RESEARCHERS IN MOTION

Quarterly Newsletter Issue 3 2016

EURAXESS LINKS INDIA

Contents

EURAXESS Links India Newsletter is a quarterly electronic newsletter, edited by EURAXESS Links India, which provides information of specific interest to European and non-European researchers in India who are interested in the European research landscape and conducting research in Europe or with European partners.

Please email to india@euraxess.net for any comments on this newsletter, contributions you would like to make, if you think any other colleagues would be interested in receiving this newsletter, or if you wish to unsubscribe.

Editor: Ainhitze Bizkarralegorra Bravo, EURAXESS Links India, Country Representative.

1 Briefing I EURAXESS country: The Slovak Republic

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 Links India e-newsletters. In this edition, we will zoom in on the Slovak Republic.

Slovakia is a young and dynamic country offering an increasing number of opportunities to carry out excellent research and to turn it to practical application or business ideas. It has been an attractive destination for foreign investors, having one of the highest shares of medium and high tech exports in the EU and being a number one producer of cars per capita in the world. Now Slovakia has a strong ambition to take another step forward, to become the hub of innovations and encourage more Slovak companies to follow the examples of ARDACO, c2i, ESET, CEIT Group, Ecocapsule, GA Drilling , Sygic, SPINEA, ALITER Technologies, Pixel Federation and several others that are among the innovation leaders in their fields. Research and development should be in the heart of this exciting transformation.

1.1 Slovakia and its Research, Development & Innovation System

Research and Development in Slovakia, Brochure, 2016

R&D in the Slovak Republic is carried out particularly at public sector institutions, including 23 public and state universities, 57 institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and specialised research institutes established by state administration central bodies. The private sector currently lags behind in R&D activities but several targeted policies and funding programmes should help to increase the number of researchers in private companies in the near future.

The share of researchers in the working population is slightly under the average in EU). 42.7% of researchers in Slovakia are women, compared to 33.2% in the EU, and their share is comparatively high also in the majority of STEM disciplines. On the other hand, foreigners only comprised 2.44% of researchers employed in Slovakia in 2014 and increasing the number of international researchers in the R&D is therefore one of the main challenges for Slovak research institutions.

Several new Science Parks were established since 2007. Comenius University Science Park in Bratislava (in the picture above) should provide the space for collaborative interdisciplinary research in the fields of biomedicine, biotechnologies, environmental medicine and related societal challenges. (Photo: Vladimír Kuric)

R&D expenditure in Slovakia is relatively low in comparison with the wider EU. In 2014, the overall spending on R&D was 0.89 % of GDP but it should increase to 1.2 % of the GDP by 2020. Considerable investment in the new research infrastructure has been made mainly due to the Structural and Investment Funds of the European Union. During the last decade brand new research infrastructures have been established or upgraded in all key research institutions and many research institutions now have an infrastructure comparable to that of the best R&D institutions in Europe. Further upgrades of the R&D infrastructure will be financed from the European Investment and Structural Funds in the period of 2014 - 2020. The establishment of these integrated scientific infrastructures has already seen the first success and the Slovak Republic became, together with Portugal, the most successful country in the first Teaming for Excellence Call (Horizon 2020) with a gain of four projects which should result in the creation of international centres of excellence.

1.2 Research Excellence in Slovakia

The areas with the largest potential to contribute to the excellent, cutting edge research on the international scale were defined in the Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3 SK) which outlines the R&D priorities to be funded in the forthcoming years via national funding schemes but also via EU structural funds. These areas reflect both the scientific and research

capacities available and the economic specialisation of Slovakia. The R&D priorities include the **r**esearch of materials & nanotechnology, ICT and biomedicine & biotechnology. Technology priorities include industrial research, environmental & agricultural research and research on environmentally friendly and sustainable energy. The role of social sciences in tackling the global and local societal challenges is also stressed in the Strategy.

The majority of institutions producing excellent and innovative research are located in Bratislava, one of the most innovative regions in the new EU member states according to the EU Innovation Scoreboard. But research excellence and strong innovation potential can also be found elsewhere. The region of Košice is building its reputation of the Slovak "Silicon Valley" with a high concentration of ICT firms and related R&D activities**. "**IT Valley**" cluster was one of the first industrial clusters in the region of Central and Eastern Europe awarded with the** Gold Label of the European Cluster Excellence Initiative**. The region of** Žilina is becoming a home of top quality research on intelligent transport systems not only because of the presence of the numerous companies related to the car and transport industry but also due to the ERA Chair grant awarded to the University of Žilina.

