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Brussels

# European Commission, UKRO and UUKi Joint Event on the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions

Wednesday 26 June 2024  
09:00-16:30  
University College London



# Welcome and overview of the session

## Housekeeping:

- No fire alarms expected
- Fire Marshalls and First Aiders present
- Sessions are being recorded and there will be photography today
- Q&A sessions scheduled at the end of each session
- Breaks at 11:00, 12:35, 15:15, with networking drinks from 16:30
- Pre-election period – restriction on Comms

## Session 1

- A celebration of UK association and what this means for our continued and increased participation in Horizon Europe
- An overview of the opportunities available for the UK through the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA)

### **MSCA – part of Pillar 1 “Excellent science”**

- The European Union’s flagship programme for **doctoral** and **postdoctoral** training
- Fund excellent research and innovation and **equip researchers at all stages of their career with new knowledge and skills**, through mobility across borders and exposure to different sectors and disciplines



# Welcome Address

- Dr Georgina Drury,  
Deputy Director,  
UKRO, UKRI  
International





# Today's event - aims

- Following Association to Horizon Europe from WP2024
  - UK Government, UKRI, and European Commission – shared priorities for ‘increasing participation’
- Increased engagement with all Horizon Europe funding opportunities
  - All pillars – all sectors
  - Increase application numbers
  - High quality
- MSCA – a significant Pillar 1 scheme for the UK
  - foster lasting and meaningful engagement
  - sustained pipeline of quality applications



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# Overview of today's sessions

<b>Time</b>	<b>Session 1 – Welcome and overview of the conference 10:00-11:00</b>
10:00	<b>Welcome address and overview of the day, UKRO</b>
10:05	<b>Making the most of UK Association and the opportunities available through the MSCA, UKRI, European Commission, and EU Delegation to the United Kingdom</b>
11:00	Coffee and networking (30 min)
	<b>Session 2 – MSCA Implementation 11:30-12:35</b>
11:30	Featuring sessions on MSCA Practicalities and Novelties, Global Mobility and Visas, and the EURAXESS platform
12:35	Lunch and networking (60min)
	<b>Session 3 – Deep dive into the MSCA Schemes 13:35-15:00</b>
13:30	Deep dive into the MSCA Doctoral Networks and Post Doctoral Fellowships, including opportunities for industry and cross-sector mobility, as well as opportunities available through Staff Exchanges, COFUND and MSCA Citizens
15:15	Tea and networking (30min)
	<b>Session 4 – MSCA - Fostering international collaboration and wrap up 15:30-16:10</b>
15:45	Featuring sessions from UUKi and the Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA) on international collaboration, and fostering a global network
16:30	Networking drinks and meeting close



# Networking! and introductions

Several teams and speakers present

- European Commission
- UKRO
- UKRI Events team
- UKRI International – IPSE and Guarantee teams
- UKRI Global Mobility teams
- UUKi
- EURAXESS
- MSCA Alumni Association
- Guest speakers – case studies



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# Professor Christopher Smith

- AHRC Executive Chair and UKRI International Champion





# The Horizon Opportunity

- Horizon Europe is the world's largest research funding programme with a budget of ~€95.5bn from 2021-27
- The value of Horizon Europe goes beyond purely fiscal benefits - seeks to address the SDGs and helps achieve the overall policy aims of the Commission
- Emphasis on collaboration, means the best research groups can work together on these challenges
- **The UK as an associated country** – we are now once again able to participate in the world's biggest research programme.
- **For the MSCA** – we can now fully participate in the scheme with the same rights as all other beneficiaries.



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# The challenge that lies ahead

## A call to action - increase participation!

- maximise the benefits of association - overcome uncertainty of the last few years

## Positive signs

- UK ERC 2024 Starting Grant applications up by 52% (on 2023)
- Increase in participants UKRO Webinars – over 1800 sign-ups for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships in May 2024
- Full data set required to see UK overall picture – yet to be determined
- Switzerland's recovery from temporary Horizon 2020 exclusion took some years



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# Working together to support the R&I sector



Arts and  
Humanities  
Research Council



Biotechnology and  
Biological Sciences  
Research Council



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council



Engineering and  
Physical Sciences  
Research Council



Innovate  
UK



Medical  
Research  
Council



Natural  
Environment  
Research Council



Research  
England



Science and  
Technology  
Facilities Council



Department for  
Science, Innovation,  
& Technology



UK Science  
& Innovation  
Network



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Knowledge Transfer Network





# Increasing participation

## Activities & Networks

- **HMG marketing campaign** to encourage academia and industry Horizon Europe bids
- **DSIT pump prime funding** (£10k/grant) for Pillar 2 collaborations, delivered by the National Academies
- **network of NCPs** supported through DSIT and UKRI

## Events

- Jan 2024: UKRO & UUKi event for research managers on increasing participation
- Feb 2024: Royal Society milestone event with EU Research Commissioner Iliana Ivanova on joint effort to boost UK participation
- Mar 2024: UKRI presence at the Brussels R&I week to show our European partners that we are back
- Mar & Jun 2024: DSIT Roadshow events in Birmingham and Glasgow to reach businesses, researchers and academics in every part of the country



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# The MSCA opportunity

## Horizon Europe is a global programme

- **UK R&I sector is global :**
  - 60% of UK publications co-authored with at least one non-UK author (2020)
  - 31% of UK's academic staff were non-UK nationals (in 2021/22 - 28% in 2014/15)
  - 43% of postgraduate enrolments (annually) from outside of the UK
- **UK established over 237,000 collaborative links in 163 countries** (many due to MSCA schemes) under Horizon 2020
- **UK the strongest performing country** in Horizon 2020: receiving 17.8% or €1.159bn out of total budget of 6.511bn
- funding received by **higher education institutions (88%), private for-profit entities and public bodies**
- **continued strong engagement with the MSCA schemes** while not associated to Horizon Europe



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# MSCA in numbers

Long UK track record as an MSCA host and guest, bringing and acquiring new skills

## We are doing well!

- **UK success rates in line or above overall success rates** -> 11-17% success rate of MSCA Doctoral Networks proposals submitted with UK participants
- **UKRI Horizon Europe Guarantee (up to 31 May 2024) provided:**
  - £178.6 million or 3,638 total grant offer letters of which 814 (22%) were MSCA grants
  - 102 Doctoral Network grants (within the above figure), equalling £34.1 million

## We can do even better!

- **empower the UK to engage in all schemes** (PF, DN, Staff Exchanges, MSCA Citizens) - working together with UK MSCA NCP services, the European Commission, and sharing best practice across the sector



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**UK Research  
and Innovation**



# Thank you



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