

International Funding Opportunities for Ideas of Collaboration Projects in OOHP

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The present paper is presenting the exploratory workshop organized by the OOHP Master team in December 2011, which opened paths for theoretical knowledge and for collaboration with researchers having international prestige. Also, the paper presents funding opportunities available in national grants, and the strategy chosen by the team to prepare a two-step access to funds..

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In December 2011, the first public event has been organized by the OOHP Master team from the Psychology Department of West University of Timișoara. It is impressive how, over such a short period of time, less than two years since the official launch of this MA programme, so many ideas, initiatives and enthusiasm have come together within and around it. We have three explanations for this: Coralia Sulea's determination to make things as highly performant as possible; the Psychology Department's managerial support; and the motivating contribution of the students attending our MA program. In our opinion, the OOHP MA program is an excellent example of the fact that, even within a mass education system, there can be educational offers that emphasize quality, competence, seriousness and courage. And this is just the beginning. We imagine the evolution of this masters program, during the next eight to twelve years, into a top 10-5-3 European MA in Occupational Psychology and Organizational Health, with help from our guests and partners. We are convinced that the difference will be made by the research field, through its thematic, methodological and experiential, diversity, as well as by its attitudinal and value-based unity. This workshop represents an important step in this direction and a scientific achievement in its own right; this fact was guaranteed by the value of its guests and host participants, and by the specific objectives and targets expected to be reached.

Occupational health psychology is the field of psychology, where research and practice are directed towards the development of individual and organizational interventions to create healthy organizations, healthy employees and maximize the efficiency and work performance of employees. In this workshop, two specific concepts of the organization's psycho-social health were

highlighted: work engagement and job insecurity (quantitative or qualitative) perceived at the workplace. Discussions have targeted the relationship of these concepts with individual, organizational and societal issues based on current research in the field and their practical valences. Specific topics, such as: definition and measurement, prevalence, antecedents, consequences for individuals, organizations and society, interventions and research, were discussed. However, the main goal of this workshop was to initiate and develop scientific collaborations with researchers of international prestige and to stimulate research in this new direction of occupational health psychology studies, in Romania; to provide students the opportunity to learn from names in the field; to strengthen the collaboration relationships with our colleagues from other major Romanian universities (Bucharest, Cluj - Napoca, Iași). This event was highly important because it provided the opportunity to develop international partnerships and collaborations, including institutional partnerships. These institutional partnerships are essential for future international research projects and for strengthening the Erasmus collaboration which we already have, with the colleagues from Spain.

In the months following this event the possibilities to develop conjoint projects became more and more credible. For the development of a successful project, five main features are needed: team project, project idea, research's interests and themes (previous partnerships), managerial strategy for research, opportunities funding (thematically fitting).

Fortunately, we have a consistent previous partnership inside the team project. If we consult the long list of previous publication in partnerships we will find not only

conjoint research interests but also visible results of this collaboration.

Funding opportunities are available in national grants, by example IDEI in Romania: PN II ID PCE 2011 or RO-EU Operational Programs, but mainly in the European ones, grants which are centralized in Brussels, such as: FP 7 (Framework Program 7, several), CIP (Competitiveness and Innovation FP), EIF (European Integration Fund), LLP (Different actions and sub actions), YIA (Youth in Action), EUC (Europe for Citizens).

Right now, for our interests and goals, the most adequate financing opportunity is the one proposed by the new EU2020 Strategy which looks to increase competitiveness and sustainable development.

The EU 2020 Strategy was developed upon a revised structure of the Lisbon strategy (2005), with precise goals, to offer more coherent framework for maximizing capitalization of EU strengths, while tackling the weaknesses and exploring new opportunities. Within this general strategy the member states developed their own strategy (The National Reform Program, The Convergence Program) and report the progresses annually.

The need for building "The Innovation Union" is more openly discussed and for the development of this project three initiatives were launched in order to achieve the goals of the EU 2020 for a "smart growth". In this context research is in the service of citizens and the aimed topics are: climate change, energetic efficiency, **health and life quality**.

Why an Innovation Union? Because a) public investment in RDI is low compared to the one in USA, Japan, while China and South Korea are strongly catching from behind; b) private investment in RDI is more and more externalized towards the emerging economies; c) EU is the largest market in the world but it's fragmented and not sufficiently opened to innovation; d) the "brain drain" phenomenon – the top specialists are drawn outside Europe; e) the European Research Space is not fully accomplished; f) Patents' high price plus limited access to financial services for enterprises; g) European innovation is not homogenous; i) Exists a large discrepancies between South / East and Central / Northern Europe.

The aims of this program are: 1) the inclusion of favorable growth, which is 75% of the EU population, aged 20 – 64, to have a job (compared to the current 69%) and 2) decrease by 20 millions of the people at risk of poverty; 3) decrease in the early school abandonment rate at a maximum of 10%; 4) over 40% college graduates among population aged 30- 34.

The "Innovation Union" Strategy is structured on 30 action points grouped in 5 large chapters. The first chapter, entitled "Consolidation of the knowledge base and reduction of fragmentation" promotes excellence in education and development of competencies, Achievement of The European Research Space, coordination of the other EU financing instruments, the European Institute for Innovation and Technology and the agenda of the innovation strategy (AIS).

Through the second and third chapters projects for transforming innovative ideas in products and services, improvement in the access to financing for the innovating enterprises, creating a single market of innovation, promoting openness and capitalization of Europe's creative potential, maximizing social and regional benefits, disseminating the innovation benefits throughout entire Europe, increase in social benefits, will be promoted.

For us, the most interesting chapter is the fourth one, which refers to **the European Partnerships for Innovation**, because this chapter will focus on major societal challenges, such as: climate changes, energy, food safety, **health and ageing population**. In these projects the entire research and innovation chain is involved, the projects are goal oriented, better integrated and the instruments and existing initiatives are simplified and better coordinated. Example: The pilot partnership for a healthy and active ageing: major societal challenge due to the advanced ageing degree of European; until 2060, an increase up to 4.6% of GDP (EU average) it's estimated for the ageing process related costs; the outcome: at least 2 additional years of active and healthy life; it addresses all components from the decisional factor up to the selling of goods and services.

However, one can not neglect the importance of the fifth financing direction, **to International Collaboration – external expansion of the EU policies**: drawing high level researchers / academics / innovators and keeping them in Europe; common initiatives for cooperation with the third part countries; international cooperation regarding advanced research infrastructures (their costs/complexity justifies their development only at an international level).

The strategy chosen by the project teams was to prepare a two step access to funds: the first step, already achieved, accessing funds offered by the Romanian Government by UEFISCDI and the second one, preparing a project for the direction which covers one of the major societal challenges, such as: **health and ageing population**.

Time will show if the research strategy and management were the best inspired.

Useful links for International Funding Opportunities:

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:RO:PDF>
http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?pg=home
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0546:FIN:RO:PDF#page=2>
http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/rationale_en.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none
<http://eit.europa.eu/>