

Quarterly
Newsletter
Issue 2
2020

EURAXESS NORTH AMERICA

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we continue through the second half of the year, we adjust to the new normal and begin a strong push to make our info sessions available online through live webinars and recorded videos. Subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#) as we make our 2020 content available, and keep an eye on the News and Events sections on the [EURAXESS North America homepage](#) as we announce more activities, and [send us an email](#) if you have suggestions for the types of online events you'd like us to put together. We are happy to take any and all feedback, as well as reach out to partner organizations of interest to create custom content—so let us know how we can help!

Enjoy reading the newsletter and wishing you good health!

–Your EURAXESS North America Team

The information contained in this publication is intended for personal use only. It should not be taken in any way to reflect the views of the European Commission nor of the Delegation of the European Union to the USA or the Delegation of the European Union to Canada.

This newsletter is also intended as a communication tool with you all, so please do not hesitate to contact us at NorthAmerica@euraxess.net for comments, corrections, or if you want to advertise a particular funding scheme or event.

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KARACAN

EURAXESS North America Team

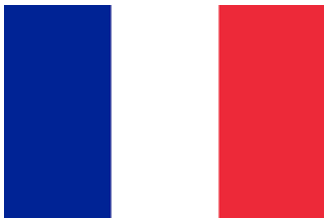


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1 EURAXESS country in focus: France – A decade of change



Introduction

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

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

Research and Development in France

In France, it is the [Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation \(MESRI\)](#), which designs, develops and implements the national research and innovation agenda.

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

A large part of French public research is carried out in higher education institutions. Its organisation relies principally on a two-tier system with universities on one side and national research organisations on the other. Collaboration between the two



kinds of entities is achieved in so-called 'mixed research' units (UMR), i.e. laboratories whose management and monitoring is shared by one or more organisations and/or universities.

France

Capital

Paris

Major cities

Bordeaux, Grenoble, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Montpellier, Nantes, Nice, Rennes, Strasbourg, Toulouse

Language

French

Political system

Republic

Currency

Euro

Area

244,340 sq. mi. (632,834 km²), 213,010 sq. mi. (551,695 km²) of which are considered metropolitan France

Promotional page about France:

<https://www.france.fr/en>

EURAXESS France

<https://www.euraxess.fr/>

CPU

<http://www.cpu.fr/presentation/presentation-of-the-cpu/>

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

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

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

For more information, please visit:

<https://nest-com.com/comprendre-lecosysteme-de-linnovation-france/>.

Funding and Recruitment Opportunities

Research funding

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

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

Two more mechanisms specifically targeted at research and innovation include:

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



Recruitment opportunities

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

- [EURAXESS Jobs](#), the European Portal, (click on France)
- [ABG \(L'Intelli'Agence\)](#)
- [Campus France grant search engine](#), listing all the grants and scholarship programmes available from national institutions, local governments, corporations, foundations, and institutions of higher education

Important Information for Incoming Researchers

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

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

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

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

EURAXESS Centres are distributed across the whole French territory: find your nearest [EURAXESS Centre here](#).

EU Council Presidency

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



2 Interview with the Office for Science and Technology at the Embassy of France in Washington, DC

To accompany the French country profile in this quarterly newsletter, we interviewed Dr. Yves Frénot, Counselor for Science and Technology at the Embassy of France to the United States. Read on to learn about France's comprehensive efforts in S&T beyond its borders.



**AMBASSADE
DE FRANCE
AUX ÉTATS-UNIS**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

**Service pour la Science
et la Technologie**
Office for Science and
Technology

France seems to be one of only a few countries whose Embassy makes science a priority at a federal level as well as at a state level. How is having science diplomats in French Consulates throughout the USA particularly beneficial?

The organisation of the [Office for Science and Technology \(OST\)](#) at the Embassy of France in the United States is quite unique, but it is a great asset. The OST is a network of 22 colleagues posted at the Embassy in Washington, DC and in the Consulates of 6 other cities (Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco).

Each member of our team has different scientific expertise and brings a different set of skills. Having our network organised this way allows us to cover most of the scientific fields, from emerging technologies (such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, 5G and quantum computing), biotechnology and medical research, to research related to agriculture, the environment, and global issues such as climate change, biodiversity, plastic pollution, and more.

Having such a rich and diverse team is very beneficial for the development of strong and lasting relations with our scientific partners in the USA. It offers us an opportunity to be in close contact with the different research and innovation ecosystems, to better understand local needs and interests, and to identify areas where Franco-American collaboration would be valuable.