1.3 Recruitment Opportunities

1.3.1 Public Sector Recruitment Opportunities

Most researchers in Slovakia are employed in public sector institutions, with universities being the most important employers of research staff. All positions open at the Slovak universities are published on the webpage of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of SR. Similarly, the Slovak Academy of Sciences announces all vacancies via its public website. Experienced scientists from abroad who are interested in working at the institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences can also apply for a fellowship within the SASPRO programme, co-funded under FP7. The programme allows applications for a fellowship from 12 to 36 months, while the field of science within which it is possible to submit applications is not limited.

PhD candidates are considered to be regular students in Slovakia and receive a monthly scholarship if enrolled as full time students. Selected PhD programmes offered in English language can be found in the overview prepared by SAIA.

Slovak researchers working abroad who consider returning to Slovakia might be interested in the reintegration programme "Návraty" introduced last year. The programme enables research institutions from the public sector to open the positions for highly qualified Slovaks living abroad and receive the extra funding from the state that would enable them to provide competitive salaries and other conditions to the returnees.

1.3.2 Private Sector Recruitment Opportunities

Slovakia is a country with a strong industrial base, tradition of industrial R&D and high share of medium and high technology production. Nevertheless, R&D activity of the business sector remains relatively low which is reflected also in the lack of the R&D positions at Slovak companies. Recently introduced innovation policies (support to clusters, innovation vouchers, tax reliefs) and funding programmes indicate a positive shift that should contribute to the development of stronger research potential in the business sector.

Besides supporting the R&D capacities in the established industries and

Slovak Academic Information Agency

Researchers considering a short-term research stay in Slovakia can choose from a variety of available options. The largest programme providing funding for study and research stays in duration from 1 - 12 months is The National Scholarship Programme (NSP) administered by SAIA, n. o., a mobility funding agency being also a member of European EURAXESS network. More information about the programme is available at www.scholarships.sk

companies, creation of new technological start-ups is strongly supported. This support is not limited to Slovak citizens only. Concept Paper on Start-up support in Slovakia adopted by the Slovak Government in 2015 foresees various advantages for international researchers who decide to start their innovative business in Slovakia. These include start-up visa, grants and more. With its population of around 5 million Slovakia might be too small to be the final market for start-ups but it is ideal for testing new ideas.

1.4 Funding Opportunities

The competitive funding for R&D and innovation projects is provided by several public agencies. Major R&D grant agency in Slovakia is the Slovak Research and Development Agency (SRDA) offering funding for research project in both basic and applied research and across all scientific areas. Employees of universities and the Slovak Academy of Sciences can also apply for smaller grants supporting basic research (VEGA grants) and use of its outcomes in the educational process (KEGA grants).

Larger infrastructural project and collaborations between the academia and industry are mostly supported by the Structural and Investment Funds of the European Union. More than 2.2 billion euro is allocated in the Operational Programme Research and Innovation for the period 2014 - 2020. Two agencies are involved in the distribution of funding from this Programme: the Research Agency and the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency

1.5 Research collaborations

Slovakia enjoys all benefits of being a part of the European Research Area with an access to the major international R&D funding programmes, collaborative networks and some of the world best research infrastructures. As a member state of CERN, European Space Agency or Institute for Nuclear Research in Dubna it provides its researchers with an opportunity to participate in some of the most challenging research projects of the time. Its geographical location, historical ties and current policies (see e.g. EU Strategy for the Danube Region) make it an especially attractive place to develop research collaborations with the regions of Balkan and Eastern Europe.

1.6 Important information for incoming researchers

The instrument of **hosting agreement** was introduced to simplify the relocation of third country researchers to Slovakia. Researchers who signed a hosting agreement with a research institution or a university can apply for a temporary residence for the purpose of research and development. This type of residence requires fewer administrative duties and allows faster decision-making procedure. In this case, a researcher does not need a work permit or a confirmation of a possibility to fill a vacant position.

Practical assistance to international researchers is available at EURAXESS Service Centres in five Slovak towns. The most comprehensive summary of practical information for mobile researchers is available on the national portal of the Slovak EURAXESS Network (www.euraxess.sk) and in the regularly updated International Researcher's Guide to Slovakia

Text prepared by Janka Kottulová, Katarína Košťálová and Mária Sásová, EURAXESS Slovakia team in SAIA, n. o.

