

BROAD VARIETY OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECTS

Green energy research in Slovakia

Research into renewable energy sources has become increasingly important as countries struggle to bring down their carbon emissions. Supported by the EEA and Norway Grants, the Slovak University of Technology has set up a centre for renewable energy research. Among the planned activities of the centre is pioneering research on energy generation from glycerine, a by-product from bio-diesel production.

Research on conservation of historical textiles and canvas in Poland

The Institute of Physics of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków will through this project research how the conservation of historical textiles and paintings on canvas could be improved. The project includes among others testing of objects in museums and magazines, as well as the development of a prototype system for strain monitoring in historical textiles.

Improving ecological management of Portuguese estuaries

Estuaries, the brackish areas near river mouths, are important habitats that often play a vital role for local fisheries. The Centre of Marine and Environmental Research – CIMAR – seeks through this project to increase the understanding of the ecology of such areas, thereby laying the foundation for better ecological management. The project focuses on the estuaries of Formosa, Aveiro and Minho, and is expected to result in the publication of 18 scientific papers.

Geothermal power research in Hungary

Hungary has considerable potential for geothermal energy generation, particularly due to the geological properties of the Great Pannonian Plain. With support from Norway, the Central Geo Mine Ltd. will map rock fractures and thermal water reservoirs in this area, creating a knowledge base for further energy development. The project will result in software models for the analysis of geothermal sites, as well as the publication of several academic articles.

Hormone research in Slovakia

Glucocorticoid, a steroid hormone, has relevance for a number of paediatric diseases. Through this project, the University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Košice will conduct research on the functioning of glucocorticoid resistance mechanisms, and determine how this knowledge could be applied in the treatment of children suffering of - among others - leukemia and polyarthritis.

Researching emissions from land use change in Estonia

An area's status as forest, grassland or tilled land has substantial consequences for soil emission of greenhouse gasses such as methane and nitrous oxide. The Institute of Geography at the University of Tartu will in this project develop knowledge and possible strategies of mitigation regarding such emissions in Estonia. The project includes analyses based on Geographical Information System (GIS) data and methodology, and will result in several academic articles.



Measuring changes in sulphur and nitrogen pollution in the Czech Republic

In May 2004, the European Economic Area (EEA) was expanded to include the ten new Member States of the EU, with a further enlargement to include Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. At the same time the three non-EU members of the EEA - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway - established the EEA and Norway Grants to support social and economic cohesion within the enlarged EEA.

The 30 members of the EEA share access to the Internal Market, characterised by the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons.

Over the five-year period 2004-2009, the EEA and Norway Grants will make available €1.3 billion to 15 beneficiary states in the EU. Norway provides 97% of this funding. Projects are supported in a wide range of priority sectors such as protection of the environment, conservation of the European cultural heritage, health and childcare, and development of human resources.

EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

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ACADEMIC RESEARCH FACT SHEET

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Academic research

Creating new platforms for academic research

Support for academic research has for the past decades been one of the principal ways of building a peaceful and prosperous Europe. Economic growth has become increasingly dependent on scientific research, and European countries more and more interdependent. Academic research is therefore an important priority of the EEA and Norway Grants.

Improved integration and coordination of research in Europe are key values underpinning the support from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to research projects in Central and Southern Europe. Bilateral cooperation is encouraged, and to date nearly half of all supported projects are based on partnerships between research communities in the donor and beneficiary states. Such joint research efforts may also become catalysts for further international research projects.

In order to achieve convergence of economic and social standards within Europe, it is vital to pool ideas and ensure favourable conditions for academic excellence in the countries of Central and Southern Europe. The EEA and Norway Grants therefore fund academic research in the majority of the beneficiary states. The grants allow skilled researchers to stay in their home countries, and further the development of high quality research in the region.

The Hungarian biochemist and Nobel laureate Albert Szent-Györgyi once claimed that "research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought". Through grants to research projects addressing key societal challenges, the EEA and Norway Grants come one step closer to achieving the goals of a Europe working together on shared responsibilities.