What are some priority research areas in French science in 2020?

Among the French priorities in research and, as a consequence, the priorities of my office, I would mention four main areas:

- Research related to environmental issues such as the impact of climate change, the conservation of biodiversity, and plastic pollution;
- Research on digital and emerging technologies including AI, blockchain, quantum computing, and cybersecurity;
- Health and medical research, whose issues are currently exacerbated thanks to COVID-19;
- Space research through the French National Centre for Space Studies (CNES).

What are some noteworthy examples of Franco-American research collaboration in recent years?

For example, the Embassy of France in the USA organised a Franco-American seminar on microplastic pollution in the ocean that took place in Le Mans, France in December 2019. The meeting brought together over 40 experts from both countries and led to the creation of a joint project between the CNRS's GDR 2050 'Polymers and Oceans' network of over 200 researchers and 50 research institutes and the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE). The project received funding from the Richard Lounsbery Foundation to trace the surge in plastic pollution and its impact during the 2020 pandemic.

Earlier this year, the French-American Innovation Days (FAID) event in Houston brought leaders from academia, industry, and government together with experts in the field of AI in manufacturing to discuss a possible vision for Industry 4.0. These events create opportunities for different stakeholders to get together and reinforce ties between the French and American research communities.

The space partnership between France and the United States is one of the oldest and most emblematic in the scientific and technical fields. NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are major partners of the CNES (and vice versa). The CNES maintains its historic cooperation with the Americans, namely in robotic exploration programmes for Mars, and in oceanography and altimetry. The CNES is also involved in Artemis, NASA's flagship programme to return astronauts to the Moon in 2024.

How has the global pandemic affected Franco-American research relations and what was the response from your office?

In many ways, the COVID-19 crisis took the scientific community by surprise, but French and American researchers have quickly responded to jointly search for innovative, preventative, and therapeutic measures. By the end of March, 17 American laboratories had published 7 articles with the involvement of French scientists. In the following two months, more than 60 laboratories contributed to



over 50 Franco-American co-publications concentrating on epidemiological studies, therapeutic solutions, and vaccines.

Inserm, the CNRS, and Institut Pasteur are the leading French institutions that collaborate with American colleagues. For instance, the Quantitative Bioscience Institute at UC San Francisco, Institut Pasteur and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai have been collaborating to study the SARS-CoV-2 virus and have already identified FDA-approved drugs that could be repurposed.

French expertise in the medical field allows our researchers to lead strong innovation projects, and French companies such as BioMérieux in Atlanta or Sanofi in Boston have been very active. French startup Iktos, a former laureate of our NETVA support programme, also made headlines by announcing a collaboration with American SRI International to use AI for the accelerated development of new antiviral therapies.

From our office's perspective, the crisis has been as challenging as it has been for the rest of the world. Many requests for information have come in about the research carried out in the USA or ways to connect with colleagues here. These challenging times have provided an opportunity to become more innovative in terms of getting researchers and stakeholders to engage in collaborative projects and to better communicate about science and cooperation.

For researchers and students interested in potential ways to get involved, are there joint research opportunities?

Many programmes exist between France and the USA to promote and support joint scientific projects and student mobility at different levels of education.

The OST manages, in particular, the bilateral funds financed by the government of France and specific universities, including MIT, Stanford, Berkeley, the University of Chicago, and UT Austin. A call for collaborative projects is sent out every year and funds are made available to support student/researcher mobility and to help organise scientific events.

For PhD students at American universities, the **Chateaubriand Fellowship** provides funds for conducting research in France for periods of 4 to 9 months. Different French research organisations such as Inserm, Inria, and Université Paris-Saclay are partners, as is the USA's National Science Foundation (NSF), through its GROW programme.

