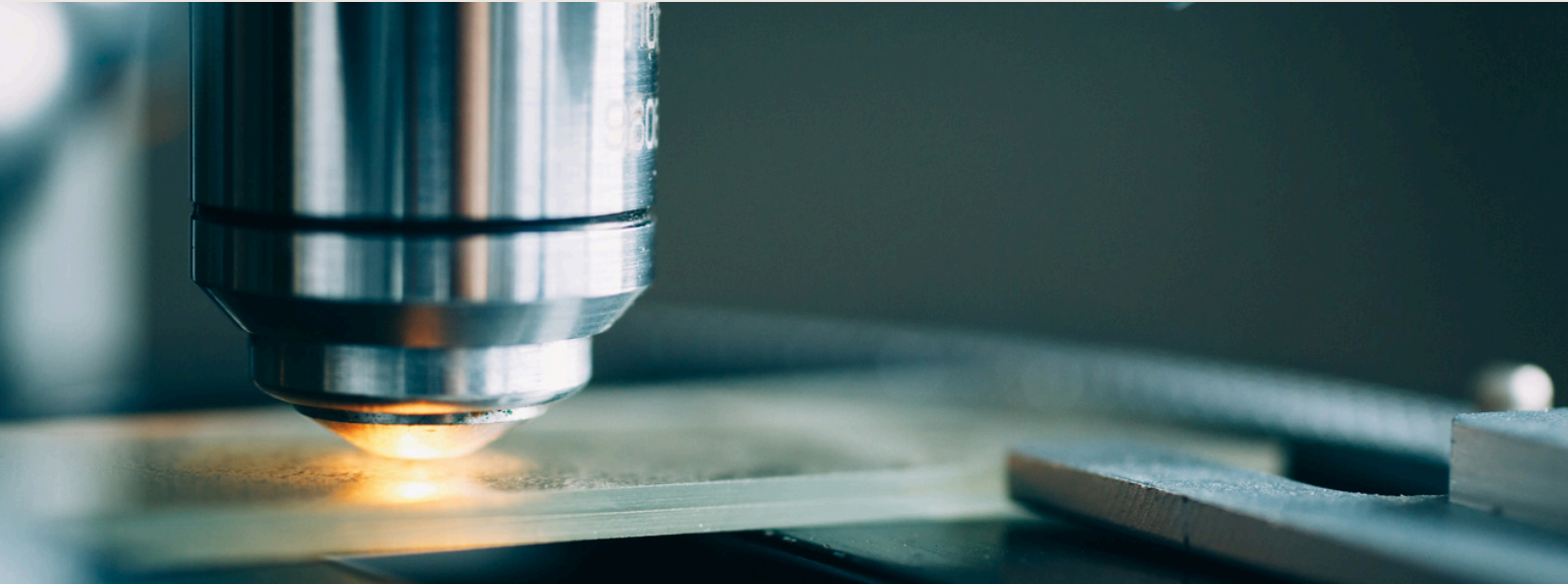




RLS-SCIENCES

SPRING EDITION NEWSLETTER



RLS-SCIENCES SPRING

27 MARCH, 2026

The RLS-Sciences network is preparing for its major activity in 2026: the fourth in-person RLS-Sciences Overall Conference! From 14-18 June, partners will convene in Munich and Linz, at the invitation of Bavaria and Upper Austria, to work on current topics and priorities and to build on the results of the 2024 Conference in Québec, the 2025 Digital Week and the 12th RLS in Cape Town. In this newsletter, we are happy to provide an update of the most important information about the conference. We expect confirmation on regional participation by 17 April, 2026, via the respective regional coordinators.

As always, we are glad to share updates and successes from RLS-Sciences partners. To showcase ongoing exchanges and the importance of interregional mobility for joint scientific work, this edition offers a special section on mobility experiences from young researchers in the network. Ahead of the June conference, you can also find a selection of open funding opportunities included.

Happy reading!

