

Quarterly
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EURAXESS NORTH AMERICA

Dear Friends and Colleagues!

Being the gateway to the European Research Area (ERA), EURAXESS takes pride in providing an array of information on Europe's vibrant and dynamic research landscape, from latest strides and achievements to funding and partnership opportunities through our new and improved [portal](#) and beyond!

In the fourth 2019 issue, we are zooming into Serbia as one of the European Research Area's destinations. The second article brings you a brief of the event we held in Montreal, in collaboration with Concordia University, called 'Collaborating with Europe under a new context'. Our hot topic for this issue is very dear to our hearts as we were happy to see a new scientific diaspora come to life: the Swedish Trans-Atlantic Researchers & Scholars (STARS) Network.

EURAXESS North America is very pleased to provide you with the latest news and developments from the ERA. As always, we strive to offer a selection of articles to engage our growing community of researchers and science advocates in North America, and include recent and very interesting R&D news from the European Research Area, Canada and the United States. If you wish to receive the latest funding opportunities, please subscribe [HERE](#).

Enjoy reading the newsletter!

Happy Holidays and a great start to the New Year!

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 for a particular funding scheme or event

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Population (2017): 7,02 million
(World Bank)

GDP (2017): 41,4 billion USD
(World Bank)

89th largest economy in the
world in 2017 (World Bank)

Global Innovation Index
(2018): 55/126 (World
Intellectual Property
Organization)

Global Competitiveness Index
(2017-2018): 78/137 (World
Economic Forum)

Gross domestic expenditure
on R&D in % of GDP (2017):
0,89 (EUROSTAT)

Scientific/technical journal
articles per million inhabitants
(2016): 712,1 (World Bank)

Ease of Doing Business score
(2018): 73,13 (World Bank)



Dam of the Iron Gates -
Serbia - Rumania

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1 EURAXESS Country in Focus: SERBIA

1.1 Introduction of the national research landscape

Outlook of R&D ecosystem

In terms of both quantity and quality, R&D landscape is dominated by **state and public research organisations**. There are seven public universities with 89 faculties acting as independent legal units involved in tertiary education and R&D. Some of the universities host research institutes, while the other organisations are either independent or affiliated to Serbian Academy of Sciences or Arts.

Research funding

Most of the research funding comes from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development which runs the framework, comprised of the basic science, technology development and interdisciplinary research actions. However, this framework is expected to be significantly revamped in 2019, as a result of recently passed legislation on National Science Fund.

Since 2011, the [Serbian Innovation Fund](#) implements various financial aid instruments for fostering the establishment of new and strengthening the existing innovative companies, by allowing them to access venture capital markets, and by attracting foreign direct investment in the high-tech research and development sectors. It also awards successful industry-academia collaborations through the Collaborative Grant Scheme for R&D Organisations and Private Sector Enterprises; it helps different stakeholders focusing on the technology transfer aspect of innovation through the Technology Transfer Facility programme; and it implements a number of mini and matching grants.

Research impact

For years, especially since 2009, Serbia is regularly being endorsed as a rising star in different scientific fields as it has achieved the highest percentage increase in total citations, based on bi-monthly Essential Science Indicators from Clarivate Analytics. According to [Scimago Journal & Country rank](#), Serbia is ranked as 57th in number of citations, better than many European countries.

Regarding the participation in Horizon 2020 framework, Serbia is one of the top performers in the region, with 76.3 million € of net EU contribution and 158 unique participants. When considering its very low national investment in science and research (0.89% of GDP in 2017), all this can be taken as an exceptional result and reflection of its highly skilled work force in this domain.

Open science

In 2018, Serbian government formally adopted a [national open science policy](#). The policy mandates deposits of all publicly funded research in open access (OA) repositories and recommends OA to research data. It also places a call to organisations for adopting institutional policies and repositories in the next six months. This is the latest addition to previous initiatives, such as local directories



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 North America newsletters. In the December 2019 edition, we zoomed in on Serbia.