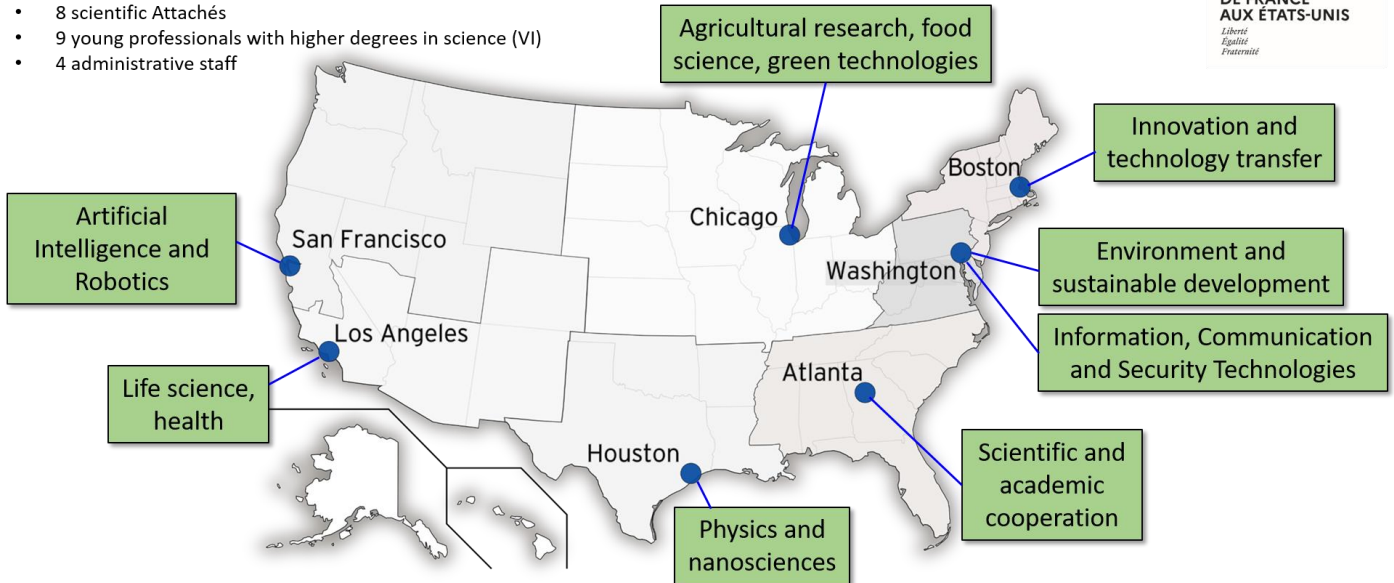
The **Thomas Jefferson Fund** is another programme that supports new collaborations and the most innovative projects from promising young researchers in France and the United States.





Office for Science and Technology

- 1 Counselor
- 8 scientific Attachés
- 9 young professionals with higher degrees in science (VI)
- 4 administrative staff



A map of the OST's presence throughout the U.S., with professional staff based at the Embassy of France in Washington, DC and most of France's Consulates-General in the country.



3 Hot topic: COVID-19 will have a huge impact on researcher mobility and the academic world – but how exactly?

COVID-19, the pandemic that has ravaged the world for most of 2020, continues to take a massive toll on lives, health systems, economies and society in general. It also has a huge impact on researchers – their physical mobility, the way they work, and how they interact and cooperate through international research networks.

Restrictions on travel and social interactions, which hinder movement within and between countries, make conference participation impossible, thwart international research cooperation, and prevent researchers from visiting partner institutions or working and conducting research in them.

A lot has been written about the effects of these trends on academic teaching. We know that universities have moved towards online classes and are preparing for much-reduced enrolments for the upcoming academic year, especially from foreign students. According to one study, some 36% of students are considering changing their study plans.

But much less is known so far about COVID-19's impact on research, the other side of academia. Research priorities are changing and research budgets have been reallocated. Many people interested in research positions abroad are reconsidering their plans because of travel restrictions, financial uncertainties and other pressures. A lot of uncertainty remains. Researchers are asking themselves questions like: *How can I carry out research and cooperate with my international peers under the new conditions? Can I still research abroad under these circumstances? Should I postpone it? Should I abandon it?* Research institutes and universities are asking: *How should we prepare for the emerging new research context? Do we need new online research collaboration tools? How can we maintain our research excellence? Can we host guest researchers under these circumstances?*

Nobody has answers to these questions at the moment, but researchers around the world are working hard to try and find them. To support and accelerate this process, EURAXESS will carry out a global survey to collect information about current thinking around these issues and the most recent innovative ideas for solutions.

