

Quarterly
Newsletter
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EURAXESS LINKS NORTH AMERICA

Contents

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Editors: Viktoria BODNAROVA and Katrien MAES, EURAXESS Links North America Team

1	EURAXESS Country in Focus: THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC.....	2
1.1	Slovakia and its Research, Development & Innovation System	2
1.2	Research Excellence in Slovakia	3
1.3	Recruitment Opportunities	3
1.4	Funding Opportunities	4
1.5	Research collaborations	4
1.6	Important information for incoming researchers	5
1.7	Important case study between Slovakia and the US	5
2	European Scientific Diasporas in North America series.....	6
	Research and Innovation Network Austria - RINA.....	6
3	Meet Dr. Christina Schneider – Jean Monnet Chair at the University of California in San Diego	8
4	In case you missed it.....	10
4.1	Event Outlook	10



1 EURAXESS Country in Focus: THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC



[Slovakia](#) is a young and dynamic country offering an increasing number of opportunities to carry out excellent research and to turn it to practical application or business ideas. It has been an attractive destination for foreign investors, having one of the highest shares of medium and high tech exports in the EU and being a number one producer of cars per capita in the world. Now Slovakia has a strong ambition to take another step forward, to become the hub of innovations and encourage more Slovak companies to follow the examples of [ARDACO](#), [c2i](#), [ESET](#), [Ecocapsule](#), [GA Drilling](#) and several others that are among the innovation leaders in their fields. Research and development should be in the heart of this exciting transformation.

1.1 Slovakia and its Research, Development & Innovation System

Brochure: [Research and Development in Slovakia](#)
(2016)

R&D in the Slovak Republic is carried out particularly at public sector institutions, including [23 public and state universities](#), 57 institutes of the [Slovak Academy of Sciences](#) and specialised research institutes established by state administration central bodies. The private sector currently lags behind in R&D activities but several targeted policies and funding programmes should help to increase the number of researchers in private companies in the near future.

The share of researchers in the working population is slightly under the average in EU). 42.7% of researchers in Slovakia are women, compared to 33.2% in the EU, and their share is comparatively high also in the majority of [STEM disciplines](#). On the other hand, foreigners only comprised 2.44% of researchers employed in Slovakia in 2014 and increasing the number of international researchers in the R&D is therefore one of the main challenges for Slovak research institutions.

R&D expenditure in Slovakia is relatively low in comparison with the wider EU. In 2014, the overall spending on R&D was 0.89 % of the GDP but it should increase to 1.2 % of the GDP by 2020. Considerable investment in the new research infrastructure has been made mainly due to the Structural and Investment Funds of the European Union. During the last decade brand new research infrastructures have been established or upgraded in all key research institutions and many research institutions now have an infrastructure comparable to that of the best R&D institutions in Europe. Further upgrades of the R&D infrastructure will be financed from the European Investment and Structural Funds in the period of 2014 - 2020. The establishment of these integrated scientific infrastructures has already seen the first success and the Slovak Republic became, together with Portugal, the most successful country in the first [Teaming for Excellence Call](#) (Horizon 2020) with a gain of four projects which should result in the creation of international centres of excellence.



Several new [Science Parks](#) were established since 2007. Comenius University Science Park in Bratislava (in the picture above) should provide the space for collaborative interdisciplinary research in the fields of biomedicine, biotechnologies, environmental medicine and related societal challenges. (Photo: Vladimír Kuric)



1.2 Research Excellence in Slovakia

The areas with the largest potential to contribute to the excellent, cutting edge research on the international scale were defined in the [Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation](#) (RIS3 SK) which outlines the R&D priorities to be funded in the forthcoming years via national funding schemes but also via EU structural funds. These areas reflect both the scientific and research capacities available and the economic specialisation of Slovakia. The R&D priorities include the research of materials & nanotechnology, ICT and biomedicine & biotechnology. Technology priorities include industrial research, environmental & agricultural research and research on environmentally friendly and sustainable energy. The role of social sciences in tackling the global and local societal challenges is also stressed in the Strategy.

