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EURAXESS NORTH AMERICA

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Albania is a democratic and developing country with an upper-middle income economy. Albania is a member of the United Nations, World Bank, UNESCO, NATO, WTO, CoE, OSCE and OIC. It is also an official candidate for membership in the European Union. Furthermore, Albania is one of the founding members of the Energy Community, including the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, and Union for the Mediterranean.

1 EURAXESS Country in Focus: ALBANIA

1.1 Research and Development in Albania

Albania has a number of research institutions conducting cutting-edge basic research. Eleven of the Top-35 research organizations that receive funding through the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020) are from Albania. The capacity of Albania's research institutes to conduct excellent research is also reflected in the relatively good performance in terms of scientific publications.

R&D performance is concentrated in public sector centres and institutes, higher education institutions, line ministries, and the government sector: UNESCO statistics indicate that in 2008, 52.1% of R&D was performed by the public sector and 47.9% by higher education. UNESCO¹ also reports that GERD funded by business enterprises totalled 13.1m ALL in 2007 and 54.3m ALL in 2008 (\$0.308m and \$1.311m in current PPP\$, respectively, or approximately €0.225m in 2007² and €0.891m 2008³). This is the first standardised indicator of the size of BERD in the country—other estimates suggest that the ratio of gross business enterprise expenditure on RTD to GDP is around 0.0025%⁴.

1.2 Albania's R&D Strategy

The **New R&D&I Strategy for the Programming Period 2017-2022** aspires to strengthen the Albania research system (human capital and infrastructure), conduct research relevant to the needs of the country and thus make R&D an indispensable tool for the further development of the Albania economy. In this context, it is intended to launch programmes focusing on the development of human capital for research in a knowledge economy (including support to excellent researchers, support to mobility of researchers to work in enterprises, and support to training for innovation activities, as well as starting grants for new researchers).

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

According to the programme of National Strategy for Development, Science and Innovation, Albanian enterprises are expected to increase their Business Expenditures on Research and Development sensibly. A considerable number of enterprises is more and more undertaking Research and Innovation activities mainly in services and incremental innovations. In this line, The National Agency of Scientific Research and Innovation aims to support a close collaboration between the private businesses and the academic staffs through the implementation of The Triple Helix Project (Public + Businesses + Academia).

1.3 Funding and Recruitment Opportunities

The government constitutes the largest R&D source of funds (in 2015, 0.4% of the GERD was funded by GOV) and the third largest R&D performer (after Higher Education Institutes and Business). The National Agency for Scientific

Research and Innovation www.akti.gov.al is the supreme State advisory body



for national policy for research, technology and innovation. The responsibility of funding research is shared between the *Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth* and the *Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs*.

The National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI) consider the scientific and technological cooperation agreements as important in increasing the national capacities of the scientific research level. There are calls launched to do justice to this importance and these calls are funded from the government's budget.

The agency has a record on carrying out bilateral calls with Slovenia, Austria, Turkey and Italy. It is also important to note that governmental agreements on science exist with a whole range of states/countries all around the world:

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina
2. Malaysia (Active)
3. Kosovo (Active)
4. Macedoni (Active)
5. Austri (Active)
6. France (Active)
7. Jermani (Active)
8. Hungarian (Active)
9. Itali (Active)
10. Ceki (Active)
11. Slovakia (Active)
12. Croaci (Active)
13. Rumani (Active)
14. Slovenian (Active)
15. Bullgari (In Negotiation)
16. Polison (On Negotiations)
17. Greqi (In Negotiations)
18. Turqi (Active)
19. The United Emirates

Furthermore, Albania has an interstate agreement with 9 of the 28 European Union member states. The dates of implementation of these agreements are as follows :

1. Austria- 11.01.2006
2. France- 02.08.2011
3. Germany- 03.09.2012
4. Hungary- 04.01.2008
5. Italy 5-18.12.1997
6. Czech Republic- 06.10.1998
7. Slovakia- 08.2001
8. Romania- 10.2009
9. Slovenia- 23.02.2007

Meanwhile, with other countries:

1. Turkey (07.02.2007)
2. United Arab Emirates-13.03.2014
3. Russia- (11.04.1995)
4. Bosnia and Herzegovina- (22.12.2003)
5. Monte Negro- (16.12.2008)
6. Kosovo- (12.2013)



Important information for incoming researchers

[EURAXESS Albania](#) is a resource for foreign researchers who plan to come to Albania. Whether you are looking for information about work, study or everyday life in Albania, EURAXESS Albania covers all matters relating to your professional and daily life, job and funding opportunities. EURAXESS Albania is also a platform for researchers, entrepreneurs, universities and businesses.