Lea Pfäffel and Michaela Eggert
Bavarian RLS-Sciences Management Team

RLS-SCIENCES
SPRING NEWSLETTER

WHAT'S INSIDE

RLS-Sciences Overall
Conference 2026 • P. 2

Mobility Experiences Young
Researchers • P. 3-4

Updates from RLS-Sciences
Partners • P. 5

Funding Special • P. 6

Visit us online:
<https://rls-sciences.org>

RLS-SCIENCES OVERALL CONFERENCE 2026

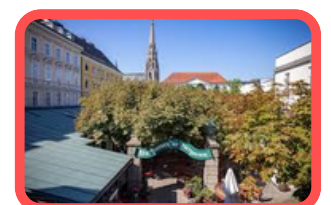
The fourth RLS-Sciences Overall Conference will take place from 14–18 June, 2026 in Munich and Linz, at the invitation of both the Bavarian and Upper Austrian State Government. Partners from the seven RLS-regions will present the work they conducted within and between the four research groups on Renewable Energy, Aerospace, Small Satellites, and Digital Health over the last two years. Bavaria and Upper Austria expect that each region will be represented by approximately ten participants, including eight scientists (two per RLS-Sciences topic) and two administrative or political coordinators. The co-hosts are pleased to be able to cover accommodation, transportation on site, and meals during the conference. The regional coordinators will set up their respective delegations. If you want to participate in the conference, please contact your regional coordinator(s).

The Overall Conference Program will feature Joint Sessions, where all research groups will come together to exchange on relevant topics in an interdisciplinary manner, and parallel thematic group session, where the research projects follow their individual programs and discuss next steps in their respective priorities. In the joint sessions, participants will hear keynotes on the topics of resilient and safe infrastructures, the role of science and technology in prevention and risk management, and perspectives around Smart Agriculture. Welcoming and opening talks will be given by the political coordinators of the participating regions.

Participants will have the opportunity to take part in interesting site visits. In Munich, the groups will visit the Leibniz Supercomputing Centre and several TUM departments, depending on the research group interests. The Energy Group will further visit the Energy Technology Center (TZE) at Landshut University of Applied Sciences. In Linz, participants will tour different departments and labs of the FH Upper Austria in Wels, the company voestalpine in Linz or the software park Hagenberg with RISC Software GmbH.

As RLS-Sciences is celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2026, the conference will feature new thematic developments and even more engagement at the interface of science and regional policy. A special celebration will be held on the evening of 15 June, with high-level regional contributions and attendance. Keynotes and presentations will focus on the role of high technologies in science and innovation.

The RLS-Sciences Overall Conferences have so far created important momentum for the network. Previous editions were held in São Paulo (2019), Bavaria (2022) and Québec (2024). Following each of these conferences and through further virtual exchanges, joint publications were developed as well as new collaborative projects. The 2024 Conference in Québec focused on “Innovation Zones – A Regional Development Tool in the International Context”, a theme which will be well represented and brought forward during the 2026 conference.



MOBILITY EXPERIENCES YOUNG RESEARCHERS

On January 30, 2026, the RLS-Sciences Munich Management Team hosted a virtual Funding Workshop dedicated to student and young researcher mobility. Experts from funding organizations and universities provided information about a range of mobility programmes at national, regional and local scales. Experts from Fonds de recherche du Québec-Nature et technologies, FAPESP and the University of Georgia explained different pathways to accessing funding and emphasized how mobility grants can serve as a valuable first step in establishing international research collaborations. The Munich Team showcased the RLS-Sciences Funding Database and included current funding options available to the five RLS-Sciences research groups across the seven partner regions. Mobility awardees then shared their experiences and illustrated how academic mobility can drive forward international partnerships, initiate research projects and contribute to personal and professional development. Please find a highlight of experiences from network partners below.

Mayara Melo, University of Campinas (UNICAMP), São Paulo

What learnings would you like to share with peers who are interested in studying or doing research abroad? What were your impressions from the visit?

Studying and doing research abroad taught me that international mobility is as much about adaptability and openness as it is about academic excellence. In Québec, I learned the importance of working in multicultural and multilingual environments, where collaboration, clear communication, and respect for different research cultures are essential. I also learned how valuable it is to be proactive: seeking feedback, building networks, and engaging in seminars, workshops, and informal discussions greatly enrich the experience. [...]

Québec offered a stimulating academic environment, with a strong culture of collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and openness to international researchers. I am deeply grateful to Prof. Dr. Louis Gosselin for his guidance and collaboration on my research, to my colleagues and friends inside and outside the lab at Université Laval, and to everyone who welcomed me so warmly. [...]



PhD candidate at UNICAMP, stayed at Université Laval, Québec, from November 2024 to April 2025

Jana Witolla, Technology Center for Energy (TZE), Bavaria

What learnings would you like to share with peers who are interested in studying or doing research abroad? What were your impressions from the visit?

If you have the chance to stay abroad, take it! Take advantage of the opportunity for international networking and the expansion of scientific cooperation. Stay curious and ask questions. [...]

