EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion is an initiative of the European Research Area (ERA) that addresses barriers to the mobility of researchers and seeks to enhance their career development.

This pan-European effort is currently supported by over 40 countries, of which we will profile one in each of our quarterly EURAXESS Japan newsletters. In this edition, we will zoom in on the Czech Republic.

EURAXESS Members in Focus: Czech Republic

- The Czech Republic is home to some of Europe's oldest and largest universities.
- Czech R&D is not driven only by the country's history of excellent science, but also by extensive state support. Financial aid comes from national and European resources and is administered by a number of mostly national institutions (Czech Science Foundation, Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, Czech ministries; with the exception of Horizon 2020).

R&D Funding in the Czech Republic

- **Czech Science Foundation** (www.gacr.cz)
- **Technology Agency of the Czech Republic** (www.tacr.cz)

Research Excellence in the Czech Republic

New European Centres of Excellence focus mainly on international collaboration and contribution to applied results.

- **The Central European Institute of Technology (CEITEC)** is a multidisciplinary science centre focused on life sciences and advanced materials and technologies whose aim is to establish itself as a recognised centre for basic as well as applied research (www.ceitec.cz).

- **Extreme Light Infrastructure (ELI)** is part of a new generation of large European research facilities with the main goal of creating laser equipment with unique parameters (www.eli-beams.eu)

- **CzechGlobe - Global Change Research Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences** is a public research institution and European Centre of Excellence investigating the ongoing global climate change and its impact on the atmosphere, biosphere and human society through the use of the latest techniques and instrumentation (www.czechglobe.cz).

- **The IT4Innovations national supercomputing centre** conducts research and provides state-of-the-art technologies and services in the fields of high performance computing and embedded systems (http://www.it4i.cz).

Where can I find out more?

Government Office for Science, Research and Innovation

The main objectives of the Section are as follows: science policy unification; setting up of the rules for transparent funding of institutions engaged in science, research and innovations; identification and support of excellence in science and the expansion of international scientific cooperation. http://www.vyzkum.cz/

The Czech Academy of Sciences

The Czech Academy of Sciences (the CAS) is set up as a complex of 54 public research institutions. The Academy employs over 8,000 employees, more than a half of whom are researchers with university degrees. http://www.avcr.cz/en/

CzechInvest

The main objective of The Business and Investment Development Agency CzechInvest, is to advise and support existing and new entrepreneurs and foreign investors in the Czech Republic. http://www.czechinvest.org/en

EURAXESS Czech Republic

EURAXESS Czech Republic provides information and assistance to researchers who are coming to work in the Czech Republic. EURAXESS help researchers and their families to plan and organize their move to a foreign country, providing assistance in all matters related to mobility. www.euraxess.cz

The Czech Republic and Japan

In 2017, both Czech and Slovak Republics as successors to former Czechoslovakia will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Czechoslovakia (13 February 1957). 12 years later, in 1978, the two countries signed an Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, and this agreement has been serving as the basis for scientific and technological cooperation between Japan and the Czech

Republic up to now.

The Czech Republic is in a different weight category than Japan and this fact, of course, has a significant effect on the scope and extent of cooperation between the two countries. That is why the Czech Republic has adopted a two-pronged attitude to its cooperation with Japan – a multilateral one and a bilateral one.
The former has, basically, two forms.
On one hand the Czech Republic strives to participate in various programs of scientific cooperation between the European Union and Japan, especially within the framework of the EU program for research and innovations Horizon 2020.

On the other hand the Czech multilateral cooperation with Japan stems from the joint efforts of the Visegrad Four countries (so called V4 - Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). In 2013, the summit of prime ministers of V4 countries with prime minister of Japan took place in Warsaw and one of its significant outcomes was the establishment of the Year of Exchanges between the V4 countries and Japan. In 2014, a memorandum on a new program of cooperation between the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and relevant state institutions of the V4 courtiers (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport on the Czech side) was signed in Bratislava. The first call for projects under the joint research program "V4 - Japan on Advanced Materials" was launched in January 2015. Out of 51 recommended projects, a joint committee chose five. Czech universities and scientific institutes participate in four of them.

Signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Technological Agency of the Czech Republic (TACR - chairman Petr Ocko) and the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organisation (NEDO - chairman Kazuo Furukawa) on 17 June 2016. *Credit: Embassy of the Czech Republic in Tokyo*

In order to foster the scientific cooperation with Japan and to demonstrate the willingness of the V4 countries to develop this form of cooperation, the V4 countries under the then Czech presidency organised a Joint V4 - Japan Seminar on Technology Transfer: “Nanomaterials for Industrial Use” in June 2016. The present Polish presidency plans a similar seminar for the year 2017.

Finally, the most significant part of the Czech-Japan cooperation in the field of science and research is based on a bilateral platform. An important number of Czech scientists work in Japan at present and the core of cooperation lies on university level. In addition, the Czech Academy of Science and the Japan Society for Promotion of the Science signed a memorandum on joint projects and exchange of scientists in 2009. One of the crucial steps for enhancing the cooperation between the two countries is a memorandum signed by the Technological Agency of the Czech Republic (TACR) and the New Energy Development Organisation (NEDO) in June 2016. The existence of the memorandum paves the way for identification of fields of mutual interest and implementation of joint projects. The first initiative of the Czech side will be the Czech Technological Robotic Mission which will visit Japan in the first half of April 2017.