2 Hot topic l Science Communication initiatives in India: “Chai and Why”, “Bodystorming”, “Student Scientist” and the “EURAXESS Science Slam”

If you are Bangalore-based student or researcher and curious about communicating science away from your lab, come and join the “2nd Communicating Science Out of the Lab – EURAXESS Event” in ***Bengaluru on 22 October 2016! Registration*** *to attend this event will* ***close on 21 October 2016*** *(or as soon as we reach the maximum capacity of participants). The event is being co-organised by EURAXESS Links India, NIAS-National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) and TIFR-Tata Institute of Fundamental Research Outreach.*

This event will be a practical training conducted by EURAXESS Science Slam big supporter Prof. Arnab Battacharya from TIFR and with the new EURAXESS Science Slam India finalists as special guests (names to be announced very soon). It will also be a great opportunity to learn first hand about other science communication initiatives in India such as “Chai and Why” (TIFR, Mumbai), “Student Scientist” (NIAS, Bengaluru) or “Bodystorming” (NCBS, Bengaluru).

No worries if you cannot be in Bengaluru on 22 October. EURAXESS Links India quarterly newsletter is pleased to feature in its third issue what these fouroriginal initiatives are about.

2.1 “Chai and Why?” – 8 years of spreading excitement about science

Though science and technology underpin societal progress, there is a general lack of awareness in the Indian public. Further, even for the general public who are interested in science there is really no forum to interact with scientists, discuss their views and ask questions. ***Chai and Why?*** is an unique outreach initiative of TIFR to take science out to the public based on an informal, accessible science-café-like platform that has been running in Mumbai without a break since 2009, twice or thrice a month. *Chai and Why?* has also stretched the boundary of a typical science café, and developed into a small experiment in getting the Indian public excited about science.

Chai and Why? is not a lecture. It usually starts with a short talk bringing out the background and important issues of the subject. After this a break allows discussions, chai (of course) and conversations to start, and is followed by an hour or more of questions and answers and general discussion. With a casual meeting place, plain language, and inclusive conversation we want to create a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere for people with no science background,

so that anyone can participate. Our audiences have ranged from 6 year old kids to 80+ year olds, and questions have flown freely. Given the diversity of the research being done at TIFR it has not been difficult to cover a very wide range of issues relating to science and technology, in particular topics that affect our world today - lasers, nanotechnology, space exploration, stem cells, malaria, Alzheimer's disease, large science experiments like the LHC, supernovae, mathematics behind puzzles, genetics, solar energy, lighting, etc.

The focus and style of *Chai and Why?* is not on science *education*; we do not want to "teach" people but want to get people excited about science. Hence, connecting with the audience, packaging and timing of the sessions are most important. Science behind the stories making headline news is always a good topic – e.g. sessions around Mangalyaan and LHC. But often, one can use things in the news to explore very basic science topics. We looked at mathematics behind the financial markets during the stock market crash. A while ago, words like 2G and 3G were on the first page of every newspaper but nobody really knew what exactly they meant. Hence our session "2G, 3G, yeh sab kya hai Ji". Catchy titles have been a highlight of *Chai and Why?.* Why would people wake up on Sunday morning for "A primer on wireless communication"? I think the Indian scientific community has been a little too uptight and conservative in its view of science as a serious subject. Sometimes a little liberty can make it open and accessible to a wider audience. This is also the reason for *Chai and Why?* being an enthusiastic partner of the EURAXESS Science Slam!

While most Science Cafés target a "mostly adult" audience we encourage younger participants as well. Special sessions targeting younger children during the summer vacation periods, with "hands-on" fun experiments covering e.g. science in the kitchen and bathroom, connections between origami and maths, or mathematics in folk tales, etc have been enthusiastically received. Our festival specials around Holi, Diwali, etc are also very popular. Dealing with a young audience means that *Chai and Why?* is on Facebook and YouTube! We were perhaps the first group in India actively using social networks to promote science and reach out to the community.

