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EURAXESS India Newsletter is a quarterly electronic newsletter, edited by EURAXESS 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.

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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.

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EURAXESS INDIA

Contents

1 Briefing I EURAXESS country: Estonia - A place for independent minds.....	2
Research and Development in Estonia	2
Research Excellence in Estonia	2
Entrepreneurship and Innovation	3
Funding and Recruitment Opportunities.....	3
Important Information for Incoming Researchers	3
Research collaboration with India.....	4
Interview with Indian researchers Katyayani Sukhavasi, Satish Srirama and Margaret Lyngdoh in Estonia.....	4



Estonia is a small North European country and it has been a member of the European Union since 2004.



Promotional page about Estonia: www.estonia.ee.



[University of Tartu](http://www.ut.ee)



[Research in Estonia](http://www.research-estonia.ee) initiative carries out International marketing activities with the aim to **introduce Estonian research on an international level and for international audience**. The portal offers information and news for professionals, scholars, and students interested in research opportunities in Estonia.

Umbrella organisation uniting researchers, scholars and intellectuals: [Estonian Academy of Sciences](http://www.eurosci.ee)

1 Briefing | EURAXESS country: Estonia - A place for independent minds

Did you know that Skype was programmed in Estonia in 2003? Or that Estonia has used legally binding digital signatures since the year 2000? These facts illustrate the innovative attitude of the small North European country called Estonia perfectly. Estonia has an attractive environment for research, top-level infrastructure, a collaborative research community and excellent research achievements.

Research and Development in Estonia

Estonian researchers are good partners in international collaboration projects and the number of international co-publications is rising. Research in Estonia is becoming more international as the number of foreign researchers from 2005 to 2014 has increased **sevenfold** [1]. The impact of papers authored by Estonian researchers is growing rapidly; average citations per paper exceed the Thomson Reuters' Essential Science Indicators (ESI) mean citation rate by 5% [2].

There are 20 R&D institutions in Estonia, including [6 public universities](#) where most research is performed. The leading scientific institution in Estonia is the [University of Tartu](#).

The ratio of total R&D expenditure to GDP in 2015 was 1.5%, with nearly half of R&D expenditure in 2015 coming from the state budget [3].

Research Excellence in Estonia

Biological sciences are at the forefront of Estonian research – 2/3 of the top researchers (among 1% most cited in their field worldwide) who are affiliated with an Estonian research institution are **biologists** and **ecologists** [2]. Each Estonian paper published in environment/ecology and plant and animal science receives about 40% more citations than papers in these fields in general. Additionally, clinical medicine, molecular biology and genetics, physics, pharmacology and toxicology, and psychiatry/psychology are also above global average [2].

There are 9 [Research Centres of Excellence](#) in Estonia, composed of **internationally highly regarded research groups**. Featured topics are: terrestrial ecosystems in the context of global change from molecular to biome-level responses, genomics and translational medicine, information and communication technologies (ICT), molecular cell engineering, space studies.

[1] <http://www.stat.ee/science-technology-innovation> [2] <http://blog.ut.ee/how-successful-is-estonian-science/> [3] <http://www.stat.ee/news-release-2016-132>



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 40 countries, of which we will profile one in our quarterly e-newsletter. In this edition, we zoom in on Estonia



How Skype started in Estonia, read [The Story of Skype](#)

[e-Estonia – The Digital Society](#)

[Enterprise Estonia](#) supporting and advising entrepreneurs



The main funding body is the [Estonian Research Council](#).



Information and support for incoming researchers on [EURAXESS Estonia](#)

Author: Hanna Raig,
EURAXESS Estonia

Estonian R&D Strategy

The Estonian R&D strategy document **Knowledge-based Estonia 2014–2020** outlines four objectives: 1) Research in Estonia is of high level and diverse 2) R&D functions in the interest of Estonian society and economy 3) R&D makes the structure of economy more knowledge-intensive 4) Estonia is active and visible in international RDI cooperation. The strategy foresees that by 2020 investments in R&D **will reach 3% of GDP** [4].

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Innovation and the start-up ecosystem in Estonia are growing rapidly. Notable recent success stories backed by R&D in the IT field include [Skype](#), [TransferWise](#), [Lingvist](#), [Starship Technologies](#) and [Guardtime](#).

