

## European Science, Engineering and Technology Highlights<sup>1</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014

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<sup>1</sup> Note: If you would like additional information or background, please feel free to contact either Carine Polliotti at [cpolliot@nsf.gov](mailto:cpolliot@nsf.gov)

## 1 Educational upward mobility slowing – OECD report



Educational upward mobility has started to slow in the industrialized world, according to the OECD's new Education at a Glance 2014 report. The share of people with lower qualifications than their parents is rising – even though higher education pays off more than ever before – and “inequalities between tertiary-educated adults and the rest of society are growing”. The report analyzes the education systems of the 34 OECD countries as well as Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Latvia, Russia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140909171122896>

Report available at:

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/Education-at-a-Glance-2014.pdf>



## 2 EuropeanPioneers: 4.5 million Euros (\$5.9 million) of EU funds for startups

Over the next two years, the EU funding program “EuropeanPioneers” will support 25 startups and SMEs in the European Union with a total of 4.5 million Euros (\$5.9 million). The scheme targets businesses active in the fields of Smart City Services, Social Connected TV, Pervasive Gaming, and E-Learning. The aim of the project is to boost media-sector startups and SMEs with innovative business models. The application deadline for the first round is 31st October 2014. Interested companies can apply online from 1st September at [www.europeanpioneers.eu](http://www.europeanpioneers.eu).



In the course of the 8-month program, the selected startups will receive funding of between 50,000 Euros (\$66,000) and 250,000 Euros (\$330,000) each, as well as access to the technologies of the powerful FIWARE and FI-CONTENT software platforms. The platforms provide open-source software, software as a service and cloud service infrastructures for the digital industry. These technologies have been developed by companies and research institutions in the context of the EU's “Future Internet Public Private Partnership”.

Full article available at:

<http://www.alphagalileo.org/ViewItem.aspx?ItemId=144816&CultureCode=en>



### 3 Europe: Universities warn against cuts to EU research funding



The European University Association, or [EUA](#), has warned the Council of the European Union against making “considerable cuts” to proposed funding for research and innovation, including to the major framework program Horizon 2020. In a press statement last Thursday, the EUA said it understood that the Council of Minister’s position – to be formally adopted in September – recommended reductions in research and innovation payments.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140829121307787>



### 4 Europe: Facts on tenure track in Europe’s research universities



Universities in three out of 10 European countries do not have an academic tenure track – France, Spain and the United Kingdom – while in seven countries three basic tenure models have been implemented since the turn of the century, according to a survey by the League of European Research Universities, LERU. The models – in Belgium, Finland, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland – are outlined in a paper on “Tenure and Tenure Track at LERU Universities: Models for attractive research careers in Europe” launched on Tuesday 2 September.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140903091641340>



### 5 Europe: Commission seeks views on how to make EU a better place for SMEs



The European Commission opened today a consultation on the needs of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Europe. The propositions received will be used to upgrade the EU’s Small Business Act (SBA), a political document adopted in June 2008 compiling a list of measures designed to make life easier for small businesses. The SBA is considered as the basis for the EU’s SME policy and is therefore a key part of EU regulation and part of a wave of pro-SME regulation launched at EU level over the past years. The SBA was published shortly after the launch of the Eurostars program, a joint EU-EUREKA funding instrument for R&D-intensive small businesses. The public consultation launched this week seeks further input from all interested parties, including entrepreneurs and business organizations, to help the European Commission ensure the SBA is fit to meet future challenges.

Full article available at:

[http://www.eurekanetwork.org/about/-/journal\\_content/56/10137/4300547?refererPlid=10195](http://www.eurekanetwork.org/about/-/journal_content/56/10137/4300547?refererPlid=10195)



## 6 EU 'single market for research' now depends on national reforms, study finds



The European Research Area (ERA) partnership between Member States, research stakeholders and the Commission has made good progress in delivering ERA. The conditions for achieving an ERA, where researchers and scientific knowledge can circulate freely, are in place at the European level. Reforms must now be implemented at the Member State level to make ERA work. This is the main conclusion of the latest ERA progress report, presented today by the European Commission. The report updates last year's overview, and

presents individual country reports that give a snapshot of implementation on the ground, notably at the level of research organizations.

Full article available at:

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-14-1003\\_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-1003_en.htm?locale=en)



## 7 Germany: Rectors' conference head slams EU funding priorities



A leading German higher education official has spoken out against the European Union's funding priorities for next year. According to Professor Horst Hippler, president of the German Rectors' Conference – the Hochschulrektorenkonferenz or HRK – the EU is doing too much for agriculture while neglecting research and innovation.