7.Macedonia- (2016)

The current ambition of the agency (NASRI) is to endow into future calls with Monte Negro, Kosovo and Macedonia.

1.4 International Research Cooperation and Mobility Examples

The Higher Education sector is the largest R&D performer accounting for expenditure in 2015. At the end of 2015, the Higher Education sector was composed of 12 public universities and 28 institutes subordinated to Ministries. In addition to public, there are 24 private universities of various types accredited by the *Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth* operating in the country.

The R&I strategy for the next programming period 2017-2022 focuses on the following priorities:

- Areas of traditional strength for the country (examples: tourism, energy);
- Areas of recent successes in terms of critical mass and on-going activities (examples: IT, engineering, energy);
- Areas of high added value and able to deliver major economic benefit and employment prospects (examples: energy, nutrition – food sciences); and
- Areas of national interest (examples: food production, archaeology, culture, energy, defence).

[1] Beyond 20/20 WDS - Table View

[2] Source: European Central Bank, ECB reference exchange rate, US dollar/Euro equal to \$1.3705/€1, 2007 data.

[3] Source: European Central Bank, ECB reference exchange rate, US dollar/Euro equal to \$1.4708/€1, 2008 data.

[4] Estimates from discussions with MES officials, 2011



2 Science Communication

Interview with Dr. Sanna Fowler



About Sanna

Originally an immunologist, Sanna decided shortly after her PhD at Oxford that the lab bench was probably better off without her. After a career curveball into sports marketing and communication with the America's Cup sailing team Alinghi, she is happy to have found her way back to science: not in the lab, but in communication and fundraising. She is part of a dynamic team at EPFL, responsible for sharing the school's incredible discovery and innovation and raising the profile of the institution internationally.

Sanna is still passionate about science and feels we are living in a time of silent revolution: democratising knowledge and breaking down the barriers between science and society. She has managed several 'out of the box' communication projects including Technologist – a radically different European science magazine, Fusebox – a crowdsourced innovation platform, as well as conferences and exhibitions aimed at the general public.

Dr Sanna Fowler, Deputy Director of Development, EPFL (Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne), recently led a series of science communication workshops for researchers in Thailand looking to improve their science communication skills. These workshops were co-organised by EURAXESS ASEAN and Thailand's National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) with the support of the Thailand-European Union Policy Dialogues Support Facility. On her last day in Bangkok, Sanna sat down with EURAXESS ASEAN and shared her views on science communication.

Please tell us how your interest in science communication developed.

I have always enjoyed the reporting side of science (presentations, reviews, posters etc.) but the big 'revelation' for me was during my PhD in Mucosal Immunology at Oxford. My funding body was part of an initiative called 'Researchers in Residence' that encouraged scientists to go into primary schools and teach three lessons on their subject. We got some basic coaching and then I was left on my own with 30 eight-year olds! I worked harder on those three lessons than anything else, and it was a real baptism of fire, but those kids had so much enthusiasm, it was infectious.

Why do you think science communication is important?

Research no longer happens in Ivory Towers – funding is increasingly competitive and from a wider range of sources. It could be described as a 'buyer's' market, and if you're trying to sell your science in this environment, you need a great pitch. I think it's no coincidence that countries where a higher proportion of funding for universities comes from non-governmental sources, like the US and the UK, have a more developed science communication scene.

Upheavals like the 1998 autism-MMR vaccine falsehood have thankfully made scientists a lot more proactive about communicating and creating links with the public. But the continuous drip feed of pseudoscience on social media needs scientists to be constantly vigilant and counter with arguments that are relevant to people.

Lastly, improving science communication to non-experts can only be a good thing for communication between peers. After all, how many of us have sat through terrible scientific presentations given by colleagues or even world-leaders in our field?

What is the difference between science communication and journalism?

Science communication is extremely broad and encompasses anything from school's outreach to diplomacy. In my opinion, good journalism is an essential tool for science communication as it focuses on the relevance of science rather than just the research itself. It also tends to have a more 'birds-eye' view of research which is important for joining the dots across disciplines and seeing how things fit together – for example the social and economic changes we can expect with increasing numbers of robots in the workforce.



“Ask yourself why people should listen to you”

“Fake news” is very much in the headlines these days. What impact is this having on science communication?