Estonia is standing out as a **digital society**. We have developed highly innovative and practical solutions for digital **public services** including online tax-declarations (in use since 2000), digital signatures (2000), online voting (2005), digital recipes (2010), and most recently the e-residency (2016) for anyone in the world (you can become an [e-resident](#) of Estonia in order to register your business in Estonia).

[Competence Centres \(8\)](#) are designed to improve the competitiveness of enterprises through strategic cooperation between Estonian science, industry and the public sectors. Main topics are health and food technologies and ICT services.

[Enterprise Estonia](#) promotes business and provides financial assistance, counselling, cooperation opportunities and training for entrepreneurs, research institutions and the public and non-profit sectors.

Funding and Recruitment Opportunities

Research in Estonia is primarily financed on the basis of **quality competition**. Financing comes from the state budget, foreign funds (mostly EU H2020 and other means) and companies. The [Estonian Research Council](#) is the principal funding body of R&D in Estonia, consolidating different grants and types of funding and giving research more visibility within society. There are also several **mobility grants**. [Click here](#) for the funding calls.

As most research is performed in the public universities, most research jobs are also available in public universities. PhD students are regarded as students and receive a monthly scholarship.

Important Information for Incoming Researchers

[EURAXESS Estonia](#) provides information and support to international researchers for free. We provide information about **entry conditions**, visas and **residence permits**, Estonia in general, the Estonian research landscape, **job & funding offers**, events for researchers and much more!

See [Estonian Embassy in New Delhi](#) and all [Estonian embassies and representations around the world](#).

[4] Estonian Research and Development and Innovation Strategy 2014-2020 “Knowledge-based Estonia”



Research collaboration with India

Research collaboration between Estonia and India is mostly based on **relations between universities and research groups** but also through bilateral agreements and through participation in European Union-Asia multilateral cooperation agreements. For example, the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of India on Co-operation in the **Fields of Science and Technology** was signed in 1999 and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology Government of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia for **Cooperation in the field of Biotechnology** was signed in 2013.

Research cooperation between Estonia and India has been carried out through the **ERA-NET INNO INDIGO** project which is a consortium of European and Indian R&D organisations. Since 2014 the Estonian Research Council has participated in three INNO INDIGO calls – 1. Clean water and health 2. Diagnostics and interventions in chronic non-communicable 3. Bio based energy.

Results of a survey by the Estonian Development Fund indicate several attractive R&D fields for the Estonian economy and these are biotechnology, agriculture and plant genomics, ICT, folklore, nanotechnology and medicine (orthopaedics). Best prerequisites for research cooperation with India are in life sciences, ICT (cyber security), health and environmental sustainability.

All researchers from India can apply to Estonian Research Council mobility grants.

In the Estonian strategy for internationalization of higher education 2016-2020, India is one for the target countries from where Estonia welcomes international students.

Most Asian studies programmes in Estonia are based in [Tallinn University](#). [The Asian Research Centre in Estonia](#) focuses on promoting collaboration with Asian countries and organizes various events and seminars.

Interview with Indian researchers Katyayani Sukhavasi, Satish Srirama and Margaret Lyngdoh in Estonia

1. How did you hear about Estonia and why did you decide to work in Estonia?

Katyayani Sukhavasi (KS): My encounter with Estonia is a bit on the unusual side. I had moved to this country in 2013 as my husband got approved for his PhD. Eight months later I heard about a job opening at the University of Tartu which quite matched with my previous job profile back in India. I attended the interview and got selected. Three years later, in 2016 I became PhD student at Tartu University after facing an interview and giving a detailed presentation on



[ERA-NET Inno Indigo](#)



[See Estonian Research Council portal for funding opportunities in Estonia](#)



[Asian Research Centre in Estonia](#) brings together all parties interested in Estonia-Asia relations and collaboration.



Katyayani Sukhavasi

PhD student, laboratory specialist, Department of Pathophysiology

University of Tartu



Satish Srirama

Associate Professor, Head of Mobile & Cloud Lab, Institute of Computer Sciences

University of Tartu

my PhD project. So, definitely it wasn't cake walk all through but I am glad that I am part of a very competitive research group.

Satish Srirama (SS): I did my PhD in computer science from RWTH Aachen, Germany in 2008. One of my colleagues at RWTH, who is a German national, had actually moved to Estonia and suggested University of Tartu (UT) and its excellence in science and research. This motivated me to move to Estonia. I relocated to Tartu with my Estonian Science Foundation (now Estonian Research Council) funded **MOBILITAS Postdoctoral research grant**.

