



# SUCCESS STORY

## KEEN helps Lithuania move its research forward Horizon 2020 | Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation

**The KEEN project aims to help Lithuania become a future European leader in innovation. Supported by a Horizon 2020 “Twinning” grant, Switzerland’s University of St Gallen is working with 2 European partner universities to support entrepreneurial capacity building at Kaunas University of Technology (KTU).**

“Lithuania’s KTU has the potential to be the MIT of the Baltic region,” says Dr Charlotta Sirén, Assistant Professor at the University of St Gallen’s Global Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation. “Combining the technical skills of the project partners with cutting-edge entrepreneurial best practices could really set KTU up to become a future startup hub.”

### Swiss entrepreneurship

To provide KTU with these best practices, the University of St Gallen is partnering with a university in the UK and one in Germany in the Horizon 2020 Twinning project

“KEEN” (Knowledge-Empowered Entrepreneurship Network). Through collaborations, Twinning aims to strengthen a specific field of research in an emerging institution. KEEN’s goal is to build an entrepreneurial ecosystem in Lithuania. “St Gallen is known for high-impact entrepreneurial research and KTU has a strong background in technical research – a perfect combination,” explains Sirén. “KEEN will have a huge impact on the startup scene in Lithuania.”

*‘KEEN allows me to meet senior researchers at some of the best universities in the EU doing entrepreneurial research’ (Dr Sirén)*

“It will provide the partner universities with funds for numerous training and collaborative visits, conference travel and public outreach activities.”

Euresearch played an important role in strategy and planning for the proposal. “Euresearch was extremely helpful in bringing the EU perspec-

tive,” she says. “It’s so important that there is someone who has the full picture and is always ready to help.”

### Added-value for St Gallen

Sirén sees a clear win for her university as well. “Researchers in our group have been able to expand their collaborative network. Working with the other partner universities has also enhanced our ability to work across cultures while maintaining a strong European perspective. We have also gained a unique insight into the European Commission’s grant application process and are better tuned to their wants and needs as we continue the process of pursuing new and exciting opportunities for future funding.”

Running an EU project has also been an important personal and career achievement, Sirén says. “One of the biggest benefits for me is how this project broadens my network and nurtures collaboration with people from different backgrounds.”

*‘A great project with a promising future for Switzerland and the rest of Europe – that’s what makes our work so rewarding!’ (Euresearch)*



*Dr Charlotta Sirén (©Keystone-SDA/Keystone)*

**Euresearch** is an information and advisory service on the European Research and Innovation Framework Programmes. It has offices in all the Swiss regions and a Network Office in Bern. Euresearch is a non-profit association supported by the Swiss confederation.

## PROGRAMME

The “Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation” Programme aims at bridging the gap between EU countries with higher research and innovation performance and those with lower performance (so-called “Widening” countries). The programme does not fund research per se, but supports actions that aim at raising research excellence. In particular, it invests in knowledge transfer and exchange of best practices, creating Centres of Excellence, and networking among European researchers. The coordination of the project is always in the hands of the Widening country.

## FACTS & FIGURES

**Project Name** Creation of the “Knowledge-Empowered Entrepreneurship Network” to position Kaunas University of Technology at the forefront of EU research in entrepreneurship

**Programme** Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation

**Interviewee** Dr Charlotta Sirén, Assistant Professor, University of St. Gallen

**Project Participants** Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania (Coordinator) and 3 partners from 3 countries

**Research Area** Entrepreneurship & Innovation

**Project Dates** 01.09.2018 - 31.08.2021 (3 years)

**Project Cost** € 991 868,75

**Project Funding** € 991 868,75

**More information** [www.keenetwork.com](http://www.keenetwork.com)

