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The conference “Collaborative Research in Horizon 2020. Promoting German-Polish Cooperation in EU Research Funding” took place in the German-Polish twin-cities Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice on May 24-25, 2018. Its aim was to discuss EU research funding opportunities as well as fostering German-Polish cooperation in this field. The conference was financed by the EU Competence Network of Brandenburg Universities [1] and co-organised by the EU Research Affairs office of the European University Viadrina (EUV) in Frankfurt (Oder) and the Regional Contact Point for EU Programmes at the Poznań Science and Technology Park [2]. It was the first conference of this kind with an explicit German-Polish focus and attracted about 50-60 participants (about 80 had registered, incl. speakers). In accordance with the research and teaching agenda of both EUV and Collegium Polonicum (CP), the conference informed on EU collaboration programmes with special regards to interdisciplinary research on societies, climate and environment as well as energy-related topics.

In his opening address, Jürgen NEYER (Frankfurt/Oder) correctly pointed to the fact that (scientific) cooperation is always based on human networks, joint ideas as well as financial support. According to him, the conference “Collaborative Research in Horizon 2020” was held at the right place since one of the main tasks of the EUV is to enhance encounters between Eastern and Western Europe. His colleague Magdalena MUSIAŁ-KARG (Poznań) agreed with this opinion by stating that the twin cities of Frankfurt and Słubice are in fact a laboratory of European integration.

The first conference session was dedicated to two EU funding lines aimed at establishing networks among researchers. Bjanka Bethke (Bonn) presented some general information about the COST programme, which is not confined to specific topics but enables researchers from the EU as well as non-EU countries to set up interdisciplinary research networks. Although COST does not fund research activities, it allows for short term research stays at partner institutions and can be used to prepare further proposals for research funding. The information was completed by Christian Strauss (Berlin), who evaluates the COST programme. Both the programme staff and the evaluators take into account the same criteria, such as the SMART objectives [3], as well as excellence, impact and implementation, and

both perspectives were helpful to understand the nexus between calls for proposals and evaluation. Katrin Girgensohn (Frankfurt/Oder) completed this perspective with an example of a successful project proposal for the COST programme. This trilateral look on the EU research funding system was a great asset to the conference, since it did not adhere to official information available on the internet only, but gave a lot of additional insights.

The first session was completed by Mareike Schmitt (Brussels) who provided information about the actions Teaming and Twinning, which are part of the Horizon 2020 section “Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation”. This section explicitly aims at increasing the participation of new EU member states as well as associated countries. Twinning focuses on institutional networking in the form of joint conferences, visits etc. Teaming concentrates on institution building in eligible countries by establishing new centres of excellence. Schmitt mentioned that, in this funding line especially, a financially solid coordinator as well as well justified partners are key to success. According to her, at 12 percent the success rate is slightly higher than in other EU funding lines.

The following session included two parallel events with regard to Social Sciences and Humanities as well as Climate and Energy Research. Mareike Schmitt introduced to H2020 as well as the topic of Climate and Energy Research. She stressed that every proposal should not only focus on research (excellence), but always should provide applicable solutions for some of the challenges, the EU and European societies are confronted with (impact). Concerning climate and energy, proposals should refer to fundamental EU schemes such as the European Strategic Energy Technology plan (SET-plan). Then, two research projects were introduced by their coordinators, who have managed to successfully apply for EU support. Jens LOWITZSCH (Frankfurt/Oder) mentioned, that it was crucial to include atypical, non-academic partners into the consortium as well as to have a lot of staying power. His project SCORE was successful only at the third attempt after three years of project writing and improving. The evaluators’ suggestions after the first two rejections, however, were very helpful to further improve the proposal. Jürgen KROPP (Potsdam) from the EUCalc project confirmed a writing and improving process of two to three years and recommended to attend information and networking events. The establishment of a consortium should be balanced and include not only science, but industry, NGOs and practitioners, too. Besides, he turned attention to the fact that EU evaluators often have a non-scientific background, which has to be taken into consideration when formulating the proposal.

Day 1 was concluded by a special session for speed networking and project idea building. Around 10 participants presented their ideas for potential EU research projects with a poster. About 30 persons participated in the poster presentation and networking part of the conference.

Day 2, taking place in Słubice, was opened by the CP's director Krzysztof WOJCIECHOWSKI (Słubice). Among others, he mentioned the latest cooperation project between the EUV and the Adam-Mickiewicz University in Poznań, aiming at establishing a bilateral faculty focusing on digital societies. Then, Anna STACHOWIAK-SZREJBROWSKA (Poznań) introduced another EU funding line for networking. The Innovative Training Networks are part of the Marie-Skłodowska-Curie Actions and are funding the establishment of PhD training groups. The funding line is not topic-related and aims at enhancing internationalization of doctoral programmes and mobility of Ph.D students. In contrast to other funding lines, the budget is automatically calculated by the application system based on the included consortium. Szrejbrowska, too, stressed the importance to include partners from non-academic sectors, especially the industry. This should enable the transfer of scientific knowledge and mobility of scientists to the non-academic sectors. According to her, the cooperation with commercial actors, however, includes new challenges due to a different working conditions. As an example of an Innovative Training Network, Ralph RICHTER (Erkner) and Łukasz ROGOWSKI (Poznań) introduced the project RURAction. Again, the proposal was only successful in a second attempt and after a lengthy rewriting and improvement process. Richter stressed that the focus of applications should be less on targeting research gaps and more on societal challenges. Since a cross-sectoral and international cooperation includes additional risks, a well-planned risk management has to be part of every proposal according to Richter. His colleague Rogowski turned attention to issues such as open access, a communication strategy and a professional data management, which are obligatory for every proposal.