Based on the enthusiastic response to the hands-on *Chai and Why?* summer sessions, experiments that could be done with easy to obtain items were packaged into a science-demo called "The Wonderful Laboratory called Home". This interactive programme received a phenomenal response in schools in Mumbai and other locations across India. To expand the reach, the outreach team developed a Marathi equivalent – "*ghar navachi prayogshaLa"*. Similarly during the International Year of Chemistry we did a whole set of fun chemistry experiments which eventually formed the basis for "*rasayanshashtratil gamti-jamti*". These experiments have now been tried out in rural Maharashtra and have reached out to over 40000 children. This is only a tiny step, but we hope our efforts will, in the long term, influence a few more students to take up science and spawn the generation of scientists in India!

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www.facebook.com/chaiandwhy

demonstrating science experiments to all audiences, particularly school and college students and pioneered “Chai and Why?” Mumbai’s popular science café.

Glimpses of Chai and Why? sessions: experiments with squirting orange peels into a

Glimpses of outreach activity in rural and under-served communities. candle flame, blowing large soap bubbles, grain filled bottles rolling down, and making ice cream

2.2 "Bodystorming" and NCBS Science and Society Program and Art-Science Residency

The National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) part of Tata Institute for Fundamental Research is a government funded institute undertaking fundamental research in biology. It gathers about 500 scientists interested working on all length scales starting from tiny molecular structures going up to the understanding of population zones of Tigers and birds in different parts of India. Besides disseminating our findings in the classical media like scientific journals of conferences, we are also engaged in other forms of science communication to inform a broader public, as they are, as tax payers, the ones who make our work possible. We have an active Science and Society office at NCBS that hosts the following *programmes* to further this dialogue:

- Public engagement and outreach through interdisciplinary lectures and talks.
- Thematic lecture series/ book projects on key Science and Society issues (e.g. Future of Nature).
- Developing an institutional archive to serve as a resource for research in history of biology in India – ongoing with consultations with partner institutions engaged in history of science teaching and research.
- Science and media training workshops in writing, photography, film, web and podcasts.
- A seminar course on the history and philosophy of science and bioethics for graduate/post graduate students in science/biology.

In particular we host *art-science residencies* with the following goals:

- Develop new insights and understandings by incorporating the artistic process with other investigative processes.
- Provide a setting conducive for artist-conducted research/exploration which, in turn, adds to the overall creative atmosphere of NCBS
- Initiate campus and public discourse about the relationship between art, science and interdisciplinary approaches.
- Support a platform to elucidate the role that artists can play on campus and in the community at large.
- Enhance the role of NCBS as a center for cultural engagement in addition to being a place for biological research and academic excellence.

Find out more on:

https://www.ncbs.res.in/HistoryScienceSociety/

http://bodystormingindia.com/

“Bodystorming” – NCBS’ most successful art science residency!

In another effort to broaden the scope of scientific research and its communication, we initiated in 2015 together with colleagues at the University of Minnesota the project ‘Bodystorm Hits Bangalore’. The idea here was to bring together dancers and scientists to explore scientific models with dance, to draw new inspiration for the scientists out of this ‘in promptu’ realisation of their ideas and to use the created dance pieces as a way to present scientific findings to a broader audience, following the idea that an image can say more than thousand words.

To bring together dancers and scientists to explore scientific models with dance, to draw new inspiration for the scientists out of this ‘in promptu’ realisation of their ideas and to use the created dance pieces as a way to present scientific findings to a broader audience, following the idea that an image can say more than thousand words.

“Bodystorming” (2015)

With the financial help of University of Minnesota, NCBS and the culture activities fund of India Alliance – DBT/Wellcome Trust, we could invite the Minnesota based dance company Black Label Movement with its director Carl Flink and Biophysicist Dave Odde to Bangalore to conduct a week of intense bodystorming together with selected dancers from India and scientists from NCBS. The response and outcomes from this initiative were so positive that we intend to invite Carl and the Indian dancers again for a second round and hope that the idea will spread to other places as well.

Article and pictures provided by Aparna Banerjee and Darius Vasco Köster, NCBS

2.3 “Student Scientists”: A Platform for the Student-Scientist Interaction

It is uncontested that getting exposure to the tools and methodologies of scientific research and interaction with established scientists during the school days could induce scientific temper and passion for science in growing minds. Unfortunately in a geographically large nation like India, where availability and accessibility to knowledge is heterogeneous, students, especially those from villages and marginalized regions, rarely get any chance to experience the essence of science and know the opportunities available in this filed. Hence a system bridging students with researchers working in the institutions of higher

education and innovation is the need of the hour for this nation aiming at quick and sustainable development in the field of science and technology.