READ OUR EURAXESS countries in FOCUS:

Focuses on other EU countries are available [here](#).

BioSense institute

[BioSense Institute](#) is one of the success stories. It is a research organisation striving at introducing advanced IT in agriculture, food safety, ecology and environmental protection. It was kicked-off in 2006 and today it is recognised as European Center of Excellence, with 190 researchers, state of the art equipment and facilities and immense networking capital gained in multiple collaborative projects, funded by FP7, Horizon 2020 and other frameworks. BioSense has established the first Living Lab for precision agriculture which actively engages relevant domestic SMEs, companies, farmers, decision makers and other beneficiaries. It hosts many other forms of collaboration such as demonstration farms, shared research facilities, accelerator and more.

of OA journals ([doiSerbia](#) and [SCIndeks](#)) and [national open access portal for PhD theses and dissertations](#).

About PhD studies

All public universities have accredited doctoral programmes in different scientific fields, welcoming also international students. The outlook of those programmes is very similar to the ones of other European academic organisations; it takes 3 years to complete, it involves attending courses (typically in the first 3 semesters) and independent research (second 3 semesters). The admission to a doctoral programme is conditioned to the completion of a master's degree programme. Typically, the successful completion is conditioned by the results published or accepted for publication in scientific journals with a given impact factor associated to it. Every doctoral student has typically one mentor. Formally, there are three committees involved in the development of a doctoral thesis. First, there is the committee approving the subject and the title of the thesis. Second, the committee responsible for evaluating the thesis, and the third committee, appointed for the defense procedure.

Top research performers

Besides major public universities in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kragujevac and Niš, top research performers (based on national funding) in Serbia include: [Institute of Physics](#), [Vinča Institute of Nuclear Sciences](#), [Institute Mihajlo Pupin](#), [Institute for Biological Research „Siniša Stanković“](#) and [Institute of Chemistry, Technology and Metallurgy](#).

1.2 International cooperation

International cooperation is one of the top priorities of the national R&D ecosystem. All universities have very active international cooperation offices, while there are also similar institutional initiatives on the faculty level. Serbia is associated to the European research funding frameworks since FP7 (2007) and it is considered as an equal opportunity stakeholder in ERA. It participates in the H2020 programme development (19 Programme Committee members), it is committed to supporting local scientists in grant development through the network of National Contact Points (17 NCPs) and mobility (5 EURAXESS Centres). For years, Serbian government maintains its own fund of science collaboration grants with a number of countries. Bilateral cooperation with People Republic of China is one of the recent additions to this programme and it has shown to be quite successful in the first round of funding (2017-2019).

Serbian participation in Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

According to [MSCA Country profile](#), 40 foreign researchers have been hosted by Serbian R&D organizations in period 2014-2020, most of them in RISE actions. However, as the interest in national R&D landscape for participation is growing (68 different organizations have participated in some MSCA action in the period above), this number is expected to significantly increase in the future.



1.3 Working as a researcher and living in Serbia

Since 2013, Serbian organisations are involved in achieving the highest level of commitment to the principles of [The European Charter and Code for Researchers](#) (so called, Charter and Code), demonstrating their care for human resources as the Country's most valuable asset. In the period of 2013-2019, all public universities have been awarded HR Excellence in Research label by the European Commission as an endorsement to successfully implemented HR management policies.

Work culture in Serbia is similar to the one dominant in Mediterranean countries. People prefer informal behavior and open communication; they cherish personal relationships. Serbs tend to respect the deadlines, agreements and obligations. Fluency in foreign language (especially English) is very high.

According to the [statistical office of Republic of Serbia](#), out of 16,000 researchers employed in different R&D organisations (including industry), 50.04% are women. Some under-representation is visible at management layers though: 38.3% of all managers of R&D organisations are women.

