Widening Country Inspiration Story

"Careful planning of the secondments in close relation to the research goals and activities is critical for preparing a feasible application."

Organisation name: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi
Organisation type: Higher education organisation
Country: Romania
Project Acronym: HESPRI
Project start and end date: 01.01.2023-31.12.2026
Type of MSCA, Horizon Europe: Staff Exchanges
Is your organisation a coordinator? Yes

HESPRI

ELEVATING HIGHER EDUCATION PUBLIC POLICIES: AN EMPOWERING SPRINGBOARD

What is your project about?

Our project aims to address some major issues facing higher education (HE) today. HE is no longer able to respond to the needs of society, because of the major crises it faces: the tension between the traditional and the neo-liberal values; the biased evaluation of quality in HE; the ineffectiveness stemming from the distorted measurements of scientific achievements and other factors; digital technology and the way in which it transforms how we teach and learn. HESPRI wants to find innovative strategies to strengthen education policies and help universities respond better to society's needs.

Why is your project important for society?

Stronger higher education policies matter because universities shape the future - through research, teaching students, and collaborating with partners. HESPRI relies on multidisciplinary expertise of European social sciences and humanities, as well as computer science and other 'hard sciences', for understanding fundamental contemporary transformations of society, economy, politics and culture.

What communication and public engagement measures have you foreseen?

We tailor our communication activities not only to the scientific community, but also to non-scientific audiences, which we engage through channels such as social media posts, talks and lectures in HE institutions and education centres, as well as workshops, open conferences, scientific articles and books.

What kind of support did you get?

Poring over the call documents was essential in developing our proposal. Additionally, the writing team was supported throughout the process by colleagues in partner institutions who had previously participated in successful Research and Innovation Staff Exchange projects under Horizon 2020. We also benefited from extensive engagement of coordinator's research support policy officers. We also found useful insights in National Contact Point (NCP) recordings of open events for

MSCA Staff Exchanges project applications.

Do you have other successful projects under Horizon 2020/ Horizon Europe? Yes.

If yes, what in your experience helped you to succeed?
One of the key factors is mobilising interdisciplinary and intersectoral teams of talented researchers, committed to quality communication and shared work, together with building a strong institutional support system for research applications (e.g., engaged university governance, knowledgeable research support officers). These things are highly relevant when starting this type of endeavour. Capitalising on previous international partnerships and openness to new collaborations can also be real assets.

What tips can you give other organisations that would like to apply for MSCA?
At the heart of a successful application lies an impactful research idea, a committed team of researchers, a strong international network, as well as a responsive institutional support team in the case of the coordinator. Careful

planning of the secondments in close relation to the research goals and activities, as well as good previous knowledge on data management, Open Science and communication and dissemination tools are critical for preparing a feasible application.

More information on the project:

The Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) support researchers at all stage of their career across all disciplines. The MSCA also support cooperation between industry and academia and provide innovative trainings and career developments.

The MSCA Staff Exchanges (SE) funds short-term international and inter-sectoral exchanges of staff members involved in research and innovation activities with the aim to develop sustainable collaborative projects between different organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors (in particular SMEs), based in Europe and beyond.

The MSCA-NET project is the MSCA NCP project to facilitate the transnational cooperation to achieve a consistent and harmonised level of NCP support. The scientific community can also profit from our project to support their MSCA application.