie is a board member of the ForMediation group, which offers continuous training to all professionals dealing with families. She is also a Family Mediator and Jurist at *CHS and the Mental Health Service “Le Chien Vert.”*

## 4 In case you missed it...

### Recent and upcoming activities

While not a complete list, here are a few past and future virtual events of ours and close partners—watch the recordings and sign up to attend live on the event webpages below!

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<td>Eighth Annual Meeting of the European Scientific Diasporas in North America</td>
<td>December 1st, 2022</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>EURAXESS North America and the GWU Elliott School of International Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>German-U.S. 2nd Transatlantic Higher Ed Accelerator Matchmaking</td>
<td>January 25th, 2023</td>
<td>Virtual</td>
<td>German Center for Research and Innovation (DWHI) San Francisco</td>
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<td>Horizon Europe Info Days and Brokerage Events</td>
<td>January 17th-20th, 2023</td>
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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 our homepage: [http://northamerica.euraxess.org](http://northamerica.euraxess.org).

To sign up for free membership in our network, [subscribe here](http://northamerica.euraxess.org).

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Content in this quarterly newsletter includes pieces produced by EURAXESS Worldwide.