The majority of institutions producing excellent and innovative research are located in Bratislava, one of the most innovative regions in the new EU member states according to the [EU Innovation Scoreboard](#). But research excellence and strong innovation potential can also be found elsewhere. The region of Košice is building its reputation of the Slovak “Silicon Valley” with a high concentration of ICT firms and related R&D activities. “[IT Valley](#)” **cluster was one of the first industrial clusters in the region of Central and Eastern Europe awarded with the Gold Label of the European Cluster Excellence Initiative**. The region of Žilina is becoming a home of top quality research on intelligent transport systems not only because of the presence of the numerous companies related to the car and transport industry but also due to the ERA Chair grant awarded to the [University of Žilina](#).



Researchers considering a short-term research stay in Slovakia can choose from a [variety of available options](#). The largest programme providing funding for study and research stays in duration from 1 - 12 months is The National Scholarship Programme (NSP) administered by [SAIA, n. o.](#), a mobility funding agency being also a member of European EURAXESS network. More information about the programme is available at www.scholarships.sk

1.3 Recruitment Opportunities

1.3.1 Public Sector Recruitment Opportunities

Most researchers in Slovakia are employed in public sector institutions, with universities being the most important employers of research staff. All positions open at the Slovak universities are published on [the webpage](#) of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of SR. Similarly, the Slovak Academy of Sciences announces all vacancies via its [public website](#). Experienced scientists from abroad who are interested in working at the institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences can also apply for a fellowship within the [SASPRO programme](#), co-funded under FP7. The programme allows applications for a fellowship from 12 to 36 months, while the field of science within which it is possible to submit applications is not limited.

PhD candidates are considered to be regular students in Slovakia and receive a monthly scholarship, if enrolled as full time students. Selected PhD programmes offered in English language can be found in the [overview prepared by SAIA](#).

Slovak researchers working abroad who consider returning to Slovakia might be interested in the [reintegration programme “Návraty”](#) introduced last year. The programme enables research institutions from the public sector to open the



positions for highly qualified Slovaks living abroad and receive the extra funding from the state that would enable them to provide competitive salaries and other conditions to the returnees.

1.3.2 Private Sector Recruitment Opportunities

Slovakia is a country with a strong industrial base, tradition of industrial R&D and high share of medium and high technology production. Nevertheless, R&D activity of the business sector remains relatively low which is reflected also in the lack of the R&D positions at Slovak companies. Recently introduced innovation policies (support to clusters, innovation vouchers, tax reliefs) and funding programmes indicate a positive shift that should contribute to the development of stronger research potential in the business sector.

Besides supporting the R&D capacities in the established industries and companies, creation of new technological start-ups is strongly supported. This support is not limited to Slovak citizens only. [Concept Paper on Start-up support](#) in Slovakia adopted by the Slovak Government in 2015 foresees various advantages for international researchers who decide to start their innovative business in Slovakia. These include start-up visa, grants and more. With its population of around 5 million Slovakia might be too small to be the final market for start-ups, but it is ideal for testing new ideas.

1.4 Funding Opportunities

The competitive funding for R&D and innovation projects is provided by several public agencies. Major R&D grant agency in Slovakia is the [Slovak Research and Development Agency](#) (SRDA) offering funding for research project in both basic and applied research and across all scientific areas. Employees of universities and the Slovak Academy of Sciences can also apply for smaller grants supporting basic research ([VEGA grants](#)) and use of its outcomes in the educational process ([KEGA grants](#)).

Larger infrastructural project and collaborations between the academia and industry are mostly supported by the Structural and Investment Funds of the European Union. More than 2.2 billion euro is allocated in the Operational Programme Research and Innovation for the period 2014 - 2020. Two agencies are involved in the distribution of funding from this Programme: the [Research Agency](#) and the [Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency](#).

1.5 Research collaborations

Slovakia enjoys all benefits of being a part of the European Research Area with an access to the major international R&D funding programmes, collaborative networks and some of the world best research infrastructures. As a member state of CERN, European Space Agency or Institute for Nuclear Research in Dubna it provides its researchers with an opportunity to participate in some of the most challenging research projects of the time. Its geographical location, historical ties and current policies (see e.g. [EU Strategy for the Danube Region](#)) make it an especially attractive place to develop research collaborations with the regions of Balkan and Eastern Europe.



1.6 Important information for incoming researchers

The instrument of **hosting agreement** was introduced to simplify the relocation of third country researchers to Slovakia. Researchers who signed a hosting agreement with a research institution or a university can apply for a temporary residence for the purpose of research and development. This type of residence requires fewer administrative duties and allows faster decision-making procedure. In this case, a researcher does not need a work permit or a confirmation of a possibility to fill a vacant position.

