RSU Riga Stradins University

KEY-RSU

Host Profile

SOCIAL SCIENCES

RESEARCH CENTRE

Research environment, thematic areas, supervision and partner opportunities

The Centre will provide:

2 postdoctoral positions
5 years of research and career development

36 months MSCA co-funded + 24 months RSU-funded

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
Choose Europe for Science

Project No. 101313381 | Riga, Latvia



Co-funded by the European Union

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS **2**

ABOUT RĪGA STRADIŅŠ UNIVERSITY **4**

ABOUT THIS HOST PROFILE ..... ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

IN THIS GUIDE 4

SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH CENTRE HOST ENVIRONMENT **5**

RESEARCH FOCUS AND THEMATIC AREAS 5

1. Democracy, Security and Information Environments *5*

2. Sustainability Transformations, Organisational and Community Resilience *5*

3. Social, Cultural and Institutional Transformations in Health *5*

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT AND EXPERTISE 6

INFRASTRUCTURE, SOFTWARE AND RESEARCH RESOURCES 7

RESEARCH CULTURE AND INTEGRATION 8

INTERDISCIPLINARY AND SOCIETAL-IMPACT OPPORTUNITIES 8

POTENTIAL SECONDMENT AND COLLABORATION PATHWAYS 8

FEASIBILITY BOUNDARIES 9

RSU-WIDE RESEARCH AND RESEARCHER SUPPORT ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH CENTRE THEMATIC RESEARCH AREAS **10**

PURPOSE AND INTERPRETATION 10

PROFILES AT A GLANCE 10

SSRC-1 | FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SECURITY OF PEOPLE WITH SEVERE MEDICAL CONDITIONS ..... ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND RATIONALE ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

INDICATIVE SCIENTIFIC SCOPE ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

POSSIBLE APPROACHES ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

RELEVANT HOST EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

INTERDISCIPLINARY AND INTERSECTORAL OPPORTUNITIES ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

POTENTIAL COLLABORATION AND SECONDMENT PATHWAYS ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

APPLICANT BACKGROUND ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

COMPETENCES THAT MAY STRENGTHEN THE PROPOSAL ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

FEASIBILITY BOUNDARIES ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

ETHICS, DATA AND RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

SSRC-2 | INFORMATION MANIPULATION AT THE INTERSECTION OF MEDICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND RATIONALE ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

INDICATIVE SCIENTIFIC SCOPE ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

POSSIBLE APPROACHES ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

RELEVANT HOST EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

INTERDISCIPLINARY AND INTERSECTORAL OPPORTUNITIES ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

POTENTIAL COLLABORATION AND SECONDMENT PATHWAYS ..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

Applicant background ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Competences that may strengthen the proposal ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Feasibility boundaries ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Ethics, data and responsible research ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Expected contribution ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

PARTNER PROFILES AND SECONDMENT OPPORTUNITIES ..... ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

University of Iceland ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Nagasaki University ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
University of Skövde ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
SIA APPLY ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Biomedical and clinical collaboration at RSU ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

WORKING DRAFT Prepared for host review. Specific resources and collaboration or secondment arrangements remain subject to the conditions stated in this profile.

About Rīga Stradiņš University

Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) is a research university located in Rīga, the capital of Latvia. Established in 1950 as the Rīga Medical Institute, RSU has evolved into a modern, internationally oriented university recognized for its strengths in health sciences and social sciences. The university offers education and conducts research in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, public health, rehabilitation, sports and health sciences, as well as in social sciences, including communication, political science, international relations, law, psychology, sociology, social anthropology, and regional development.

Today, RSU brings together more than 12,000 students, including over 3,000 international students. The university offers study programmes from bachelor's to doctoral level and maintains close links with Latvia's healthcare system, research institutions, and international academic partners.

Guided by its motto “Science for healthy societies”, RSU is committed to advancing research that contributes to individual and societal well-being. Its research environment brings together specialised institutes, laboratories, and research centres, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration across biomedical, health, and social sciences. RSU continues to invest in research infrastructure, international partnerships, and the professional development of researchers.

RSU also promotes the well-being, physical activity, and social integration of its employees. The university provides access to sports infrastructure and opportunities to engage in a range of sporting and recreational activities, including participation in RSU sports teams. Beyond sport, members of the RSU community can take part in cultural and creative activities, including dance and choral singing, providing opportunities to connect with colleagues outside the workplace and become part of the wider university community.

This guide brings together the information needed to explore the Social Sciences Research Centre as a host for your KEY-RSU research project. It introduces the research environment, thematic opportunities, supervision arrangements, and potential partner and secondment pathways.

Within KEY-RSU, SSRC offers two postdoctoral positions, combining a 36-month MSCA co-funded phase with a 24-month RSU-funded phase. Candidates develop an individual research proposal within the advertised research opportunities.

In this guide

- Host environment and research infrastructure
- Thematic research areas and project opportunities
- Supervision arrangements and links to separate Supervisor Profiles
- Partner profiles and secondment opportunities

READ THIS PROFILE ALONGSIDE THE OFFICIAL KEY-RSU CALL DOCUMENTATION for eligibility, employment conditions, application instructions and selection procedures. Access to specific resources and partner opportunities depends on the research project and the applicable arrangements. The postdoctoral researcher remains responsible for proposing a feasible project and identifying required resources; feasibility will be assessed during selection.

Detailed Supervisor Profiles are provided separately and should be read alongside the relevant thematic research area.

Social Sciences Research Centre Host Environment

Explore the host centre

The Social Sciences Research Centre (SSRC) at Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) serves as the university's central platform for interdisciplinary, internationally oriented, and societally engaged social science research. Operating within the Faculty of Social Sciences and under the strategic oversight of the Vice-Rector for Studies, the Centre brings together research groups led by tenure-track professors and senior researchers, fostering collaboration across the social, health, and life sciences.