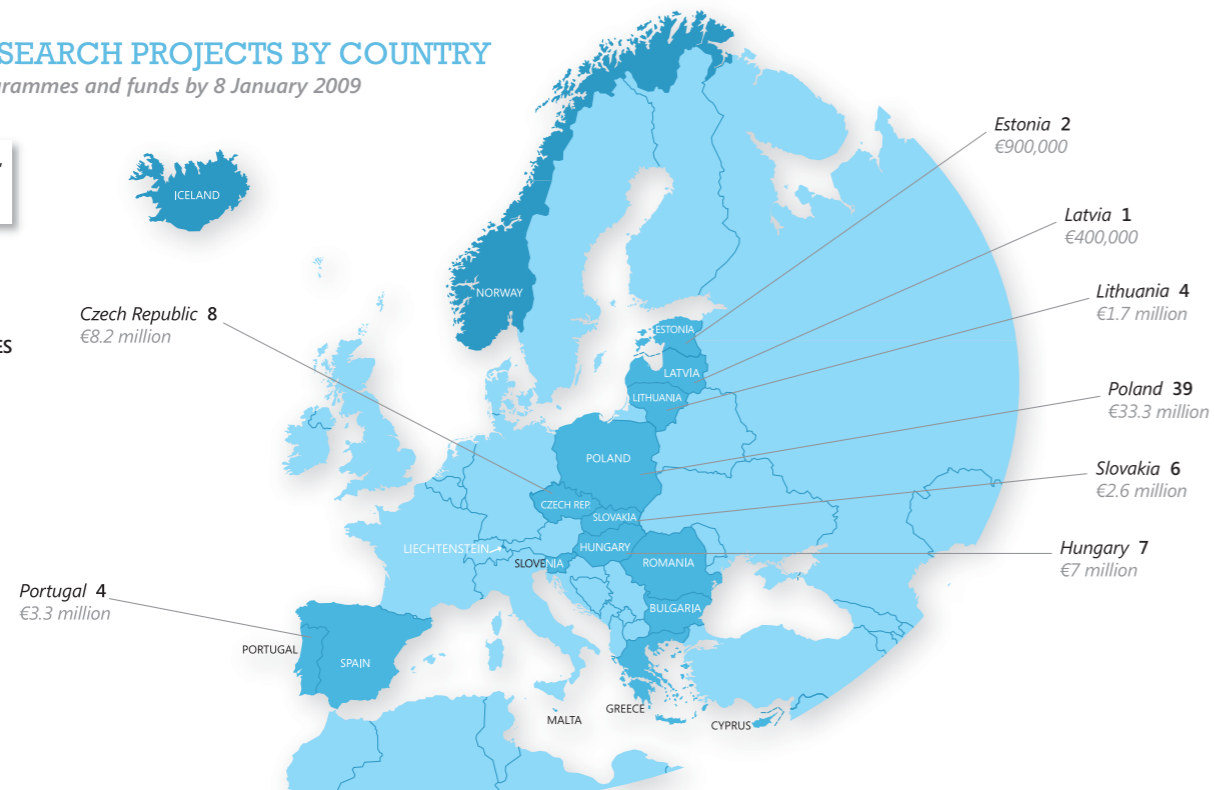
Dr Marek Marcinek is one of the researchers supported by the the HOMING programme, which aims to encourage young scientists to return to Poland.

ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECTS BY COUNTRY

Approved projects, programmes and funds by 8 January 2009

Total 71 supported projects, programmes and funds
€57.4 million in grants

DONOR STATES
BENEFICIARY STATES



BENEFICIARIES

Academic research is a priority sector in 12 beneficiary states. So far, 71 projects, funds and programmes with a total value of nearly €60 million have been approved. This accounts for about 7 percent of all grants. The largest number of approved projects in this sector is in the EEA and Norway Grants' largest recipient state, Poland, with close to 40 approved projects worth more than €33 million.