Practical assistance to international researchers is available at EURAXESS Service Centres in [five Slovak towns](#). The most comprehensive summary of practical information for mobile researchers is available on the national portal of the Slovak EURAXESS Network (www.euraxess.sk) and in the regularly updated [International Researcher's Guide to Slovakia](#).

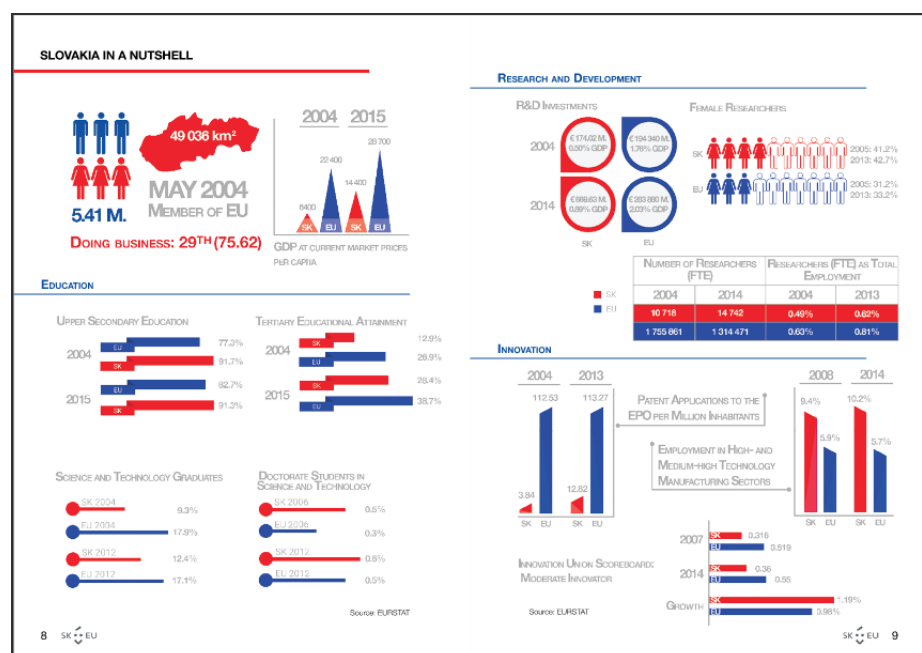
1.7 Important case study between Slovakia and the US

In May 2016 the **Slovak American Business and Innovation Council (SABIC)** was established in Washington DC. Its formation reflects the growing demand from US businesses active in Slovakia and Slovak businesses entering the US market for a permanent business and innovation focused platform based in the United States. SABIC is a joint initiative of the Slovak embassy, the private sector and the nonprofit sector. The main goals of SABIC are to promote the commercial activities and investments between the US and Slovakia with the focus of innovation, to support Slovakia's startup ecosystem by fostering bilateral exchange and to engage the Slovak-American professionals in this process. Among the founding members are some of the most successful examples of Slovak – US business cooperation such as ATT, Honeywell, Virtual Reality Media and ESET. SABIC can also serve as a channel through which connections and cooperation between companies and the RD centers/centers of excellence in Slovakia can be encouraged and facilitated.

Text prepared by Janka Kottulová, Katarína Košťálová and Mária Sássová, EURAXESS

For more information on the S&T collaboration between Slovakia and the US please contact **Mr Miroslav Ivan** (Miroslav.ivan@mzv.sk) – Trade&Innovation Attache at the Embassy of Slovakia in Washington, DC.