The last session of the conference was opened by Corinna AMTING (Brussels), who works at the European Commission's Research Executive Agency. She described the evaluation process including external experts, consensus reports and discussions in expert panels. At the following round table, she also highlighted that publications are not enough as a final project product. The aim of EU funded projects is to bring together people from inside and outside the EU to discuss and disseminate the results by all possible ways. According to Amting, proposals should be self-confident, but credible. Working on the project idea and establishing the consortium should start as early as possible. The included partners should provide the

expertise necessary to realize the project. Since large amounts of tax money is involved, measurement, quantification and monitoring are very important. These points were confirmed by the two other participants of the round table, Iwan-Michelangelo D'APRILE (Potsdam) and Joanna BOSIACKA-KNIAT (Poznań). Since both of them work as evaluators, the evaluation process was discussed in detail. They confirmed that proposals should not be over-scientific, but explicit and clear – also with regard to the layout. Since a lot of top-researchers are involved in proposals themselves, the EU is constantly searching for additional evaluators. Due to this fact, the participants of the round table agreed that working as an evaluator can serve as a starting point to get acquainted with the application and evaluation system.

The two-day conference brought together researchers, evaluators, EU research affairs staff as well as representatives from European funding institutions and national contact points from both countries. This made the conference a highly instructive event, since it went beyond the plain information, which can be found in the internet, too. It provided interesting insights into some of the EU's many funding lines, especially concerning international networking. All participants agreed, that in order to receive further information, interested researchers should not hesitate to contact the staff of national contact points. Often, larger institutions such as universities also employ experts, which can provide further information and help with research proposals. In this sense, the conference was a helpful starting point regarding the preparation of EU research proposals.

[1] “EU-Kompetenznetzwerk der Brandenburgischen Hochschule“ (<http://www.euk-brandenburg.de/index.php/start.html?language=de>)

[2] “Regionalny Punkt Kontaktowy Programów Ramowych UE, Poznański Park Naukowo-Technologiczny” (<http://rpk.ppnt.poznan.pl/kontakt-kontakt.php>)

[3] A proposal should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.

Program:

24 May 2018, European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder

13.00 Welcome address:

- Jürgen Neyer (Member of the Management Board of the European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder)
- Magdalena Musiał-Karg (Vice-Dean for Research and Development of the Adam-Mickiewicz University, Poznań)

13.15 – 15.45 Funding Opportunities for Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation

- COST Programme
 - Bjanka Bethke (German COST National Coordinator, DLR Bonn)
 - Christian Strauß (COST Evaluator)
 - Project Example: “Advancing effective institutional models towards cohesive teaching, learning, research and writing development”, Katrin Girgensohn (Vice-Chair of COST Action, European University Viadrina)
- Mareike Schmitt (KoWi, Brussels): Twinning and Teaming

16.15 – 18.15 European Collaborative Research: Tackling European Societal Challenges

- Parallel Session 1) Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020
 - Dominik Klinkenberg (National Contact Point Society Germany)
 - Mikolaj Pyczak (National Contact Point Society Poland)
 - Project Example: “The European Union and Eastern Partnership Countries - An Inside-Out Analysis and Strategic Assessment” (EU-STRAT), Tanja Börzel (FU Berlin)
- Parallel Session 2) Climate & Energy Research
 - Mareike Schmitt, KoWi Brussels
 - Project Examples:
 - “Supporting Consumer co-Ownership in Renewable Energy” (SCORE), Jens Lowitzsch (European University Viadrina)
 - “EU Calculator: Trade-offs and Pathways towards Sustainable and Low-carbon European Societies” (EUCalc), Jürgen Kropp (Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research)

18.30 Speed networking and project idea building

25 May 2018, Collegium Polonicum, Słubice

9.00 – 11.00

Funding Opportunities for European doctoral programmes

- Marie-Skłodowska-Curie Activities – Innovative Training Networks, Anna Stachowiak-Szrejbrowska (Institute of Plant Genetics, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poznań)
- Project Example: “Social Entrepreneurship in Structurally Weak Rural Regions” (RURAction), Ralph Richter (IRS Erkner) and Łukasz Rogowski (AMU Poznań)

11.30 – 13.00

Evaluation in Horizon 2020. How does it work?

- Corinna Amting (European Commission, Research Executive Agency (REA), Head of Unit Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Societies, Brussels)
- Round Table: Evaluation of Horizon 2020 projects (moderation Geny Piotti)
 - Corinna Amting (European Commission, REA, Brussels)
 - Iwan-Michelangelo D'Aprile (University of Potsdam, MSCA-Evaluator)
 - Joanna Bosiacka-Kniat (Poznan Science and Technology Park, Adam Mickiewicz University Foundation, Horizon 2020 Evaluator)