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Frederick University becomes part of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Solutions Network



FREDERICK
UNIVERSITY

Frederick University has recently had the honour to be inducted in the Sustainable Development Solutions Network of the United Nations (SDSN).

The Network advances practical solutions for the challenges faced today through the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were adopted by the United Nations in a worldwide, historical agreement which will impact the lives of millions of people. The

implementation of the SDGs is expected to lead to the eradication of poverty, famine, inequality and injustice and to the protection of our planet, transforming our world in the next 15 years.

The Executive Director of the SDSN, Mr. Guidi Schmidt-Traub, stated: "It is with great pleasure that the Executive Board of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network of the United Nations welcomes the Frederick University in the Network. We look forward to cooperate in the fields of research, in problem solving initiatives and on a policy level for the achievement of sustainable development".

As a part of the SDSN, the Frederick University will further contribute to finding solutions to global challenges. The Social Responsibility and Offer is one of the fundamental values of the Frederick University and it is an irreplaceable part of its identity and its daily function. The commitment of the University in this area is already reflected in its strategic plan, which has been systematically developed and implemented since the establishment of the University, with the aim of achieving a better future for everyone. This is achieved through the content of its study programmes, its research activity, its internal regulations, the services it offers, its voluntary and philanthropic activity and the multifaceted awareness and information programs that it implements and promotes.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1511>

Mobile app to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 developed by Rise Centre of Excellence

PRESS RELEASE - Responding to Deputy Minister for Research, Innovation and Digital Policy Kokkinos' call to employ digital technologies to find quick and innovative ways to fight the COVID19 pandemic, the Centre of Excellence in Research and Innovation RISE—Research Centre on Interactive Media, Smart Systems and Emerging Technologies—has developed a mobile application, COVTRACER (ΙΧΝΗΛΑΤΗΣ) that can effectively help limit the spread of the virus in Cyprus.

As part of its close working relationship with the Centre of Excellence and Innovation RISE, the Deputy Ministry for Research, Innovation and Digital Policy supports and encourages the widespread use of the COVTRACER (ΙΧΝΗΛΑΤΗΣ) App. In a statement, Deputy Minister Kyriacos Kokkinos thanked the Centre of Excellence RISE both for the development of COVTRACER (ΙΧΝΗΛΑΤΗΣ) as well as for wider cooperation in the development of a broader spectrum of innovative technological solutions to deal with the crisis. For RISE, Research Director Professor Yiorgos Chrysanthou noted that this is exactly the time to bring the power of technology to the service of society. As such, he added, the researchers at RISE have intensified their efforts to assist in combatting the spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 in Cyprus and the challenges the virus presents to the wider public.

More information: <http://www.eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1485>

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EU NEWS AND EU POLICY



Protecting Europe's workers, saving jobs with every euro available: Von der Leyen announces largest EU support yet

President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen presented on 2 April a new set of EU measures to preserve Europe's skilled workforce, the vibrant heart of the European economy.

One of the steps is a proposal to set up a EUR 100 billion solidarity instrument to help workers keep their incomes and help businesses stay afloat, called SURE. "SURE is Europe-supported short-time work. It can mitigate the effects of the

recession, it keeps people in work, it enables companies to return to the market with renewed vigour", von der Leyen explained, adding that the Commission will provide loans to those Member States that need them, to strengthen their short-time work schemes. The Commission also proposed to redirect all available structural funds to the response to the coronavirus.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1468>

Persistent Roma inequality increases Covid-19 risk, human rights heads say

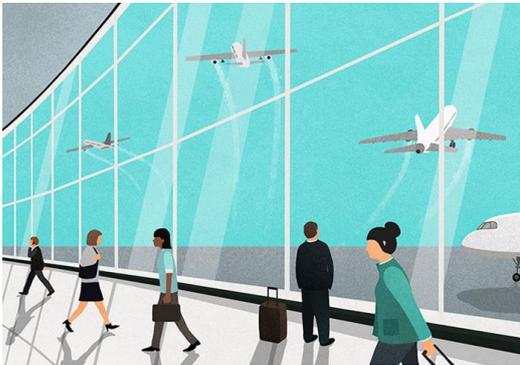
Overcrowding and poor access to sanitation have long blighted Roma communities across Europe. On the eve of International Roma Day, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) highlight the longstanding neglect of Roma that is now leaving them highly vulnerable as the COVID-19 pandemic spreads across the globe.