I think fake news is actually a huge opportunity for science communication on two fronts: Firstly, there is now a lot of research going into detecting, tracking and heading off fake news, so hopefully science will help us sift out the real information from the fake. Secondly, amid all the noise, reputable scientists are seen as trusted sources for information, for the media and public alike. But they need to step up and assume this responsibility.

In your opinion, what are some of the biggest challenges facing researchers in terms of science communication?

Finding the time! As science communication is not seen as an essential part of a researcher’s role, it gets pushed to the back after research, teaching, admin, conferences and all the masses of other things that scientists have to fit into a day. I also think it’s the responsibility of universities/research institutions to make resources for science communication available for their scientists. Both have a vested interest in promoting their science and having professional communicators working with experts is the most productive way of doing things.



How can young researchers strengthen their science communication skills?

Read, watch or listen to good science communication! There are some great popular science podcasts and blogs, and you could spend a lifetime surfing through talks on TED for example. Not only will this give you examples of how to communicate better, it will also widen your general scientific knowledge. Many scientists’ general knowledge can be pretty limited since they’re so focused on their particular research area.

What career opportunities are there in the field science communication?

I’m not sure I’m the best person to give advice here; I haven’t followed the ‘typical’ path, which would probably be to get a science communication qualification after your PhD. I took any opportunity I could get to widen my experience as much as possible, either through teaching, writing or public outreach, for example. I also left science for a few years to work in sports marketing. Ultimately, I think you have to just put yourself out there as much as possible, gain visibility and widen your experience.

Could you share some advice for researchers trying to communicate their research to the non-academic community?

Ask yourself why people should listen to you (and being a well-published/well-funded scientist is not an answer here!). Your audience needs to gain something – either information that is relevant to them, or something they’re never heard before that piques their interest. Above all, share your passion for your subject!

Thank you, Sanna!

The interview with Dr Sanna Fowler was prepared by our colleagues at EURAXESS ASEAN.



3 HOT TOPIC: EUROPEAN RESEARCH DAY 2017 (ERD17) - in collaboration with Google and DISCOVERY project

European Research Day |
Google | Washington DC |
21 September 2017



The **European Research Day** (ERD) is an event where European researchers outside of Europe meet, discuss and exchange concepts about their research projects, professional and personal experience in their respective diasporas and overall career path. It also presents a unique networking opportunity through which they can meet researchers from their current regions to advance in their careers and explore opportunities to collaborate.

This one-day event celebrated and promoted Europe as a hub for research and innovation through strategic interdisciplinary training workshops. With the overarching theme being '**mentoring**', as per 2016 2nd Annual Meeting of European Scientific Diasporas' recommendations. The event was open to all European Scientific Diasporas in North America, as well as current and/or previous American/Canadian researchers who have benefited from European research grants to further their careers (namely MSCA fellows and ERC grantees) and others.

One of the main objectives of the ERD17 was to lay the foundation of establishing a **Joint European Mentoring Initiative [JEMI]** in North America by identifying and building up a pool of core members who would serve as mentors for European Scientists in the Diaspora as well as applicants of MSCA, ERC and member states' funding schemes.

EURAXESS North America partnered with [FUTOUR](#) in strategically planning the implementation of a JEMI vision. National Scientific Diasporas, Science and Research attaches/Counsellors from European embassies as well as mentoring experts from North America contributed to these invitation-only meetings.

The JEMI sessions generated a report, which will be available in January 2018. During the [3rd Annual Meeting of European Scientific Diasporas in North America](#) held at the Embassy of France in Washington, DC on 11 December 2017 we asked the Diaspora members, Embassy representatives, researchers and experts to take action and sign up to one of the 2 possible groups:

1. [JEMI Mailing List](#) - Sign up for updates and latest information regarding the Joint European Mentoring Initiative [JEMI]
2. [JEMI Management Team Sign Up](#) - Sign up to the JEMI Management Team and contribute your expertise in one of the four working groups.

Full programme can be found [HERE](#).



4 In case you missed it....

4.1 Event Outlook

Event	When	Where	Organized by	Link
5 th MCAA Conference & General Assembly	2-3 February 2018	KU Leuven, Belgium	Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA)	Link
Information session on European funding opportunities	15 February 2018	The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, USA	EURAXESS North America	Link
AAAS 2018 Annual Meeting	15-19 February 2018	Austin, TX, USA	American Association for the Advancement of Science	Link
MIT 22 nd European Career Fair	24 February 2018	MIT, Cambridge, MA, USA	MIT European Club	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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