'Student scientist' is a platform for student-scientist interaction and joint knowledge production initiated by the National Institute of Advanced Studies, NIAS Bangalore. Bridging of two major compartments of the education system, colleges and schools, through dedicated students and encouraging cross talk between them is the first step for the formation of the student scientist network. Members of the network, known as the 'student scientists' undergoes intense training in the methodologies of science and social science utilized for studying the issues of social importance. Later they conduct independent studies under the joint guidance of their teachers and professional researchers. Student-scientists interactions are also conducted regularly in both rural and urban regions to eliminate the misconceptions about various scientific topics as well as to enhance the confidence level of students for interacting with scientists and exploring the opportunities available for pursuing higher education in the branches of science they prefer. Prof. Baldev Raj, Director NIAS and Prof. Ramamurthy, former director of NIAS and formerly the Secretary of the, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, along with other scientist and science communicators are finding time to lead the student-scientist interactions, and also share their experiences with students and answer their queries.

Water being one of the topics of prime importance for our nation, the focal theme of the activities of the 'student scientist' this year is 'Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH)'. The project team – Dr. V V Binoy (Coordinator - student scientist initiative), A Arun and T R Kumara Swamy (Junior Research Fellows)- is conducting training programmes for student scientists at various nodes of the network. Students are trained to estimate the water quality using standard water testing kits, conduct the neighborhood studies on water issues and to record the impact of summer on the environment and society. The observation and reflections of the student scientists and their friends on 'surviving the fury of the last summer' will be published as a booklet soon. The activities of student scientist are financially supported by National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC), Department of Science and Technology, Government of India through a major research project titled 'Understanding the role of 'student networks' in creating awareness about environment, water, sanitation and hygiene in rural and socio- economically marginalized areas'.

Article and pictures provided by Dr. V. V. Binoy, NIAS Bangalore

For further information:

http://www.nias.res.in/wash/

https://www.facebook.com/studentscientistnias

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2.4 "EURAXESS Science Slam India"

The EURAXESS Science Slam India is a competition open to all career levels researchers starting with MA/M.Sc. candidates (research-based or mixed) - from universities, research institutes or private sector, in all fields of research including Social Sciences and Humanities, Life Sciences and Engineering, of any nationality and age (18+) who are based in India. This competition is part of the 4th EURAXESS Science Slam taking place in ASEAN, Brazil, China and India.

The competition has two stages: (i) the 'Virtual' Pre-selection (online) where candidates will submit a short video in a creative, entertaining and accessible way; and (ii) the Live Finals where the finalists will perform in front of the review panel and a mixed audience who will choose the winner.

The pre-selection phase of the 2016 edition closed on 2 October 2016.

If you are Hyderabad based, you will have the chance to attend and choose the EURAXESS Science Slammer India 2016 at the LIVE finals on 18 November 2016. Stay tuned to register!

To find all about the EURAXESS Science Slam visit EURAXESS Links India website and follow us on Facebook/EuraxessLinksIndia.

The 1st prize this year will be the EURAXESS Science Slammer title and a round trip to Europe to visit Brussels (Belgium) and a research institute of the winner's choice in the European Union in 2017. All the finalists will receive a short science communication training on 22 October 2016 in Bengaluru.

EURAXESS Science Slam India Partners and Support organisations (2016)

EURAXESS Science Slam India finalists 2014 (above) and 2015 (below)

3 In Focus l Meet Brian Holmes, Director, European Commission Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA) l On Erasmus+

With a budget of €14.7 billion for the period 2014-2020, Erasmus+ aims to support actions in the fields of Education, Training, Youth and Sport.

The programme gives opportunities to students, trainees, staff and volunteers to spend a period abroad to increase their skills and employability. It supports also organisations to work in transnational partnership, to modernise and improve their education systems. Erasmus+ includes a strong international dimension (i.e. cooperation with non-EU countries) notably in the field of higher education and youth, which opens the programme to institutional cooperation and mobility of young people and staff worldwide. The Sport action supports grassroots projects and cross-border challenges such as combating match-fixing, doping, violence and racism.

You are the director of the European Commission Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA). Could you please tell us about the agency's main activities?

