

The Free State of Saxony and Czech Republic Sponsor PhD Positions at UNU-FLORES and TU Dresden

Monday 2 November, 2020

The Free State of Saxony will financially support three doctoral positions at the United Nations University in Dresden (UNU-FLORES). Support will be given to doctoral students from emerging and developing countries for research work on "Resource Nexus Issues Revealed by COVID-19 for Professional Communities in the Agri-Food Supply Chain". The PhD candidates will also conduct research in close cooperation with CzechGlobe as part of the joint research programmes for the management of water, soil, waste, energy, and biodiversity of UNU-FLORES and TU Dresden. CzechGlobe is the Research Institute for Global Change of the Czech Academy of Sciences and participates in the funding of the four-year doctoral programme. A corresponding agreement between the partners involved was signed today at the Ministry.

Minister of Science Sebastian Gemkow: "We all know that only together can the urgent global tasks of securing human survival and sustainability be tackled. The increasing demand for resources, the loss of biodiversity, and climate change are major challenges, which will be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of the new positions is to enable doctoral students to implement the results of their research in their respective home countries. I am pleased that European cooperation to tackle global problems has been successful here and I see this as a further strengthening of scientific relations between Saxony and the Czech Republic".

UNU-FLORES Director Professor Edeltraud Guenther said: "Food security is critical for sustainable development. We have seen how COVID-19 has changed our lives globally. This cooperation is a valuable contribution towards a better understanding of how the pandemic has affected the management of environmental resources, particularly in the agri-food supply chain. It is the responsibility of research to respond meaningfully to the changing needs of society. Against this background, the research of the United Nations University seeks to be policy-relevant."

CzechGlobe Director Michal V. Marek: "The doctoral cooperation also intensifies environmental research infrastructure cooperation at the regional level between Saxony and Czech Republic and also at the global level in collaboration with non-EU partners."

In the research projects of the doctoral candidates, a close connection to the language, conditions, and culture of their respective countries should become visible and they should be relevant for their home country. The focus is on the sustainable management of environmental resources such as water, soil, waste, and energy, as well as measures to adapt to climate change or mitigate its effects. The research will aim to address the fundamental challenges in the agricultural and food supply chain, which have become even more pressing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The research will provide solutions to increase the resilience of food systems and ensure food security in vulnerable communities, particularly in the global South.

The PhD positions will be advertised publicly and internationally, and the selected PhD researchers will be employed by UNU-FLORES. The scholarships amount to 1,566 euros per month each, of which the Saxon Ministry of Science provides 850 euros, CzechGlobe 600 euros. UNU-FLORES bears all additional costs.

The Institute for Integrated Material Fluxes and Resource Management

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