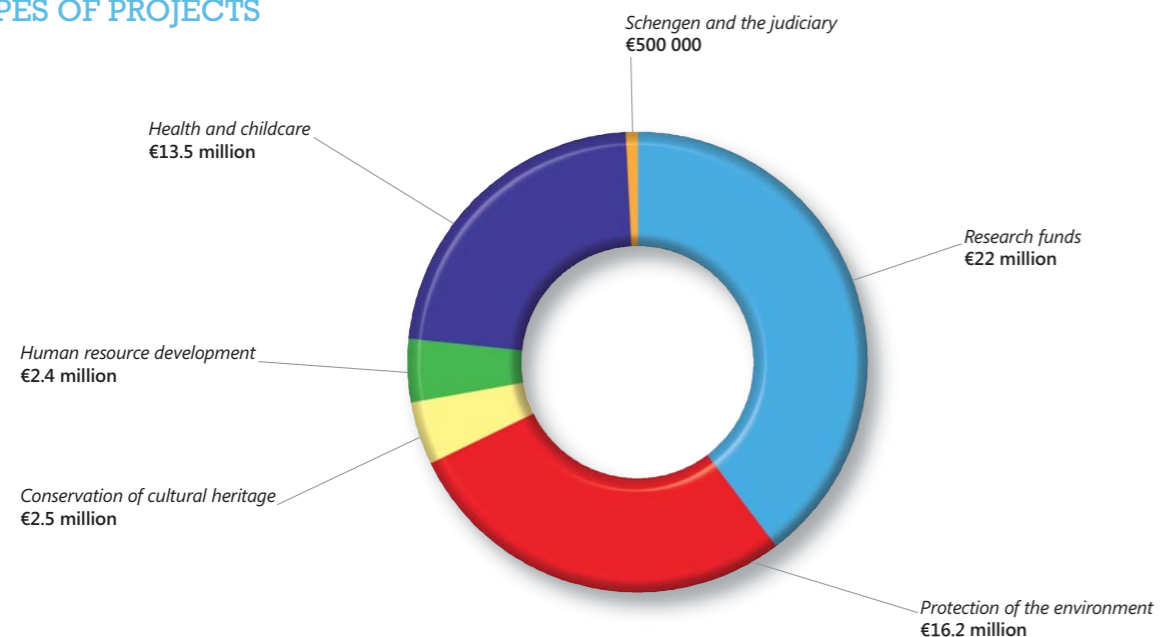
Projects

All academic research projects are within one of the priority sectors of the EEA and Norway Grants, such as protection of the environment, health and childcare, and regional policy. Approved projects have among others included research into cancer prevention and improved neonatal care, as well as research into strategies for dealing with environmental problems such as emissions and the effects of climate change.

Funds, block grants and programmes

Altogether eight funds, block grants and programmes have been established in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Slovakia. These locally administrated research support schemes offer smaller grants to projects in the respective beneficiary states, and have a total value of nearly €24 million. The largest is the €13 million Polish-Norwegian Research Fund, which offers funding to joint Polish-Norwegian projects, seminars and workshops.

TYPES OF PROJECTS



PROJECT FOCUS

Scholarships to bring Polish scholars home

Increased mobility among students and researchers has led to considerable opportunities for young people to leave their home countries and seek educational and research opportunities in the major centres of learning around the world. Responding to this trend, the HOMING programme was launched in 2006 by the Foundation for Polish Science.

Since 2007, the programme has received 60 percent support from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. The principal objective of the programme is to encourage young Polish scientists to return to Poland after an extended research stay abroad. The programme does so by providing young scholars with financial support to facilitate their return and boosting their academic careers by offering them improved working conditions in Poland.

To date, more than 90 researchers have applied for financial support, 32 of which have been successful. For many of these candidates, the two-year scholarship and research grants were decisive factors for moving back to Poland. Around €560,000 is now being distributed through the programme every year.

PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

Bilateral partnership projects between the beneficiary states and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are encouraged under the EEA and Norway Grants. Academic research has - more than any other priority sector - provided a fertile ground for bilateral partnerships. The portfolio counts 42 partnership projects between research institutions in the beneficiary and donor states, or more than half of all projects within this sector.

Polish-Norwegian Research Fund

By providing grants to joint Polish-Norwegian research projects and through financing seminars and workshops facilitating research cooperation, this €13 million fund aims to strengthen the academic bonds between Norway and Poland. The fund is implemented as a partnership between the Information Processing Centre in Warsaw and the Norwegian Research Council, and has environmental and health research as its main focus areas.

Assessing the impact of the Gothenburg protocol in the Czech Republic

At the Czech Geological Survey in Prague, a research project is underway to measure changes in sulphur and nitrogen pollution in the Czech Republic. Working closely with the Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA), a leading research institution within the field of acidification, the Czech research team is now monitoring and measuring the level of improvement in ecosystem conditions since the signing of the Gothenburg Protocol.

New methodology for migration research in Poland

In collaboration with the Norwegian Institute of Social Sciences and Labour Market (FAFO) and the Icelandic Centre of Immigration Research (CIRRA), the Centre of Migration Research at the University of Warsaw aims to develop a new methodology for migration research. The project will explore new methods to better grasp, measure and evaluate migration flows to and from Poland.

RESULTS SNAPSHOT

Number of scientific publications published	607
Number of information and computer technology (ICT) systems developed	32
Number of environmental monitoring systems created	28