The Forum international de la transition énergétique was an inspiring and energizing experience, bringing together diverse perspectives on the energy transition from around the world. Especially the exchange with researchers and professionals beyond the formal conference program provided a valuable opportunity to form new scientific collaborations and to discover emerging trends. Beyond the professional discussions, the personal interactions and shared experiences were equally relevant, encouraging a deeper sense of community.



Research Assistant at TZE, participated in the Forum international de la transition énergétique, Québec, from January 20-23, 2025.

Mag. Michael Denk, Energieinstitut an der JKU Linz, Upper Austria

What learnings would you like to share with peers who are interested in studying or doing research abroad? What were your impressions from the visit?

International scientific exchange is extremely valuable, as it broadens academic and cultural horizons and fosters new perspectives on research and collaboration. Studying or conducting research abroad helps build strong international networks and encourages innovative ways of thinking. I would highly recommend my peers to take advantage of such opportunities whenever possible. [...]

I was pleased and honoured to engage in this dialogue with the Energy Research Institute in Jinan. We, as Energieinstitut an der JKU Linz, appreciate the opportunity for scientific exchange and see this as a potential starting point for cooperation in the field of sustainable energy systems research.



Research Assistant at the Energy Institute at JKU Linz, visited the Energy Research Institute of the Shandong Academy of Sciences

Ass. Prof. Leyla Amiri, Université de Sherbrooke, Québec



Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering, recipient of the TUM Hans Fischer Fellowship 2025, first research stay at TUM in December 2025

What learnings would you like to share with peers who are interested in studying or doing research abroad? What were your impressions from the visit?

My first research stay at the Institute for Advanced Study (TUM-IAS) in December 2025 confirmed that international mobility is far more than a short academic visit. It creates structured, long-term scientific partnerships built on complementary expertise and shared research goals. During this stay, we officially launched a joint PhD project under my supervision together with Prof. Nikolaus Adams and Dr. Stefan Adami. The project focuses on developing an advanced open-source computational code to study fluid flow from laminar to turbulent regimes in porous media. [...] I was particularly impressed by the interdisciplinary environment at TUM-IAS, where computational modeling, high-performance computing, and applied engineering research are closely connected. [...] It is clear that this partnership has strong potential to grow into a long-term strategic collaboration between our institutions and regions.

I strongly encourage early-career researchers to pursue research experiences abroad. These visits accelerate scientific growth, expose researchers to new methodologies and infrastructures, and help build international leadership skills. I will return to Munich in March 2026 for several weeks.

Thank you very much for the interesting insights! RLS-Sciences encourages multiregional mobility and we are happy to support further steps. The RLS-Sciences Funding Workshops are a regular activity and we look forward to the next one!



In the meantime, if you are interested in funding opportunities for young researchers or students, please visit the [RLS-Sciences funding database](https://www.rls-sciences.org) on our website. If you haven't seen it already, check out the new design !

MEDTEQ+ Health Innovation Summit 2026

The MEDTEQ+ Health Innovation Summit 2026 was held on February 4 and 5, 2026, in Montréal and was organized by MEDTEQ+, the pan-Canadian consortium for industrial research and innovation in health technologies. Prof. Alexander Choukér, LMU Munich, took part in the panel “Collaboration with Space Agencies: Infrastructure for Health Innovations” and the pitch session with the Canadian and European Space Agencies. In 2024, Prof. Choukér and other RLS-Sciences partners from the Digital Health and Aerospace groups had offered insights into space medicine during the RLS-Sciences Explore Session on “Space, Earth, and Health”.

Project HyEfRe at 1st Linz District Heating Forum

Interim results of the Interreg Central project HyEfRe (Hydrogen Integration for Efficient Renewable Energy Systems) were presented at the 1st Linz District Heating Forum (17-18 March 2026) at JKU Linz. The forum brought together more than 120 experts from 13 countries and provided a platform for the exchange, dissemination and replication of project results and innovative ideas. The event focused on “Heat Highways”, large-scale heat storage and industrial symbiosis for waste heat integration. HyEfRe was one of the projects presented at the forum. TZE in Bavaria is acting as lead partner in the project, and Energieinstitut at JKU in Upper Austria is one of the project partners.

First European Quantum Computer at LRZ, Munich

Euro-Q-Exa, the first European quantum computer, is now installed at Leibniz Supercomputing Centre (LRZ) in Munich. The system features 54 quantum bits, a second quantum computer with 150 qubits is expected to be added to the system by the end of 2026. Euro-Q-Exa will be made available to European researchers via the Munich Quantum Portal (MQP) and the EuroHPC JU portal. The quantum computer can be used on its own or in combination with the supercomputer SuperMUC-NG for hybrid quantum-classical workflows.

