



BOOSTING RESEARCH IN TEN EU MEMBER STATES

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS IN SWITZERLAND



The Scientific Exchange Programme between the New Member States and Switzerland, Sciex-NMS.ch for short, has given over 500 young researchers from new EU member states the opportunity to complete a short-term residency in Switzerland to further their research.

Gathering experience at several research institutes, including abroad, is often a necessary step for people who want to complete a post-doctoral qualification and pursue an academic career. However, many academics from the new EU member states are unable to undertake or complete research abroad because the cost of living is too high. The Sciex-NMS.ch fellowship programme has made it possible for young researchers to complete a period of study at a Swiss university.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COOPERATION – A WIN-WIN SITUATION

The research residencies in Switzerland have allowed researchers to develop their individual skills and have promoted academic exchange, allowing the joint development of pioneering new approaches in research. Switzerland has brought its strengths in education and research to the table and at the same

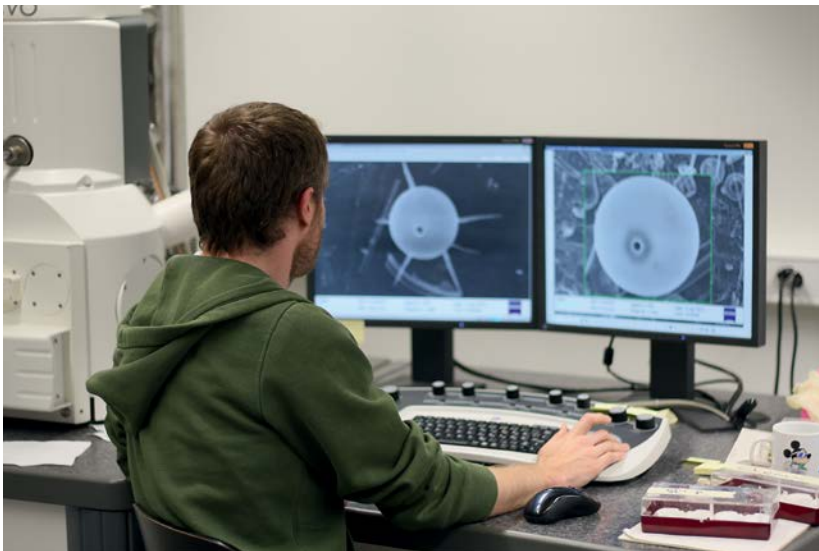
time cemented contacts with academic networks in the new EU member states. A prerequisite for applying for a fellowship is a partnership between the home and host universities.

FROM SOLAR CELLS TO INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES: APPLIED RESEARCH THANKS TO SCIEX-NMS.CH

The selection of fellowships was based on qualitative criteria, which meant a very broad range of projects received funding. Edvinas Orentas (30) from Lithuania spent one and a half years researching solar energy at the University of Geneva, investigating how efficient solar cells can be manufactured quickly and cheaply in a consumer-friendly form. Petr Dostal (37) from the Czech Republic also spent a post-doctoral year in Switzerland at the Institute for Biology in Bern. His research involved creating a combined Swiss and Czech database of invasive plant species, and this now serves as a basic research resource in both countries.

HUMAN CAPITAL AS A FACTOR OF PRODUCTION: COOPERATION BETWEEN SWISS AND FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES

The partner countries also benefit from the fellowship programme as it boosts an important factor of production: their human capital. In addition, networks in a large number of research disciplines are established, expanded and strengthened over the long term – which is also advantageous for Switzerland as a research location. The institutional partnerships often continue well beyond the research residency itself, including in new joint research projects. The maximum length of stay at a Swiss university was set at two years. An upper limit was deliberately set to ensure that researchers did not lose the link to their home university. This fellowship programme aimed to encourage knowledge transfer between the partner countries, not to contribute to a 'brain drain'.



THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME:

- gave over 500 academics from the new EU member states the opportunity to do a research residency in Switzerland;
- promoted and enhanced relations between Swiss universities and universities in the new EU member states;
- helped develop the research skills of young academics from the new EU member states and strengthen the research environment in the countries themselves.

The Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (swissuniversities) was responsible for coordinating the programme. It was implemented by means of collaboration between foreign and Swiss universities and their respective mentors (professors).



"A scholarship programme like Sciex-NMS.ch is a long-term investment for the entire society"

Edvinas Orentas (30) from Vilnius, Lithuania

THE PROGRAMME IN BRIEF

SUBJECT

Research and development

COUNTRIES

Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary

PARTNERS

Swiss universities

STARTING POINT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In order to pursue an academic career, researchers often need to gather experience at a number of different research institutes, including those abroad. However, many academics in the new EU member states are often unable to undertake or complete research abroad because the costs are too high.

PURPOSE

By supporting young academics from the new EU member states and the establishment and expansion of networks between Swiss and foreign universities, the programme makes an important contribution to strengthening research in the respective countries.

ACTIVITIES

- Organisation of time-limited research placements at Swiss universities
- Fostering the individual research skills of young academics
- Establishing networks between Swiss and foreign universities

RESULTS

- More than 500 young researchers from around 160 different universities in the EU-10 countries were given the opportunity to complete a research residency of between 6 and 24 months in Switzerland
- 27 Swiss universities and research institutes took part in the Sciex programme and supported one or several fellowships
- In total, 10 calls for applications to the programme were organised in the partner countries.
- About 2,000 applications jointly submitted by a home and a host university were examined and evaluated by scientific panels

TARGET GROUPS

- Young academics from the respective new EU member states
- Research institutes from the respective new EU member states

COSTS

Total project budget (corresponds to amount of Swiss contribution):

CHF 46.8 million

Contribution per country:

Bulgaria: CHF 2 million

Estonia: CHF 2 million

Latvia: CHF 2 million

Lithuania: CHF 4 million

Poland: CHF 12 million

Romania: CHF 9.8 million

Slovakia: CHF 3 million

Slovenia: CHF 1 million

Czech Republic: CHF 7 million

Hungary: CHF 4 million

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (swissuniversities)
- Respective mentors of the collaborating universities

DURATION

2009 – 2016

THE SWISS ENLARGEMENT CONTRIBUTION

November 2015

www.swiss-contribution.admin.ch