Despite the rising quality of living and modern facilities, Serbia is still a cheap country to live in. Based on [Numbeo online service](#) index, it is ranked 89th of 119 countries, more expensive than Turkey, Philippines, Mexico and India, slightly cheaper than Russia, Bulgaria, Poland and China. According to Numbeo crowd-sourced data, the typical basket of goods and services for 3-member household with apartment rent costs approx. 1,600 EUR (for comparison, the cost of the same basket in Amsterdam is 5,000 EUR, in Boston, USA: 6,400 EUR).

On the latest release of the Transparency International corruption perception indexes, Serbia takes 72nd position (of 176 countries), with the global average score.

EURAXESS Serbia

Serbia joined EURAXESS in 2009. Since 2011, 5 EURAXESS Service Centres are continuously providing support to researchers on the topics such as relocation and career development. Since 2017, two Career Development Centers (in Belgrade and Niš) are actively involved in the network. EURAXESS Serbian coordinator (Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Niš) is continuously and actively engaged in network collaboration, especially in EURAXESS portal development (leader of TOPIV WP8 Open EURAXESS portals) and Open Science initiative, HRS4R assessment, different think-tanks (WG Network Management) and service data analysis (EURAXESS Service Data tool).



Photo credit: Concordia International

2 Concordia explores the future of scientific collaboration between Canada and the EU

A new European Union research program could lead to more cooperation between scholars on both sides of the Atlantic.

On December 3, [Concordia International](#) and [EURAXESS North America](#) brought together a panel with expertise on EU/Canadian policy and research collaboration to discuss emerging opportunities for Canadian researchers.

Panel moderator [Patrick Leroux](#), associate dean of research for Concordia's [Faculty of Arts and Science](#), says the university stands to gain by facilitating these discussions.

“For Concordia to be a significant part of the international research landscape, we need to help our researchers become actively engaged in multinational research teams that share methods, best practices, resources, and expertise,” he adds.

“Beyond the expanded funding possibilities, international collaborations offer opportunities for stimulating expansive research and for student and faculty mobility.”

More systematic support for collaborations

Julio Sevilla is international projects manager for Concordia International and an organiser of the event.

“Recent research and innovation policy developments in Canada and the EU promise an enhanced participation of Canadian researchers in European programs such as Horizon Europe 2021-27,” he says.

“This represents a good opportunity for Concordia researchers to continue building on their bilateral collaborations. We are here to support them.”

Invited guests included researchers from universities across the province, representatives of various European embassies and consulates and government officials from Quebec and Canada.

Dominique Bérubé, vice-president of research programs for the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), was one of the speakers at the event.

“This is an ongoing conversation between individual researchers, the community and the support agencies,” she says.

“We’re trying to give a stronger and more unified response to what the communities have been asking for, in terms of more systematic support to their collaboration.”



Photo credit: Concordia International

Horizon Europe

The first set of panelists discussed what tools are at the community's disposal and what policy developments can be expected from different levels of government. Horizon Europe, the program currently being developed to succeed Horizon 2020, is the EU's largest research funding program yet, with €100 billion being invested.

Sharing similar research priorities, the EU and Canada benefit by sharing facilities, equipment and areas of expertise. Canadians currently have individual and European Council grant opportunities with Horizon 2020 but the goal is to go beyond that.

Luigi Scarpa de Masellis of the Delegation of the European Union to Canada says the proposal for Horizon Europe would extend associations to third (non-EU) countries. Canada fits the requirements, having advanced science technology and innovation capacities.

'Science is global'

Advice and recommendations were provided by the second set of panelists who have themselves experienced the learning curves and benefits of such collaboration.

"It's really changed the way we do research," says Frédéric Mérand, professor of political science and director of the Montreal Centre for International Studies at Université de Montréal. "It's completely structured our careers, it's produced real scientific results and it's not that difficult to get into."

Still, given the different requirements between each European country and university, applying for grants may be cumbersome. Viktoria Bodnarova, EURAXESS Regional Representative for North America, says people need to know where to go and what's available before they can apply for opportunities.

EURAXESS provides an online portal that functions as a one-stop-shop where researchers can go for information about potential European partners and grants.

"Science is global," Bodnarova says. "So if you want to be successful or if you want to tackle the big global societal challenges, you really need to have collaborators around the world."