The Agency's mission is to support European projects that connect people and cultures, reach out to the world and make a difference. We implement EU programmes in the fields of education, culture, audiovisual, sport, citizenship and volunteering while ensuring high quality service to beneficiaries, efficiency and financial transparency. Under the current mandate, the Agency is responsible for the whole lifecycle of project management, from contributing to calls for proposals, to ensuring selection processes and contracting, and later on, providing administrative and financial management support to grant beneficiaries. The Agency operates in close collaboration with the European Commission, providing crucial information on the major outcomes from the implementation of the programme that is in turn exploited for programme design.

Students' mobility is not a goal in itself. What is to be achieved from students' mobility? Which important skills are you expecting students to gain?

The Erasmus+ programme is our flagship of mobility for education and training. The ambition is that by 2020 the programme will have provided support to 2 million higher education students, 650,000 vocational training students and apprentices, and funded more than 500,000 youth exchanges or volunteering abroad.

But, as you say, mobility is not a goal in itself. Experience shows that this programme is working and that it really makes a difference both for students and higher education institutions. Today, universities are expected to prepare students for the complexities of modern life, aligning in particular their skills to the specific needs of the labour market. Learning abroad brings with it the chance to engage with scholars from other parts of the world, to live in another

Erasmus+

For more information about Erasmus+: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/

Please note the following definitions:

Programme Countries: all 28 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

Partner Countries: Countries in the rest of the world, including Brazil and other Latin American countries.

To sum up for students and researchers:

Individuals cannot apply to the Erasmus+ Call for Proposals. They can find out more about scholarship opportunities from their International Relations Office within their home university (credit mobility) or can apply directly to the consortium offering the Joint Master Degree of their choice (Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees).

Note that within the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMD) programme, **75 % of scholarships** offered are earmarked for **candidates who are nationals of non-EU countries** (partner countries).

*From 2014 onwards, new Doctoral Programmes and additional doctoral fellowships will be available under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, which form part of the EU's Horizon 2020 programme for research and innovation.

culture, and to reap the benefits, both at personal and professional level. In this respect, various studies indicate that employers tend to value the additional 'soft' skills, which graduates gain through international mobility. These include intercultural and communication skills, foreign language skills but also curiosity, problem-solving skills, tolerance and confidence. Mobility also gives indication of the student's ability and willingness to deal with new situations, to be open to new experiences.

At university level, mobility still represents the core element around which most internationalisation strategies are built. The effects of internationalisation have a strong, positive impact on universities, where the cross border cooperation between academic and staff often favours the development of new curricula and ways of working.

Statistics - What are the benefits of mobility (study/research in Europe) on a career?

Mobility is a booster for career development. The results of the 2015 Erasmus Mundus Graduate Impact Survey show for instance that Erasmus Mundus graduates have higher employment rates than other graduates. At the time of the survey two-thirds of graduates had found a job, and of those almost 60% had found their job within less than two months from graduation.

Similarly, the Erasmus Impact Study shows that Erasmus students have a 23% lower unemployment rate five years after graduation; their risk of long-term unemployment is half or less when compared to non-mobile students. Almost two thirds of employers think that international experience is important for recruitment, compared to 37% in 2006. Furthermore, young people who have been mobile during their studies have a greater chance of having a management position ten years after graduation compared to non-mobile students.

Does the nationality matter or is it where the student/researcher is based at the time of applying to one of your programmes that counts?

Erasmus+ offers to students at Bachelor and Master level and Doctoral candidates opportunities to study abroad, supporting exchanges within Erasmus+ Programme countries and to and from Partner countries (non EU-countries).

To benefit from these opportunities students have to apply through an organisation taking part in the programme. Although the exact eligibility conditions may vary from one action to another, the eligibility of students depends both upon their nationality but in some cases also the country in which they are based.

For instance, within the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMD) programme, 75 % of scholarships offered are earmarked for candidates who are nationals of non-EU countries (Partner Countries). However, partner country students are considered as such only if they are not residents nor have carried out their main professional activity in a Programme Country for more than 12 months in the five years preceding the relevant call deadline. To give you an example, a Morocco national who has studied in France in the two years immediately before the call deadline would be assimilated to a French national for eligibility purposes.

What does Erasmus have to offer to students and Higher Edication Institutions outside Europe, namely in Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brazil, China, India, the United States and Canada, all countries where EURAXESS Links is active?

Erasmus+ offers a large array of possibilities to engage in cross-border learning and exchange. A core element of the programme is indeed its international dimension, which aims to support the development and modernisation of higher education, to enhance the expertise of university staff, and improve the skills and employability of students in third countries, while enhancing the attractiveness of EU higher education.