Infogram | Facts & Figures
(2016) | Research and
Development in Slovakia



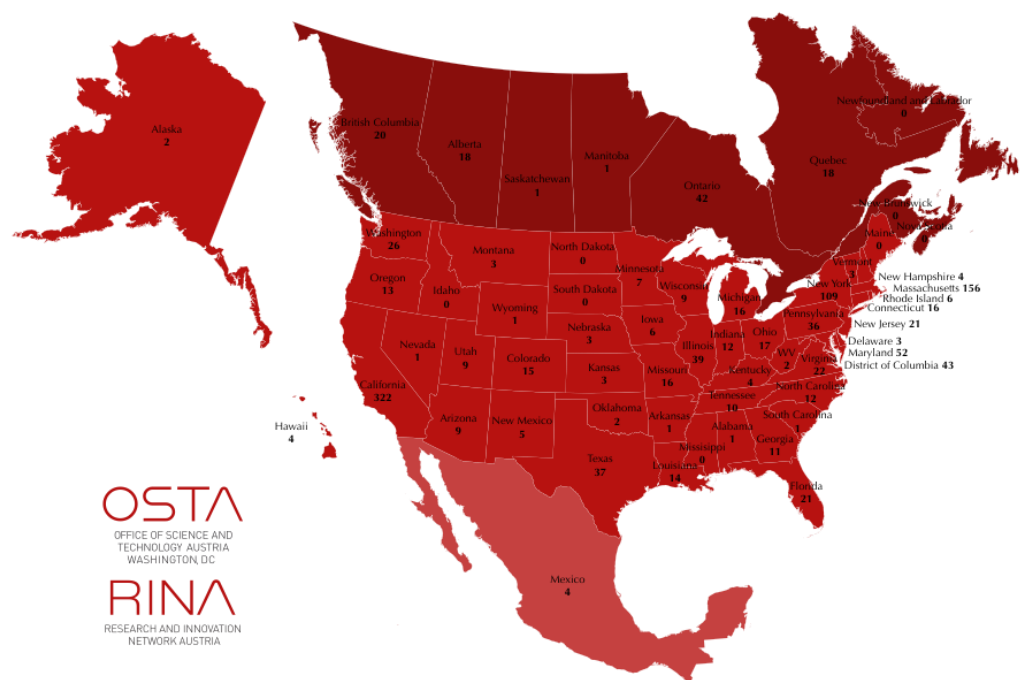
2 European Scientific Diasporas in North America series

Research and Innovation Network Austria - RINA

The Research and Innovation Network Austria ([RINA](#)) was established at the Office of Science and Technology Austria – Washington, DC ([OSTA Washington](#)) in 2001 as one of the tools for implementing the office's guiding principle: "Bridging research and innovation between Austria and North America."

RINA Members

In the 15 years since it began, this interdisciplinary network has grown to a total of 2,638 active members: 1,341 of them currently work in North America, while the other 1,297 members have relocated from North America to research positions in Austria and all over the world.



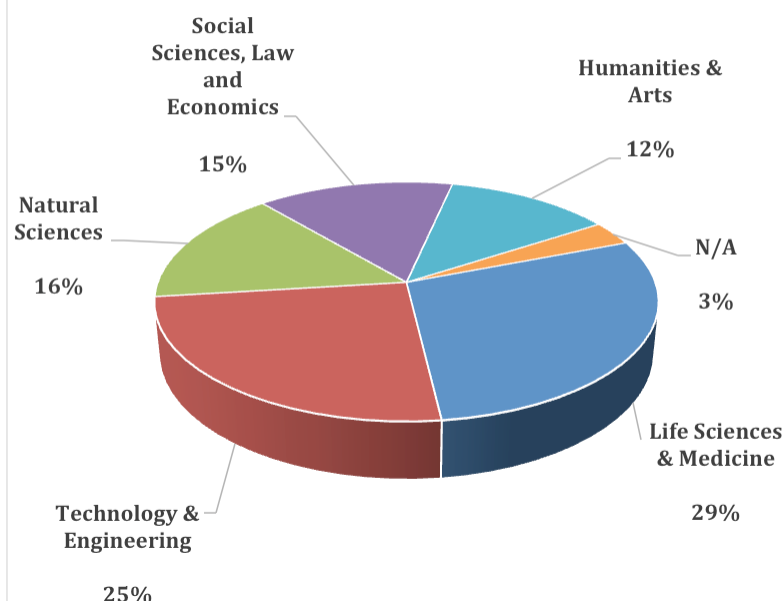
Life Sciences & Medicine is the leading academic discipline among network members, with a representation of 29%. This concentration is closely followed by Technology & Engineering, with 25% of RINA members. Natural Science; Social Sciences, Law, & Economics; and Humanities & Arts make up the rest of the members' research areas.

RINA's Focus

RINA serves as a foundation for understanding the needs of Austrian researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs in North America, and in turn allows OSTA – as a representative of its funding Austrian ministries [BMEIA](#), [BMVIT](#), and [BMWFW](#) – to respond to and fulfill those needs.



Academic Disciplines



Additionally, RINA serves as a mechanism for information exchange between the science, technology, and innovation communities in Austria, and the Austrian researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs in North America.