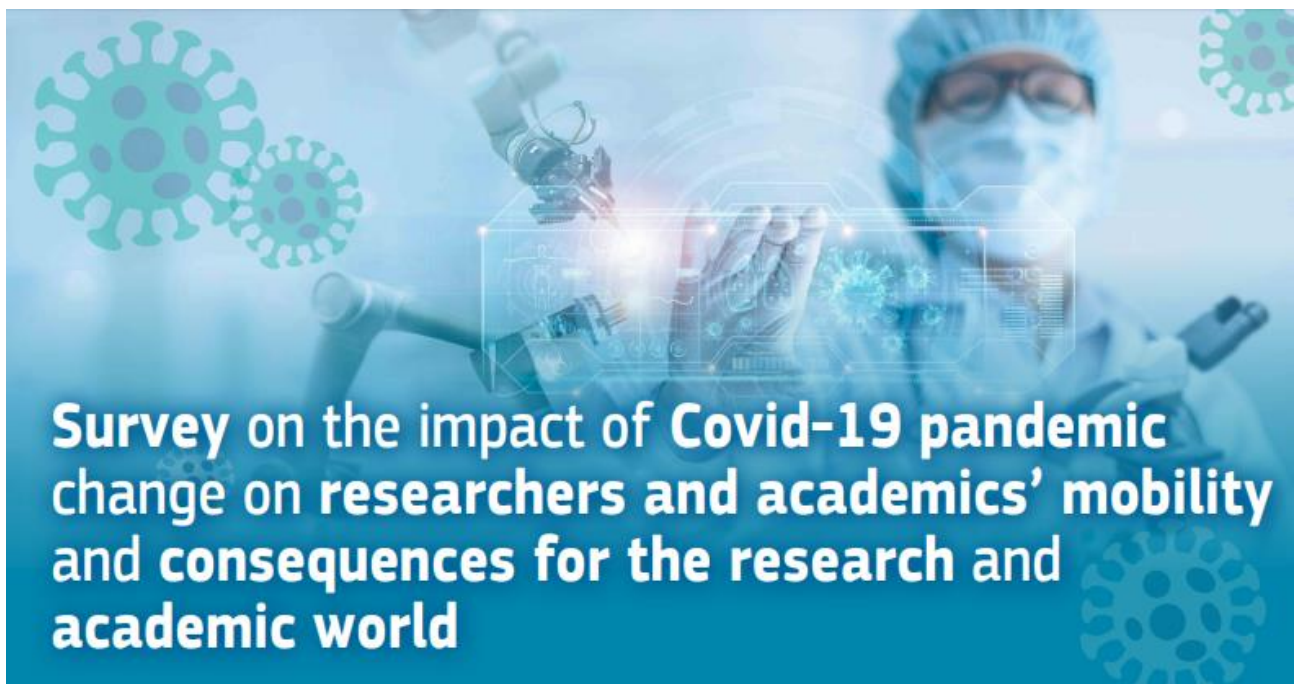
This survey will also explore how changes related to COVID-19 are affecting researcher/academic mobility, especially EU-centric mobility, as well as the potential wider consequences for the research and academic world – financial effects, research output and quality, career qualifications, hosting dynamics, etc.



The survey results will provide researchers with concrete information for their work and career agendas, and create valuable insights for policymakers.

With members in some 40 European countries and in all major regions of the world, the EURAXESS network is uniquely placed to conduct this representative survey. As a first step, the survey will collect information from researchers about their situations and perceptions, and the prospects for international mobility in the days of COVID-19. Following this, a complementary survey of universities, research institutions and research policymakers will explore the possibilities and prospects of hosting international researchers and fostering research mobility under the new conditions. The results will help researchers to re-shape their international collaboration and mobility plans, and support host institutions and policymakers in formulating new strategies and policies to maintain international researcher mobility.

For more information, please contact survey@Euraxess.net with your queries or ideas.





4 In case you missed it...

Upcoming webinars

While not a complete list, below are a few upcoming virtual events of ours for which you can sign up to attend now or save the date.

<u>Event</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>Organized by</u>	<u>URL</u>
EURAXESS Webinar on Finding STEM Research Opportunities in Europe and France	7 August 2020	Virtual	EURAXESS North America, in partnership with Afrisnet and Association Bernard Gregory (ABG)	Link
EURAXESS Webinar on Finding STEM Research Opportunities in Europe and Germany	14 August 2020	Virtual	EURAXESS North America, in partnership with Afrisnet and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)	Link
EURAXESS Virtual Coffee Chat with a Science Diplomat: Austria Interview	20 August 2020	Virtual	EURAXESS North America, in partnership with the Office of Science and Technology Austria (OSTA) at the Embassy of Austria to the U.S.	Link
EURAXESS Webinar on European Research Council (ERC) Grants	16 September 2020	Virtual	EURAXESS North America, in partnership with the European Research Council (ERC)	Save the date

About EURAXESS North America

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

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

To sign up for membership in our network, [subscribe here](#).

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