To counter the rapid spread of COVID-19, governments urge people to maintain physical distances, self-quarantine and regularly wash their hands with soap and water. However, washing is a challenge for 30% of Roma because they live in households with no tap water, as FRA reports. Up to 80% of Roma in some countries also live in cramped Roma neighbourhoods with overcrowded housing. This makes physical distancing, a key element of public health measures, close to impossible.

At the same time, quarantine and physical distancing measures are likely to push many Roma further into poverty. Many work in low paid jobs often without social security that depend on contact with other people or involve travel such as collecting scrap material.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1480>

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION



€328 million available to fund experienced researchers' mobility

A call for project proposals to fund experienced researchers' mobility across the world is open until 9 September. The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Individual Fellowships and Widening Fellowships combined make available €328 million for projects in all scientific domains.

The call is open to researchers who have a doctoral degree or at least four years' full-time research experience by the time of the call deadline. The requirements for submitting a research proposal and the Guide for Applicants are detailed in the call page.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1475>

€100 million available to cofund programmes aiming at promoting PhD or Post-Docs training, mobility and career development

A call for project proposals to co-fund ongoing or planned research programmes to promote PhD students or post-docs at regional, national and international level is open until 29 September 2020. The call makes available €100 million for projects in all scientific domains.

The European Union (EU) will support organisations for training, mobility and career development programmes, providing them with the opportunity to top up existing funding at regional, national and international level with EU funding. The requirements for submitting a research proposal are detailed in the call page.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1474>

Covid-19 and paid extensions for MSCA individual fellowships projects

Following disruptions attributed to the COVID-19 outbreak, MSCA fellows have launched an online petition for paid extensions of MSCA projects. They are notably concerned with the pandemic's impact on Individual Fellowships (IF) and the replies received so far with regard to project extensions.

The European Commission (EC) appreciates the current crisis may have critical effects on some projects, and will continue to ensure as much flexibility as possible under the existing framework.

MSCA beneficiaries (host institutions) are strongly encouraged to continue running their projects, even if the research training activities cannot be implemented as planned. Recruiting institutions are encouraged to shift project tasks (to the extent possible) to allow for work to continue. For instance, activities requiring a physical presence (e.g. experiments/lab work) may be postponed until the confinement measures are over.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1498>

Latest progress on Horizon Europe's implementation strategy

The rules and simplification measures put in place for Horizon 2020 were widely acknowledged by stakeholders as a big step towards a more attractive and easier to use programme. Based on this experience, work has been ongoing on Horizon Europe's Implementation Strategy to set out how the programme will be managed in practice to achieve its ambitious objectives. The Strategy is a living document thus it will receive further updates.

Horizon Europe's Implementation Strategy provides the framework for carefully designed rules and efficient processes across the entire programme and project life cycle. It allows the programme to deliver its impacts as efficient and user-friendly as possible.

The Commission validated, refined and developed the Strategy based on existing stakeholder feedback, internal analysis of needs and studies as well as via a comprehensive consultation and co-design process.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1513>

The future of the European Universities Initiative: EUA publishes position and survey report

The EUA has published the position "The future of the European Universities Initiative – the sector's perspective" together with the results of the recent EUA survey on international strategic institutional partnerships and the European Universities Initiative.

Endorsed by the EUA Council, the position supports the initiative and calls for it to remain open and flexible, so that it allows universities to grow and deepen their cooperation according to their strategy and priorities. The Initiative should also be used as an additional way to address obstacles to transnational collaboration and work towards greater compatibility of systems across Europe building on and embedded in the work in the framework of the Bologna Process and the European Research Area.

European collaboration and solidarity, including in research, innovation and education are of ever greater importance in the current coronavirus crisis. Strengthening Europe's innovation capacity, to which universities contribute greatly, will be crucial for recovery and for building a sustainable future. Deepening transnational university collaboration, including through alliances such as those developed under the European Universities Initiative, can play an important role in this and has great potential to strengthen European higher education and research and its international competitiveness.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1510>



Summary results of the questionnaire on the national broadband plans and reaching the 2020 and 2025 broadband targets

Almost all Member States responded to the questionnaire. Results will help the Commission Services in planning next Multiannual financial framework, in particular broadband deployment support from Connecting Europe Facility (CEF2).

The majority of the Member States claim that the definition of the broadband targets in the National Broadband Plans (NBPs) helped them to reach the targets or get closer to reaching them. 18 Member States are planning an update of their NBPs in the next years.

11 Member States updated or approved their National Broadband Plans in 2018 or 2019 (Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain). 11 Member States make a reference to the 2025 Gigabit society targets in the context of their NBPs (Austria, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden).

