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| Introduction |  |

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<intro>

**EU-funded research projects in Romania are helping the country retain talent. Young researchers, who might be tempted to look for a career abroad, find they can contribute at an even higher level by staying at home and participating in exciting projects. They still get to travel, work with specialists in other European countries, and make important private sector contacts.**

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Much has been made of researchers in lower-income EU member states leaving their home countries to make their careers where the results for themselves and for their work are better. This could be in richer European countries or further afield, such as the United States and Canada, or even China, Japan or Australia.

The evidence is clear, however, that young researchers in less well-off EU states are prepared to reject the so-called “brain drain” route and stay at home when there are interesting enough research projects based in their own countries, with funding in many cases from the EU. A good example of this is Romania.

**SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS FROM HEALTH and ROAD SAFETY TO SUPERCONDUCTORS**

While Romania’s participation in the EU’s [7th Framework Programme (FP7)](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html) and [Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)](http://ec.europa.eu/cip/index_en.htm), as one of the newer Member States, is still in the early stages and relatively modest, the range of its contribution to the Information and Communication Technologies priorities is nonetheless impressive.

Two hundred researchers, including coordinators, have participated in 160 projects worth nearly 30 million euros in these two programmes over the past five years. And they have been involved in the EU’s most important strategic areas in the ICTs, making important contributions to research on anything from future networks and the Internet of Things to smart components and micro-nanosystems, cloud computing, software, smart cities, eGovernment and digital libraries.

The majority of partners involved in ICT European projects are public companies, universities and research institutes. Nevertheless, the private companies start to be better represented. It’s the case for [Computer Sharing Bucuresti](http://www.csb.ro/), involved in ARTREAT project, which developed a patient-specific model to help clinical cardiologists provide personalised, real-time care and advice during invasive medical procedures but also to serve as a realistic training tool.[The Technical University of Cluj-Napoca](http://www.utcluj.ro/) (TUCN) has been involved in over 50 projects funded from Framework Programmes 5, 6 and 7. In FP7, from 2008 to 2013, it earned funding of 8 million euros for 35 projects, vital resources for improving its research infrastructure and keeping young postgraduates at the university, as vice-rector and head of the computer sciences faculty, [Professor Sergiu Nedevschi](http://users.utcluj.ro/~nedevski/) , explained.

‘Projects have covered a large diversity of research fields ranging from computers and telecommunications to energy-efficient materials. An important consequence of the increased visibility and high quality of students and postgrads at TUCN has been the university’s ability to attract direct research contracts with international companies such as Volkswagen, Bosch, Continental, IBM and Siemens,’ Prof Nedevschi pointed out.

Top software and engineering companies have also set up locations in Cluj-Napoca as a result of the university’s burgeoning reputation, including HP, SAP, Bosch again, and Emerson. Flagship projects such as [INTERSAFE 2](http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/87267_en.html), developing advanced driving assistance applications to improve road safety, led at TUCN by Prof Nedevschi himself, [EUROTAPES](http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/104063_en.html), to produce new superconductor materials, and [GAMES](http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/93738_en.html), to develop green IT service centres, have all been responsible for financing and fostering, says the vice-rector.

**USING RESOURCES TO KEEP TALENT IN ROMANIA**

[Costin Raiciu](http://nets.cs.pub.ro/~costin/), now back at [Bucharest Polytechnic University](http://www.upb.ro/) (UPB), actually completed his PhD thesis at UCL in London alongside European Internet guru [Mark Handley](http://www0.cs.ucl.ac.uk/staff/m.handley/), where he participated as a junior researcher in the EU’s first [Trilogy](http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/85449_en.html) project, designing multi-path Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) connections to create more efficient networks. He returned to Romania, however, as principal investigator in the [CHANGE](http://www.change-project.eu/) project to reinvigorate Internet innovation among small operators, a project that ran until the end of 2013. Now Costin and UPB are being funded to take part in [Trilogy 2](http://www.trilogy2.org/), which continues to work on the creation of “liquid” networks through multipath TCPs.

‘One of the key things is the close collaboration with people in Europe. Because of this, you have these very strong ties, regular meetings and are working on papers together. This is invaluable for us, where perhaps before we felt somewhat on the edge of Europe. The collaboration is really essential because by pooling resources you can really do a lot more,’ he commented.

‘We are catching up through these projects. If we didn’t have this funding, basically I would have to move to another country. I really like my country. My family and friends are here; that’s why I came back. But you can only do so if you can work at what you enjoy, and I really like my job. This funding is helping keep talent here. It’s been great.’

This is also borne out by the experience of Professor [Vasile Bota](http://el.el.obs.utcluj.ro/people/bota/bota.html) of TUCN, who with colleagues and students produced a cell-level simulator for cooperative wireless communications in the [CODIV](http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/rcn/85302_en.html) project. ‘We went to project meetings and defended our proposals over 3 days, learning a lot from those discussions. We also had the possibility to publish our results in some major international conferences, getting visibility. Without the EU funding, it would have been impossible to do this type of research and dissemination and the graduates would have taken lower positions in companies abroad or in Romania.’

But he added: ‘We managed to keep some very good students to work with us for almost three years and then finalise their Ph.D. theses, in 1-2 years, when good students here don’t usually stay even for a PhD. Through economic use of the travel budget, we took them with us and let them present our results so that they got experience and visibility. On this basis, practically all of them were afterwards recruited by good companies or universities, abroad and here in Romania. They said they had worked on an FP7 project and it really meant something, a major benefit.’

And in order not only to keep the researchers in Romania, but also to help them to join the “innovation” and “start-up” creation side, the [Startup Europe Roadshow](http://younginnovator.eu/startupeuroperoadshow/), organised by the European Commission and the European Young Innovators Forum stopped yesterday in Bucharest. Viorel Peca, Head of the Innovation unit, attended the debates and he gives us his opinions on a [blogpost](http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/blog/bucharest-gets-startup-boost).

More information on Romania’s evolution on ICT can be found on [DAE Scoreboard](http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/scoreboard/romania)

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