

Press Release

September 8th 2010

Sciex-NMS^{ch} - The Swiss contribution to EU enlargement

Swiss support to young researchers from the New Member States of the EU

The Scientific Exchange Programme between Switzerland and the New Member States of the EU (Sciex-NMS^{ch}) aims at promoting young talented researchers from these countries and simultaneously at enhancing the Swiss scientific network. As a result of a second call opened to the 5 countries Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia, 105 eligible proposals were submitted, confirming the interest in the Sciex-NMS^{ch} Programme. 46 young researchers were selected on the basis of their scientific excellence. The Fellows will develop part of their research at a Swiss institution.

The Scientific Exchange Programme between Switzerland and the New Member States of the EU (Sciex-NMS^{ch}) - part of the Swiss contribution to the EU enlargement - aims at establishing scientific partnerships in order to develop, on the long term, individual researchers' capacities, to foster innovation and to establish networks between researchers.

In this way, the Sciex-NMS^{ch} Programme finances fellowships for research stays of Doctoral Candidates or Postdocs in Swiss research teams for a period of 6 to 24 months. Project selection is done by calls for tenders. The second call opened to Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia confirmed the interest in the Programme of both Swiss and partner institutions and with regard to the development of the scientific career of the researchers involved.

An evaluation procedure centred on scientific quality

After the check of their eligibility, the tenders were subjected to an evaluation at two levels: first an evaluation by the responsible teams in the partner countries and in Switzerland in order to assess the importance and the quality of projects from the point of view of the institution. In a second step, the tenders were examined exclusively on the basis of their scientific quality by an "Evaluation Committee" composed of experts from the relevant disciplines. This procedure ensures that the selected projects combine both the requirement of excellence of the research project and the specific objectives defined by complementary criteria, namely the professional commitment of the Fellows and the Mentors, the mutual benefits of the collaboration within the Swiss team and the degree of support assured by both partner institutions.

The Sciex Steering Committee - responsible for the final decision - during its meeting of August 26th 2010 proceeded at the selection of tenders on the basis of the results of the evaluation and the budget available.

Selection of 46 excellent researchers

In the end, the projects of 46 excellent researchers from Estonia (3), Hungary (9), Lithuania (6), Poland (26) and Slovenia (2) were selected.

A very high majority of the projects come from the mathematical / natural sciences and engineering, a fact that reflects the dominant scientific disciplines of the countries involved as well as the expectations with regard to the contents of the international collaboration. The distribution according to scientific discipline results in a geographical concentration of projects in the Zurich Institutions of Higher Education, where almost half of the selected projects will be developed.

Furthermore, the Swiss host institutions of the selected researchers are mainly universities and the two Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology as well as Swiss Federal Research Institutes - according to the following distribution:

21 researchers will be integrated in a university:

- University of Basel: 2
- University of Bern: 3
- University of Fribourg: 4
- University of Geneva: 6
- University of Lausanne: 2
- University of Lucerne: 1
- University of Neuchatel: 1
- University of Zurich: 2

9 in a Swiss Federal Institute of Technology:

- Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne: 3
- Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich: 6

14 in a Swiss Federal Research Institute:

- EAWAG - Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology: 2
- EMPA - Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology: 5
- PSI - Paul Scherrer Institute: 5
- WSL - Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research: 2

For the first time, 2 researchers will also be integrated in a University of Applied Sciences (HES-SO Fribourg and HES-SO Valais).

A financial commitment of more than 3.6 million Swiss francs

The total amount allocated for the second call amounts to 3.6 million Swiss francs - devoted to cover the costs for salaries and travel expenses of the researchers and split as follows: 244'000 CHF for Estonian fellowships, 680'000 CHF for Hungarian fellowships, 530'000 CHF for Lithuanian fellowships, more than 2 million CHF for Polish fellowships and 140'000 CHF for Slovenian fellowships.

The list of all 46 selected Sciex Fellows and more detailed information about the Sciex Programme are available on the website www.sciex.ch. You will also find there the dates of the coming calls for tenders for the different partner countries.

Further information

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