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1471>

Launch of the EU central platform for citizen science in the EU

EU-Citizen.Science is the digital platform for anyone interested in citizen science. It is designed to be the reference point for participants, practitioners, researchers, policymakers and society across Europe and around the world.

The platform gathers best practices from the community for initiating, planning and executing citizen science projects, and showcasing a wide range of citizen science projects to learn from, collaborate with, or participate in.

The success of the platform relies on contributions from the public: add your own project to the list, share useful resources, rate the

existing ones and exchange with others. There are many ways to get actively involved and take part in shaping the European landscape of citizen science! Future releases of the platform will include training materials and community discussion forums as well.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1477>



Top-up funding awarded to ERC grantees to spur innovation

Fifty-five grantees of the European Research Council have been awarded ERC Proof of Concept grants to explore the commercial or societal potential of their research results. The grants are part of the EU's research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020.

The awarded projects cover a variety of topics e.g., a faster and cheaper approach to detect disease-causing microorganisms; low-power, energy-harvesting hearing implants; or developing a sustainable social business to manage and ethically distribute donated DNA data to scientists.

Proof of Concept (PoC) grants, worth €150,000 each, can be used for example to explore business opportunities, prepare patent applications or verify the practical viability of scientific concepts.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1497>

European digital infrastructures in support of coronavirus research

Several European research communities and infrastructures are currently joining forces through highly complementary activities to help researchers in addressing the current outbreak and finding a treatment for the novel coronavirus. This is done by boosting the availability, discoverability and management of the research data and outputs in line with the Open Science principles and providing supplementary cloud services.

The open sharing of data is one principle of Open Science. It can greatly accelerate research and discovery, allowing for an effective response to the coronavirus emergency. At the same time, many e-Infrastructures and digital services are trying to make the most of the available data.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1505>

Coronavirus: Commission launches data sharing platform for researchers

The European Commission together with several partners launched a European COVID-19 Data Platform to enable the rapid collection and sharing of available research data. The platform, part of the ERAvsCorona Action Plan, marks another milestone in the EU's efforts to support researchers in Europe and around the world in the fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

The new platform will provide an open, trusted, and scalable European and global environment where researchers can store and share datasets, such as DNA sequences, protein structures, data from pre-clinical research and clinical trials, as well as epidemiological data. It is the result of a joint effort by the European Commission, the European Bioinformatics Institute of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL-EBI), the Elixir infrastructure and the COMPARE project, as well as the EU Member States and other partners.

Rapid open sharing of data greatly accelerates research and discovery, allowing for an effective response to the coronavirus emergency. The European COVID-19 Data Platform is in line with the principles established in the Statement on Data Sharing in Public Health Emergency and accentuates the Commission's commitment to open research data and Open Science.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1502>

HEALTH



Studying animal coronavirus defences is opening route to human treatments

A team that has spent the last five years developing a pipeline of technologies that can churn out a remedy for almost any newly emerging virus may have treatments ready for safety trials on Covid-19 patients by the end of the year.

The 20-strong private-public collaboration has been pooling and connecting a series of diverse technologies to build a fast pipeline where the genetic code of a new virus can be plugged in at one end – and thousands of vaccines or antibodies can emerge at the other just a few months later.

The pipeline is not ready yet, but the scientists have realised it has already generated antibodies active against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1476>

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY



A strategic research agenda for oceans and human health in Europe

The Horizon 2020 project SOPHIE released a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) for the short and medium term that outlines the link between Ocean Health and Human Health (OHH), the research needed to answer fundamental questions in the field and the framework for creating the required OHH research capacity in Europe. The SRA focuses on three main target action areas:

- Sustainable seafood and healthy people;
- Blue spaces, tourism and well-being;
- Marine biodiversity, biotechnology and medicine.

Several important cross-cutting themes arise from these target action areas, including climate and global change, pollution, ocean literacy and citizen science, equity and equality, sustainability, innovation and employment.

The SRA outlines key research questions that need to be answered within an indicative structured timeline, and highlights the needs (in terms of research to inform policy, capacity and training, and for the public) that should be considered. It also provides overarching recommendations for research needs that apply to all areas of OHH, and identifies the measures of success in achieving the required capacity.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1464>

Robust monitoring and targets are key in shifting Europe to a more circular economy

The EEA report 'Resource efficiency and the circular economy in Europe 2019 — even more from less' gives an overview and assesses the results of a 2019 EEA survey involving 32 European countries from the EEA's European Environmental Information and Observation Network (Eionet).