Photo credit: Concordia International



3 HOT TOPIC: Establishing a Scientific Diaspora Network in North America

By: Sofia Sedergren, STARS President

Tuesday, December 10, 2019 marked the official launch of the Swedish Trans-Atlantic Researchers & Scholars (STARS) Network, the latest scientific diaspora network to join EURAXESS North America. The STARS launch was the result of months of planning and hard work, building the foundation for what promises to be a very engaged and dynamic diaspora. The idea of STARS was born through an unrelated networking opportunity, which highlights the power of European scientific diaspora: these platforms give birth to new and exciting ideas through interdisciplinary networking.



STARS Network Logo. Developed by Patrik Gebhardt.

The work of developing STARS was directed by the joint expertise of Dimah Mahmoud and Viktoria Bodnarova at EURAXESS North America, who have summarised their knowledge in a guide on how to establish a scientific diaspora network. The building of STARS began in September of 2019, and though the network is still in its early stages, the EURAXESS guide has been a tremendous help in building a strong foundation of the STARS Network. By regularly referring back to the tips provided by EURAXESS, we have been able to continuously move the development of STARS forward and identifying strong partners to help STARS grow. The guide successfully outlines the fundamental questions any network creator should ask themselves before embarking on this journey and highlights strategies which other networks have employed to establish a presence in North America.

1. Do Your Research

The first step in the EURAXESS guide outlines which questions to answer before beginning the journey of building a scientific diaspora network. In the case of STARS, the early partnership with EURAXESS gave us access to some of the answers to those questions immediately. We knew that there is a plethora of



Swedish networks in North America, but none of these centers on research and science, but rather focus on Swedish industry and culture. The development of STARS was, therefore, a great complement to the already established Swedish networks in North America. Additionally, though academic exchanges between Sweden and North America are common, there is no structure to these connections and they often take place on a student to student or researcher to researcher basis. By identifying these gaps, we have been able to develop STARS' structure and mission, attempting to fill the gaps that exists through STARS' activities and network.

2. Reach out to Your Embassy

Because the Embassy is an established player, their support can help in the process of establishing a new scientific diaspora network. Often, this support is not financial, but an opportunity to expand the reach of the diaspora network and provide a platform for the network to develop. STARS contacts with the Embassy of Sweden in Washington, D.C. have been overwhelmingly positive, and the Embassy has provided support in a number of ways during the establishment of STARS. Through our collaboration with the Embassy of Sweden, we have initiated relationships with the Swedish Chambers of Commerce, and have also

been able to tap into their connections with Swedish and American universities to increase transatlantic academic collaboration. The Embassy also generously lent their conference space to EURAXESS 5th Annual Meeting of European Scientific Diasporas where the STARS Network was officially launched.

3. Identify the Co-Creators

The process of identifying co-creators who will play a key role in the development and growth of your network is one of the most crucial steps in EURAXESS' guide. For STARS, it has also been the most challenging aspect of establishing our network this far. STARS' target audience are researchers and scientists at various levels, people who often already split their time between multiple commitments. Thus, while people are enthusiastic about the initiative, they are hesitant to lend their time to the building of STARS. An additional challenge has been to identify the people who would be interested in joining STARS. Since there has been no structure to the scientific exchange between Sweden and North America up until this point, each potential member must be identified on an individual basis which is a time-consuming process. Currently, a small, but energetic core-team is working on multiple fronts to spread information about STARS across North America. However, we are still looking for additional engaged researchers who are willing to roll up their sleeves and support the continuous development of STARS.

Graphic for how to establish a scientific diaspora network. Source: [Euraxess North America](http://euraxess.northamerica).