RINA's Services & Support

OSTA informs Austrian researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs about job openings, funding avenues, options for collaboration, networking events, and research opportunities in Austria and Europe.

By participating in OSTA's networking events and visitors' programs, RINA members can improve their connections with their peers in science, technology, and innovation in Austria, as well as among the 1,341 fellow RINA members currently in North America.

Through the online blog *Bridges*, OSTA's social media outlets, and through OSTA's direct connections with media representatives, RINA members receive support in sharing their research accomplishments with the public.

OSTA also taps into its broad network with Austrian, European, and North American science, technology, and innovation stakeholders to facilitate collaboration, and supports Austrian researchers during their stays in North America, through its inquiry management program.

RINA's Annual Conference – the Austrian Research and Innovation Talk (ARIT)

The ARIT is OSTA's annual conference for Austrian researchers, entrepreneurs, and innovators in North America. It is the largest networking event outside of Austria organized specifically for Austrian researchers.

The ARIT enables contact and communication between ~120-200 RINA members and groups including a delegation of Austrian STI policy makers, university administrators, representatives from research-funding agencies, and Austrian private industry. Combining the best of both worlds, ARIT's program delivers updates on current topics on STI in Austria, while evening events provide wonderful opportunities for networking, information exchange, and initiating collaborations.

The 13th ARIT will be held on October 22, 2016, in Toronto, Canada, with a focus on "Big Data." The [OSTA](#) team, located at the [Embassy of Austria in Washington, DC](#), will be happy to answer any questions regarding this event.

Contact:

Simone Poetscher, PMP

Deputy Director and Senior
Program Manager RINA
Network

3524 International Court, NW

Washington, DC 20008

rina@ostaustria.org

+1-202-895-6754



Christina Schneider is an Associate Professor and Jean Monnet Chair at the University of California, San Diego. She earned her Ph.D. at the University of Konstanz in 2006, and worked at the Max Planck Institute of Economics in Jena (2006-2007), the University of Oxford (2007-2008), and the Niehaus Center for Globalization and Governance in Princeton (2008-2009). Her research focuses on the domestic politics of cooperation and bargaining in international organizations with a focus on the European Union and international development organizations. She has published a book on European enlargement with *Cambridge University Press*, and has articles published in journals including *American Journal of Political Science*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *International Organizations*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Public Choice*, and *World Development*. Currently, she is on sabbatical leave as an Alexander-von-Humboldt Experienced Research Fellow at the University of Konstanz, Germany.

3 Meet Dr. Christina Schneider – Jean Monnet Chair at the University of California in San Diego

EURAXESS Links North America interviewed Dr. Schneider regarding her position as a Jean Monnet Chair. She is an excellent example of a European professor who has been awarded funding from the European Commission to foster EU-US collaboration in the field of international political economy.

Please tell us a little about yourself.

I am an Associate Professor of International Political Economy at the Department of Political Science at the University of California in San Diego (UCSD). Before moving to the United States in 2008, I researched and taught in a number of countries, including Germany and the United Kingdom. My research focuses on the domestic politics of international cooperation. I have written extensively on governance issues in the European Union and international development institutions. In 2013, I was awarded the Jean Monnet Chair of the European Union to foster the knowledge and competence of European affairs at UCSD and other universities in the region.

Dr. Schneider, would you please tell our readers about your connection to the USA?

Starting in 2001, I lived in Denton, Texas for two years to study for a Master of Arts in Political Science at the University of North Texas. The unique academic environment in the United States motivated me to pursue a Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Konstanz. I returned to the United States in 2008 to pursue a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Niehaus Center for Globalization and Governance in Princeton. In 2009, I was offered a tenure-track assistant professorship in the political science department at the University of California in San Diego to research and teach about governance issues in international organizations with a focus on the European Union.

You were awarded the Jean Monnet Chair at the University of California San Diego. What has been the focus of your (research) work while Chair?

My work as the Jean Monnet Chair at UCSD has focused on European cooperation and integration in the broader global governance context. One strand of my research analyzes the European Union as a foreign policy actor in international development. The European Union is by now the largest multilateral aid donor in the world, providing more foreign development aid than the World Bank. Despite its importance, we know very little about the EU's role in international development. My research aims to shed more light about how foreign aid policies are decided within the European Union. Another strand of my research centers around the domestic electoral politics of European cooperation. The EU currently faces a number of important crises, including the



Jean Monnet Chair

The Jean Monnet Chair is part of the Jean Monnet Activities, which belong to the overarching program of the European Commission – [ERASMUS+](#).