Upcoming energy conference hosted by the Energieinstitut at JKU Linz

The DACH+ Conference Series on Energy Informatics will take place from 21-23 September 2026 in Linz. Hosted by the Energieinstitut at JKU Linz, the event will focus on energy topics such as advancements of information and communication technologies in the energy sector, energy market modelling and smart energy systems. The programme includes several themed workshops for experts to exchange on tools, methods and new ideas. RLS-Sciences partners are welcome to participate.

State Secretary for Economic Affairs visits TZE, Bavaria

Bavarian State Secretary for Economic Affairs, Tobias Gotthardt, visited the Technology Center for Energy (TZE) to share updates on developments related to the energy transition in Bavaria. TZE presented how its laboratory research on batteries and green molecules, including hydrogen, contributes to a safer and more sustainable energy system. Dr. Reinhart Schwaiberger, Managing Director of the TZE, personally invited the State Secretary to TZE during a delegation visit to Canada in October 2025. Representatives from the political, business and academic sectors had travelled to Montréal and other locations with the State Secretary to explore the innovation ecosystem in the field of energy and discuss cooperation potential with Canadian partners.

FUNDING SPECIAL: OPPORTUNITIES HIGHLIGHT

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships



Deadline: 09 September, 2026

Thematic Focus: Open

Link: Find more details [here](#)

The Postdoctoral Fellowships under the European MSCA programme are a mobility funding opportunity for early-career PhD holders. The fellowships aim at supporting researchers' skillsets across disciplines, thus strengthening research excellence. Two funding streams exist: 1) European Postdoctoral Fellowships in the EU for PhD holders of any nationality (12-24 months); and 2) Global Postdoctoral Fellowships outside the EU (1-2 years with 1 year return phase) for EU nationals and long-term residents of EU member states. The grant includes a living and mobility allowance, funding for training and networking as well as indirect costs for the host organisation.

COST - European Cooperation in Science and Technology



Deadline: autumn 2026

Thematic Focus: Open

Link: Find more details [here](#)

The Open Call 2026 from COST Association - European Cooperation in Science and Technology is a multilateral funding opportunity for networking activities. COST funds interdisciplinary research networks called COST Actions. These Actions bring together researchers, innovators and other professionals including industry specialists, who are based in Europe and beyond, to collaborate on research topics for a period of 4 years. Researchers from Bavaria, Upper Austria and Western Cape are eligible for funding. Researchers from other regions can be integrated as non-reimbursed participants. All RLS-Sciences themes are possible. The next deadline is anticipated for autumn 2026, the call will open in spring 2026.

DFG Scientific Networks



Deadline: open call

Thematic Focus: Open

Link: Find more details [here](#)

Scientific networks offer researchers at all career stages the opportunity to engage in 3-year scientific exchange and cooperation on a topic area of their choice across locations, with the aim of achieving a specific outcome. A group of 10 to 20 people is funded, half of which must be working at German institutions, the other half can be researchers in institutions abroad (in the RLS partner regions, for example). Funding includes travel and maintenance costs for work meetings of network members (full group or individual members) and for thematically relevant guests, other costs (to support coordination) and publication costs.

Clean Hydrogen Partnership Call for Proposals 2026



Deadline: April 15, 2026

Thematic Focus: Energy

Link: Find more details [here](#)

The Clean Hydrogen Partnership Call for Proposals 2026 is a multilateral funding programme under Horizon Europe Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking. The call includes 21 topics in the fields of renewable hydrogen production, storage, distribution, use cases in the cargo sector, supply chains as well as Hydrogen Valleys (IA, RIA and CSA). Proposals should address lowering of costs, improving durability, boosting efficiency or increasing competitiveness in the hydrogen sector. Within RLS-Sciences, eligible partners include those from Bavaria, Georgia, Québec, São Paulo, Shandong (for RIA and IA topics), Upper Austria and Western Cape.

M-ERA.NET Joint Call 2026



Deadline: May 12, 2026 (preproposal)

Thematic Focus: open

Link: Find more details [here](#)

The M-ERA.NET joint call 2026 is a transnational call for research, technology and development projects in the field of material sciences. Topics include materials for energy storage and distribution systems, materials for energy conversion as well as innovative surfaces, and materials addressing environmental challenges. Participants may be SMEs, academic research groups, universities or other (public) research organisations. Within RLS-Sciences, eligible regions are Bavaria, Québec, São Paulo, Upper Austria and Western Cape.

Find further funding opportunities in the [RLS-Sciences Funding Database](#).