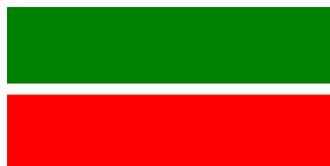
European heads of state are seeking to cut research and innovation funding by 11%. There would be €1.1 billion (US\$1.5 billion) less available for 2015 compared to what the European Commission has proposed. In contrast, agriculture subsidies are to be lowered by a mere 0.1%.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140819115432261>



## 8 Germany: First German-Russian university opens in Tatarstan



*Flag of Tatarstan*

Teaching has started at the first German-Russian university in Kazan, capital of Tatarstan. The new institution is being supported by the Tatarstan government and the German Academic Exchange Service, DAAD. The German-Russian Institute of Advanced Technologies, or GRIAT, has four engineering programs oriented to standards in Germany. It receives funding via DAAD as part of the German Federal Education and Research Ministry's "Transnational Education Program", and via the Republic of Tatarstan, which is a federal subject of Russia.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140904114522299>



## 9 Kosovo: Huge growth in higher education access but too few industry links



the country.

Kosovo's higher education system has been undergoing a tremendous change in the last decade. With access to higher education currently at over 60% of the school-leaving cohort, from a mere 15% in 1999, the government has opted for mass higher education.

Five new public universities have been established in the last five years and there are approximately 30 private accredited colleges in

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140814160710229>



## 10 Russia: Medvedev orders creation of Crimean Federal University

Russia's Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has issued a directive about establishing a Crimean Federal University named after Vladimir Vernadsky. The directive was posted on the Russian government's website, reports ITAR-TASS.



A concept note attached to the directive points out that the Federal University is to be established on the basis of seven higher learning institutions and seven research organizations. The Russian Ministry of Education and Science has been assigned to work out a federal university development program within six months and refer it to government for approval.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140814203107499>



### 11 Russia: Economic sanctions not ending Russian study abroad



Economic sanctions imposed on Russia by Western countries after Ukraine's Maidan revolution do not appear to be disrupting Russian students in foreign universities. Most will continue to study in Europe and elsewhere under numerous initiatives, including one known as Global Education that was recently approved by the government. Under the scheme, which will run from 2014-16, Russian students will be able to study in Western universities in numerous fields including medicine, engineering, management and others.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140824081658182>



### 12 Switzerland: EU immigration ruling keeps foreign students away



The fall-out from Swiss voters' decision to limit European Union immigration is not just affecting businesses. Uncertainty over grants means up to a third fewer foreign students have registered at Swiss universities this semester.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140904210144986>



### 13 Swiss scientists regain access to some E.U. grants through 2016



Starting today, scientists in Switzerland will again be able to apply for some research funds from the European Union's Horizon 2020 program—including coveted grants from the European Research Council (ERC). Both sides reached a short-term deal undoing restrictions imposed on Swiss scientists after a referendum to curb mass immigration back in February.

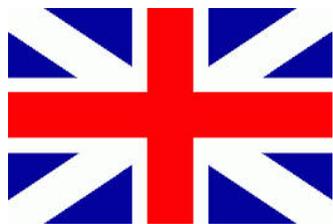
Scientists were the first to feel the cooling of the relationships between the European Union and the country it surrounds after the referendum. The union expected Switzerland to include Croatia, which entered the union last year, in its agreement on the free movement of persons. But following the referendum vote, Switzerland said it couldn't sign the Croatian deal. As a result, Switzerland lost its privileged status as an "associated country" in Horizon 2020, the bloc's research funding program.

Full article available at:

<http://news.sciencemag.org/europe/2014/09/swiss-scientists-regain-access-some-e-u-grants-through-2016>



#### 14 United Kingdom: Record numbers win university places



The proportion of students in the United Kingdom passing A-levels\* dropped for the first time in three decades following the former education secretary's clampdown on exam results. But the results triggered record numbers being accepted to university. Results were also affected because tougher subjects flourished while others, such as general studies, have declined in popularity. The admissions service UCAS said that the total number to start this year was likely to top 500,000 for the first time.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=2014082209413973>

*\*The General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (short form: GCE Advanced Level), or more commonly, the A-Level, is a school leaving qualification offered by educational bodies in the United Kingdom to students completing secondary or pre-university education.*



#### 15 United Kingdom: Universities attract more students from EU countries



So far, 4,070 students from across the European Union have been accepted to study in Scotland, an increase of 10% compared to the same time last year.

The rise is important because EU students compete for the same places as Scots and the estimated £80 million cost of educating them is the responsibility of the Scottish taxpayer. However, the figures from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service show no signs that Scots are being pushed out, with record numbers already accepted.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140822094051831>