[Jean Monnet Activities](#) are designed to promote excellence in teaching and research in the field of European Union studies worldwide. The activities also foster the dialogue between the academic world and policy-makers, in particular with the aim of enhancing governance of EU policies.

A [Jean Monnet Chair](#) is a teaching post with a specialisation in European Union studies for university professors. It must be held by only one professor, who must provide the minimum of 90 teaching hours per academic year over a period of three consecutive years. In addition, he must carry out at least one additional activity per academic year.

European debt crisis, the Ukrainian crisis, the refugee crisis, or the British referendum to leave the EU. These crises have not only contributed to a rise of populism across Europe, but also to a worsening of the EU's legitimacy crisis. For many Europeans, the EU is run by distant and unaccountable political elites who make decision behind closed doors. My research analyzes the extent to which EU member governments are democratically responsive to their constituents when they negotiate at the European level. To date we know little whether and how electoral politics have influenced governments at the EU level and with what consequences for European cooperation and domestic politics. My research demonstrates that electoral politics play an important role in European cooperation. The research culminated in a number of journal publications as well as a book manuscript.

What has been most rewarding about the Jean Monnet Chair experience?

The Jean Monnet Chair provided me with the opportunity to deepen my research and teaching about European politics significantly, and to stimulate interests of UCSD faculty and students in issues of European affairs. Although the EU has emerged as leading power in global governance (for example, by becoming the largest foreign aid donor in the world), the EU is oftentimes poorly taught and poorly understood in the United States, and particularly at the West Coast of the United States. Courses on topics relevant to the EU have been reduced, arguing that the EU has become a political system in itself that is too specific to allow for a more general application that would be of interest to an US audience. The Jean Monnet Chair activities raised the profile of the European Union on campus and in the region, and enhanced the awareness and knowledge among academics, students, and US citizens about issues relating to European integration.

In what ways have the Jean Monnet Chair improved/benefited the EU-US collaboration in STI (Science, Technology and Innovation)?

Global governance is a central component for the EU-US collaboration in STI. One important example are the challenges governments face when addressing the problem of global warming. After more than two decades of diplomacy, the process established last year in Paris is widely seen as an important step in that direction. But even though Paris was a watershed event, this does not mean that governments will actually do what is needed to cut emissions and manage the impacts of climate change. At UCSD, we brought together a group of scholars from various disciplines, including both natural and social scientists, who are working on a proposal on how to make Paris work. Our unique dual approach incorporates both the expertise of natural sciences to enhance the effectiveness of climate policies (i.e. by providing guidance as to what policies work, and by designing a new system to verify global emissions) and the expertise of social science to monitor and incentivize governments to implement and facilitate such policies. As a Jean Monnet Chair, I provide guidance on the governance challenges of the project. We hope that our proposal will ultimately enhance the cooperation between the EU, the US, and some other central countries in the fight against climate change.



4 In case you missed it....

4.1 Event Outlook

Event	When	Where	Organized by	Link
ISSNAF Annual Event 2016	17-18 October 2016	Embassy of Italy, Washington, DC, USA	ISSNAF – Italian Scientists and Scholars of North America Foundation	Link
NIH International Opportunities Expo 2016	20 October 2016	NIH, Bethesda, MD, USA	Office of Intramural Training & Education	Link
Austrian Research & Innovation Talk 2016	21-22 October 2016	Toronto, ON, CANADA	Office of Science and Technology Austria	Link
European Research Day 2016	1 November 2016	GeorgiaTech, Atlanta, GA, USA	EURAXESS Links North America	Link
8 th Canadian Science Policy Conference 2016	8-10 November 2016	Ottawa, ON, USA	Canadian Science Policy Forum	Link
2 nd Annual Meeting of European Scientific Diasporas in North America	5-6 December 2016	Washington, DC, USA	EURAXESS Links North America	Link

About EURAXESS Links North America

EURAXESS Links 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 Links North America, please visit:

<http://northamerica.euraxess.org>.

To sign up for membership in our network, and to the virtual SINAPSE community of members, please go to our website and click on the *Login Community* hyperlink on the top right-hand side of the [page](#). Membership is free!

Editors: Viktoria BODNAROVA and Katrien MAES, EURAXESS Links North America Team

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