Margaret Lyngdoh (ML): I met Professor Ülo Valk in North Eastern India in 2009 at a workshop on indigenous Assamese practices of magic. Yes, a workshop on researching magic, indeed! That was the first time I heard about Estonia. I got back home and looked at my atlas, but I could not find it because it was an old atlas. Then the internet clarified some things about Estonia for me. Prof. Valk told me that there was a scholarship available to be a visiting PhD student and I successfully applied for it. So I first came to Estonia in February 16 2010 and had my first glimpse of snow. For me, folkloristics is the scholarly excuse I get to study magic and the supernatural (from an academic perspective, of course!) But on a more serious level, in the ethnic community to which I belong to in North Eastern India (Khasi), folklore is more than just belief in the supernatural, or practices linked to magic. I have understood over the past seven years of researching for my doctoral thesis and from visiting various Folklore Departments in the USA and Ireland and India, that the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, has the most conducive research environment. This is because it is here in Tartu that new theories on folklore methodology are developed and clarified. The feel of the folklore library is very encouraging because it has the best collection of books on folklore that I have come across. The research fields in the Department are also very balanced with focus on Estonian and international folklore. Today, as a Junior Researcher in the Department, I must say that I am fortunate because I get to grow and make my academic opinion more mature in the company of some of the best folklorists in the field. We also have a brand new [MA programme](#) in Folklore!

2. Name three characteristic things about research work in Estonia or about Estonia in general.

KS: Performance excels in stress free environment and Estonia is one among those countries which provides freedom and safety for people residing here and is willing to encourage more foreign nationals to be part of its growth. Estonia has safely preserved its natural reserves like lakes, forests, bogs and boasts on it. The four seasons are distinct and a true pleasure to be cherished in here. People are warm and friendly, though reserved until and unless approached. With such beautiful surroundings and healthy competitiveness among fellow researchers it is always a treat to be part of this new yet developed country.



Margaret Lyngdoh

Junior Research Fellow,
Department of Estonian and
Comparative Folklore

University of Tartu

SS: Freedom, support and opportunities are three characteristics, which I really liked in Estonia. You are free to choose the research domain and direction at UT, as long as you produce good results. The initial support we got from the university and the research funding institutes such as Estonian Research Council was excellent. The opportunities we get for funding and individual growth make the research ecosystem in Estonia very interesting. Moreover, the country being small, you get to know several people from different research groups and institutes, thus encouraging cross-domain research.

ML: For me, sincerity is a cultural value in Estonia and it is best reflected in the research environment in my Department. Whether it is in the context of research ethics, innovative theories or internationalisation, I have discovered that the department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore is one of the best in the world. This is because of the focus of research is varied, wide, and international. If I were to isolate three key features of research in my Department in particular and in Estonia, in general, it would be (a) international, (b) cutting edge in innovation, and (c) friendly. Yes, I think that research in Estonia is friendly, because in my experience, researchers have an empathetic, compassionate connection with their research topics. And as Estonians have kindness as a basic characteristic, this also is expressed in the way that research is conducted.

3. A message to anyone who is considering research work with Estonian partners or moving to Estonia for work.

KS: Go for it! Research work in Estonia has been strongly laid on work freedom, implementation of new ideas, freedom of expression, encouraging and supportive colleagues/supervisors. Moving to Estonia could initially be quite a shock as things are quite different compared to India but definitely you will have beautiful memories written in for the future. The Estonian government has been proactively taking necessary steps to make life of foreigners worth their stay. Take the leap and explore the possibilities.

SS: As I already mentioned, “freedom at work” is the best thing you get in Estonia. To give the example of my own case, three years after moving to Estonia, I could form my own research group (Mobile & Cloud Lab, <http://mc.cs.ut.ee/>) in 2012, which I am leading since. Estonia is a land of opportunities, especially for research in IT. We also have a small yet close Indian community, which should be able to help you with initial relocation issues. Do not worry about cold and Estonian winter. If we managed in the past 7-8 years, you too can ☺ .

ML: To anyone who wants to come to Estonia for research or to work, I would like to recommend it. Here it is possible to develop independent academic and scientific opinions. If you want to be the best that you can be, come to study, research or work in Estonia! I mean every word that I have written. Estonia continues to be the best experience of my life.