

European Science, Engineering and Technology Highlights¹ MAY 2015

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¹ Note: If you would like additional information or background, please feel free to contact either Carine Polliotti at cpolliot@nsf.gov

1 Europe: Debating the impact of research on society



More than 400 university leaders and representatives from the European higher education sector met on April 16 and 17 at the annual conference of the European University Association, where Professor Rolf Tarrach, former rector of the trilingual University of Luxembourg, was elected president as the sole candidate for the position.

Tarrach succeeds Professor Maria Helena Nazare, a former rector of the University of Aveiro, as the fifth president of the EUA when he assumes the president's role in July.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20150414073906315>



2 Europe: Innovation performance: EU Member States and international competitors compared



This fact sheet explains the objectives of the Innovation Union Scoreboard and provides an overview of the research and innovation performance of EU Member States and some associated and neighboring countries, as measured by the Innovation Union Scoreboard 2015.

What is the Innovation Union Scoreboard (IUS)?

The Innovation Union Scoreboard provides a comparative assessment of the research and innovation performance of the EU Member States and the relative strengths and weaknesses of their research and innovation systems. It helps Member States assess areas in which they need to concentrate their efforts in order to boost their innovation performance. In addition, the IUS covers Serbia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. On a more limited number of indicators, available internationally, it also covers Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the US.

Full article available at:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-4928_en.htm?locale=en



3 Finland: Funding granted to new Academy Research Fellows in biosciences and environmental research



At its meeting on Thursday 23 April, the Academy of Finland's Research Council for Biosciences and Environment decided to provide funding to eleven new research posts as Academy Research Fellow. The funding period is set to start in September.

Within the September 2014 call, the Research Council received a total of 120 applications for funding for research posts as Academy Research Fellow. Women accounted for 52 per cent and foreign nationals for 29 per cent of the applicants. The total sum granted by the Research Council towards the salaries of Academy Research Fellows is some 4.8 million Euros (USD 5.2 millions).

The funding for Academy Research Fellows is granted for five years. The funding is intended to advance and strengthen the opportunities of the best advanced researchers to qualify themselves for academic leadership and establish themselves as independent researchers. The reviewers also pay attention to the career advancement of talented researchers.

Full article available at:

<http://www.aka.fi/en-GB/A/Academy-of-Finland/Media-services/Releases1/Funding-granted-to-new-Academy-Research-Fellows-in-biosciences-and-environmental-research/>



4 Norway: First non-Norwegian to head nation's largest university college



Minnesota-born Professor Curt Rice has been appointed rector of the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, the largest university college in Norway aspiring to become a university.

A pro-rector for research and development at the University of Tromsø, Rice was one of 14 applicants for the Oslo position and won, although a foreigner taking up the top post at a university in northern Europe is extremely rare. But he told University World News that his origins were not an issue at the interview.

Rice brings a fresh approach to Norwegian higher education while subscribing to the Google leadership principle: "Support the staff; match people and opportunities. And stay out of the way".

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20150416035117818>



5 Norway and Portugal strengthen cooperation



Arvid Hallén
(Photo: Sverre Jarild)

Norway and Portugal sign agreements on increased ocean-related scientific and technological cooperation. “All it takes is a glance at the map to see that Portugal and Norway share a common interest in boosting research for sustainable management and exploitation of marine resources,” states Director General Arvid Hallén of the Research Council of Norway.

Two mutually beneficial agreements - On 4 May, government ministers and research council heads from Portugal and Norway convened at the Research Council of Norway in an official meeting to sign two bilateral agreements. These agreements emphasize the strategic importance of the sea for growth and development.

Full article available at:

http://www.forskningradet.no/en/Newsarticle/Norway_and_Portugal_strengthen_cooperation/1254008965831



6 Norway: NOK 900 million (\$121 million) available for research-based innovation for industry



A record amount of funding is available for research and innovation projects in companies. This year the Research Council of Norway has made it even easier for companies to seek funding, and for the first time companies across the entire business sector will be able to find a call for proposals suited to their R&D needs.

The NOK 900 million (\$121 million) in funding for Innovation Projects for the Industrial Sector is part of the Research Council's effort to step up the pace of innovation in Norwegian trade and industry and promote a more knowledge-based, competitive and adaptable business sector.

Full article available at:

http://www.forskningradet.no/en/Newsarticle/NOK_900_million_available_for_researchbased_innovation_for_industry/1254008982723



7 Russia: Government to close two in every five universities



The number of Russian universities will be cut by 40% by the end of 2016, according to Minister of Education and Science Dmitry Livanov. In addition, the number of university branches will be slashed by 80% in the same period.

The institutions are being axed under a federal plan for the development of education during 2016 to 2020. Ministry of Education and Science data indicate that at present there are 593 state and 486 private universities, which have 1,376 and 682 branches respectively. Collectively, the universities cater for seven million students, of whom two million are holding state-funded places at an estimated average cost of US\$3,500 per student.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20150417043945585>



8 UK researchers fret about downgrading of science minister role



Jo Johnson, new Minister for Research

UK researchers have greeted the appointment of new science minister Jo Johnson with concern about how much influence he will have at the highest level of government.

Appointed to the post on May 11th by re-elected Prime Minister David Cameron, Johnson is well connected with senior-level ministers, and is tipped as a rising star in the Conservative Party. But Cameron has not chosen him to attend meetings of the cabinet — the government's most senior decision-making body, comprised of an inner circle of top politicians.

Full article available at:

<http://www.nature.com/news/uk-researchers-fret-about-downgrading-of-science-minister-role-1.17535>