The report notes that since 2016 there has been a noticeable shift in the focus of policies from improving resource efficiency to a broader circular economy perspective. Many aspects of the two overlap in policies, such as waste management and waste prevention, along with environmental and sustainable development strategies, innovation policies and economic programmes. The shift in focus is expected to consolidate even further as wider EU action is currently underway in this area, especially with the EU's newly adopted Circular Economy Action Plan, which is one of the key parts of the European Green Deal.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1469>

Protecting Europe's plants: pest survey cards go digital

The first batch of EFSA's plant pest survey cards are now available in an easy-to-use interactive format. Ten of the existing 28 cards – which are designed to help EU Member States plan their annual survey of quarantine pests – have been published as "story maps" on EFSA's website.

The cards contain material that is essential for carrying out surveys that conform to current international standards, such as up-to-date information on the pest's distribution, its host range, its biology and risk factors, as well as available detection and identification methods.

They are part of a plant pest surveillance toolkit that consists of pest - specific documents, such as the survey cards, and documents that are relevant for all pests, including general survey guidelines and information on appropriate software.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1500>

EDUCATION AND CULTURE



Resources for digital learning and teaching during the coronavirus pandemic

As more than 90% of the world's students are now at home, digital learning has taken centre stage around the world. Many institutions are posting ideas and good practices via social media in order to share their experiences and to provide support to others. Major global organisations are also offering support.

UNESCO has a dedicated webpage giving an overview of the situation. It offers information about the impact of the crisis on the sector, as well as news on dedicated topics like digital learning, discussing both obstacles and ideas. In particular, UNESCO

also has a page offering a long list of solutions, including resources on many issues linked to digital learning such as different management systems, tools for teachers, psychological support and more.

The European Commission is also active providing information and resources regarding online learning during the coronavirus pandemic. It features a selection of online resources and tools for learners, teachers and educators.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1496>

EU funded projects provide innovative learning tools revolutionising digital education

Teachers, parents and students are finding it difficult to keep in contact with one another. Finding reliable, easy to use digital education tools has also proven difficult during the first few weeks of the lockdown due to Coronavirus pandemic. Two EU projects are providing free online services to help teachers, parents and students to keep in touch and to excel while at home.

The EU funded project Up2U provides a portfolio with tools, which revolutionise teaching methods. The Up2U team decided to make its platform available in only two weeks when it was clear that teachers as well as students were struggling with access, connectivity and motivation during the first few weeks of the lockdown due to COVID-19.

The GoLab Ecosystem use innovative learning technologies for STEM subjects offering a large collection of virtual labs for teachers and students. Teachers can also make your own labs on the platform called Golabz. Its follow-up project, GO-GA, is now expanding the innovative platform to several African countries.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1507>



EU launches new €50 million pilot to develop skills and education across Europe

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and European Commission are launching a new pilot guarantee facility to improve access to finance for individuals and organisations looking to invest in skills and education. The EUR 50 million pilot scheme will support financing for students and learners, enterprises investing in the upskilling of their employees, and organisations supplying education and training.

The Skills & Education Guarantee Pilot (S&E Pilot) is a new debt financing initiative dedicated to stimulating investments in education, training and skills – as part of the solution to get more people into jobs and to respond to the European economy's changing needs. In its pilot phase, the S&E Pilot will provide an EU guarantee of up to €50 million backed by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), triggering debt financing for skills and education projects in Europe, with the aim of mobilising

more than €200 million in total financing. Interested financing institutions or providers of education and training can apply to become financial intermediaries and participate in the scheme by responding to the open Call for Expressions of Interest published by the EIF. The selection of financial intermediaries is managed by the EIF.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1501>

How should students be admitted to higher education this year?

It is becoming increasingly clear that the Covid-19 pandemic is forcing us to change the way we do almost everything – including admission to higher education. Countries have different practices in admitting students – some giving everyone with a secondary school-leaving examination certificate a right to higher education, others enabling higher education institutions to select students. Examinations, whether organised nationally or by higher education institutions themselves, play a big role in this process.

What will happen this year? Some countries, such as Austria, expect already to be back on track to run all normal examinations and admission processes on time. But for the majority of European countries the plan is to postpone examinations, and require students to sit them at a later date. This choice may mean that the higher education calendar is also disrupted, with study programmes starting later in the year. An alternative is to assess students through other methods. Some countries, including Croatia, Denmark and Estonia, are planning to limit the scope of examinations to focus on main subjects only.

More information: <http://eoc.org.cy/en/index.php?id=1503>

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