4. Strategize, Strategize, Strategize

The strategizing stage is also one of the most essential steps in the development of a scientific network. This process turns the initial idea of a scientific diaspora network into a concrete vision with clear goals. The development of a clear roadmap for the network is crucial to attract additional members to the network and to focus the efforts of the leadership team. At this step, it is especially important to incorporate input from multiple partners to clearly outline what the network's goals and priorities are. Once the vision is clear, it is easier to communicate the benefits of joining the network to others. STARS received tremendous support from EURAXESS in this process. In addition to the information provided in the guide, the EURAXESS team was willing to discuss ideas and thoughts at every step of the way. STARS also received valuable input from Swedish researchers who expressed an interest in the network early on and shared their wish list for what a Swedish scientific network would look like. Through combining the expertise of multiple stakeholders, we established four main objectives for STARS:

1. Promote interdisciplinary research by building a comprehensive network for Swedish academics, entrepreneurs, researchers, and students in North America.
2. Develop ongoing, transatlantic collaborations between researchers in Sweden and North America.
3. Provide a platform to promote successful Swedish researchers in North America.
4. Provide support to and a mentoring network for Swedish students and researchers who wish to or are currently studying or conducting research in North America.

With these clear objectives, STARS was ready to move forward to the next step in the guide and find additional stakeholders to take part in the development of the network.

5. Find Your Allies

Finding allies which align with your network's values and goals is just as central as finding engaged co-creators. Through building strong alliances with organizations, companies, and institutions which align with STARS' mission, we will be able to reach more people across North America and tap into the networks which already exist for Swedes in North America. To collaborate with well-established actors also increases the legitimacy of the work STARS is doing as more people rally around the mission. The Swedish Chambers of Commerce and the Swedish Consulates, which are spread across North America, are particularly important in this work as they are uniquely positioned to reach people in different industries and geographical areas. This work has been the most rewarding aspect of establishing STARS this far, as it has displayed the unwavering support for STARS' mission and objectives, confirming the gap among existing networks and the importance of establishing a network specifically for researchers and scientists.



6. Go Live

All the hard work put into the first five steps of the guide to establish a European scientific diaspora network is put to the test once the network goes live. The STARS Network officially launched at the EURAXESS' 5th Annual Meeting of European Scientific Diasporas at the House of Sweden on December 10th, 2019. During this event, STARS' leadership team, Sofia Sedergren (President), Niklas Hultin (Treasurer), and Patrik Gebhardt (Brand Developer), and their partner at the Embassy of Sweden, Maria Lönnberg, presented the work this far and the plans for STARS' future. Although the STARS Network is now officially launched, the work has only begun, and all the efforts put into the foundation of STARS are now put to the test in the final step of establishing a scientific diaspora network.

7. Grow

The last step of the guide is an ongoing and never-ending process. Our efforts to grow and develop the STARS Network will continue in the next few months and years, as we will work with our partners to spread information about STARS across North America. We have chosen to build a member-driven organization, and while the leadership team will continue to plan and lead events and workshops for STARS members, the goal is to have the members take initiative and suggest new types of events for STARS members to meet and learn together. STARS, and any scientific diaspora network, benefits its members in multiple ways, and there is no limit to how impactful your scientific diaspora network can be. As long as the network follows the path laid out in its strategic plan and continues to add value to its membership base the growth of the scientific diaspora network is infinite.

STARS is still in the beginning of its journey as one of EURAXESS' 17 scientific diaspora networks, and we are promising many exciting news over the next year. If you, or someone you know, want to contribute to our work, please join our leadership team, or sign up to become a general member. **You can also support STARS' work by following us on social media (LinkedIn and Twitter). Any questions can be directed to STARSNetwork46@gmail.com.**



Panel discussion at the launch of STARS at House of Sweden. Panelist: Sofia Sedergren, Maria Lönnberg, Patrik Gebhardt, and Niklas Hultin.



4 In case you missed it....

Event Outlook

Event	When	Where	Organized by	Link
Collaborating with the European Union under a New Context	3 December 2019	Concordia University, Montreal, QC, CANADA	Concordia University & EURAXESS NA	Link
5 th Annual Meeting of European Scientific Diasporas in North America	10 December 2019	House of Sweden, Washington, DC, USA	EURAXESS North America	Link

About EURAXESS North America

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

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

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

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