Erasmus+ continues to support excellent students through joint Master degrees, which are offered by consortia of EU and non-EU universities. A minimum of 75% of EMJMD scholarships are earmarked for candidates from non-EU countries – Partner Countries. Additional scholarships are also offered for one or more specific regions of Partner Countries of the world and financed by different EU external funding instruments.

Within credit mobility, the Erasmus+ programme is now open also to non-EU universities, students and staff.

Capacity building supports joint projects based on multilateral partnerships to fund curriculum development and modernisation, joint or double degrees, improving university governance and creating better links between higher education and the world of work.

The Jean Monnet action promotes excellence in teaching and research in the field of European Union studies worldwide. It focuses on mutual understanding and is set to provide important elements of critical knowledge about regional integration processes.

In your opinion, what could be done to further enhance the mobility of international students between Europe and India (or other EURAXESS Links countries)?

The tertiary student population has grown exponentially in recent years. Overall, the number of higher education students in the world is expected to reach 400 million in 2030, particularly in the developing and emerging economies, such as Asia and Latin America. Europe has been an attractive destination for students and scholars worldwide; however, more and more countries are expanding and raising the quality of their higher education. Competition for the best students, researchers and staff is therefore intensifying. Higher education institutions must invest to increase their attractiveness and actively promote international mobility of students and staff, by providing innovative curricula together with excellence in teaching and research opportunities. In this, Erasmus+ and in particular the actions covering the international dimension can strongly contribute to creating the right conditions to further enhance students and staff mobility.

A number of limiting factors have also been exposed, with academic recognition on qualifications topping the list.

Looking at the European landscape, recognition of qualifications from universities of different countries remains a priority for Europe. The Bologna Process and transparency tools such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) have helped EU national higher education systems to support the

transparency and recognition of knowledge, skills, and competences, making it easier to study and work anywhere in Europe. Yet the process is far from being completed, and internationalisation has now taken a global dimension.

The EU is therefore committed to support initiatives that will facilitate transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications, as well as the transfer of credits, foster quality assurance, support skills management and guidance.
Since the beginning of the cooperation between the EU and India, academic recognition has always been given high consideration in the educational policy dialogues. Improving the situation of students facing difficulties with the academic recognition of their qualifications remains therefore a top priority.

4 In case you missed it...

4.1 From our Flashnotes (July-September)

(click on the respective link for more details)

EU: New, Easier Visa and Stay Conditions for Non-EU Students & Researchers

European Research Council (ERC) l Upcoming calls 2016/2017

Horizon 2020 Calls co-funded by DBT (Government of India) – REMINDER

Horizon 2020 Calls co-funded by DST (Government of India) – NEW

Funding Opportunities Septermber 2016 Issue

EURAXESS Event -2nd Communicating Science Out of the Lab on 22 October!

Two events (VSI & SEIS) by Startup Europe India Network in October 2016 (India)

EU-India R&I in the field of environmental sciences applied to the decontamination of polluted waters and soils l Networking Conference

EURAXESS Science Slam India 2016 l Join the LIVE finals on 18 November!

4.2 Event Outlook (October-December)

Event (click on event title for more details)	Location	Date (2016)
6.1 Europe		
Events announced under Horizon 2020 website The website includes information on the Information Days by the European Commission and Brokerage events	*Check link*	*Check link*
6.2 India		
Startup Europe India Network: Visit Startup India ("VSI")	New Delhi and Bengaluru	17-20 October
Startup Europe India Network: Startup EU-India Summit ("SEIS") *EURAXESS Links India will be there*	Bengaluru	20 October
2nd Communicating Science out of the Lab – EURAXESS Event organised with NIAS and TIFR Outreach (EURAXESS event)	Bengaluru	22 October
12th FICCI Higher Education Summit – The EU chief guest A Global Conference & Exhibition Education for Tomorrow: 'Learn in India-Learn for the World' *EURAXESS Links India will be there*	New Delhi	10-12 November
EU-India R&I in the field of environmental sciences applied to the decontamination of polluted waters and soils l Networking Conference	New Delhi	16-17 November
EURAXESS Science Slam India 2016 l Live finals in partnership with BITS Pilani, IndiaBioscience and Nuffic Neso India – Study in Holland! And supported by B M Birla Science Centre and Finnair	Hyderabad	18 November