As part of one of the leading research universities in the Baltic region, the SSRC addresses complex societal challenges in Latvia, Europe, and globally. Its research is committed to scientific excellence, interdisciplinarity, and societal relevance, with particular strengths in the fields of societal resilience, democracy, security, information space, environment and sustainability, health communication, public policy, governance. A distinctive feature of the Centre is its ability to bridge social sciences with health and biomedical research.

Research Focus and Thematic Areas

The SSRC's research addresses major societal transformations and the factors that shape democracy, security, sustainability, health, and social resilience. The Centre brings together diverse social science perspectives to examine how individuals, communities, organisations, and institutions respond to social, geopolitical, technological, environmental, and health-related change. Research is organised around three interconnected thematic areas, with cross-cutting interests in trust, governance, participation, inequality, digitalisation, resilience, and societal impact.

1. Democracy, Security and Information Environments

This thematic area explores the functioning and resilience of democratic societies in rapidly changing information, political, and security contexts. Research focuses on governance, trust, media and communication, information environments, public participation, institutional transformation, strategic communication, societal security, and the relationships between citizens, media, public authorities, and democratic institutions.

2. Sustainability Transformations, Organisational and Community Resilience

This thematic area examines the social dimensions of environmental, digital, demographic, and socioeconomic transformations and their implications for organisations, communities, regions, and food systems. Research addresses sustainability transitions, social inclusion and inequality, community and organisational resilience, regional development, food security and food-system transformation, behavioural change, adaptation, and the governance of societal transitions.

3. Social, Cultural and Institutional Transformations in Health

This thematic area investigates the social dimensions of health, healthcare, and wellbeing in contemporary societies. Research focuses on health communication, trust in health systems, social determinants of health, digital health and emerging technologies, health-related behaviours, lived experiences of health and illness, food and nutritional security, and organisational and institutional change across health and care systems. The area supports interdisciplinary collaboration at the interface of social sciences, public health, and medicine.

Research environment and support

The SSRC offers a supportive environment for developing ambitious interdisciplinary research with scientific excellence and societal relevance. Researchers benefit from access to experienced supervisors and collaborators, methodological expertise, stakeholder networks, and established national and international partnerships. The Centre promotes collaboration across disciplinary boundaries and provides opportunities to engage with policymakers, healthcare organisations, civil society actors, and international research communities.

Within the **KEY-RSU** programme, the SSRC will host two postdoctoral researchers in an interdisciplinary research environment that combines strengths in the social sciences with close links to public health, medicine, and life sciences. Postdoctoral fellows will have access to the Centre's expertise, international partnerships, and research networks, including collaboration opportunities with the Global Studies Centre and researchers across RSU's health and biomedical research ecosystem.

KEY-RSU host team	Indicative focus	Planned capacity
Food-systems research team Main supervisor: Prof. Miķelis Grīviņš View main supervisor research profile Co-supervisor: Dr. Ieva Puzo	Food and nutritional security of people with severe medical conditions, including before, during and after cancer treatment.	1 postdoctoral researcher
Information-manipulation research team Main supervisor: Dr. Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova View main supervisor research profile Co-supervisor: Dr. Ieva Puzo	Information manipulation and information consumption at the intersection of medical and social sciences.	1 postdoctoral researcher

In relation to the two postdoctoral positions, the Centre offers particular strengths in:

- Food systems, sustainability, nutrition, and health, including research on food and nutritional security, specialised supply chains, vulnerable populations, health inequalities, and the social, institutional, and policy dimensions of food systems and healthcare.
- Information manipulation, information consumption, and political communication, with expertise in disinformation, public trust, media and information environments, democratic resilience, and comparative research focusing on Europe and East Asia.
- Advanced mixed-methods research, combining qualitative, quantitative, comparative, participatory, and digital approaches, including interviews, surveys, stakeholder engagement, policy analysis, and digital data analysis.

- Interdisciplinary collaboration across the social, health, and life sciences, connecting expertise in communication, political science, anthropology, law, public health, nutrition, biomedicine, healthcare systems, and patient rights.

The Centre has extensive experience in nationally funded and international research programmes, including Horizon Europe, and actively participates in international academic and policy networks. Researchers may benefit from opportunities for collaboration within ongoing and concluded projects such as DECONSPIRATOR (https://deconspirator.eu/) and SHIFT (https://about.make.org/articles-be/shift-begins-strengthening-europes-cognitive-resilience), as well as through broader European research and policy networks.

Research conducted within the Centre contributes to evidence-informed policymaking, professional practice, public debate, and societal resilience. The SSRC actively connects researchers with policymakers, healthcare providers, industry partners, civil society organisations, and international stakeholders to maximise both scientific excellence and societal impact.

Infrastructure, software and research resources

Area	Examples of available resources	Access note
Qualitative research	MAXQDA and NVivo for qualitative data analysis; focus-group facilities; interview and fieldwork equipment, including photo and video cameras.	Licences, room/equipment booking, project approval and secure handling arrangements apply.
Quantitative analysis	Stata, SPSS and other software for statistical analysis.	Cloud and on-site access, subject to licences, account provisioning and project-specific arrangements.
Surveys and data capture	REDCap and QuestionPro for small- and large-scale surveys and structured data collection.	Use depends on approved study design, account provisioning and data-protection configuration.
Digital and computational research	Digital-data workstations; AI-assisted functions in MAXQDA, QuestionPro and LexuAI; FaceReader for facial-expression capture and analysis, as identified in the host profile.	Confirm available tools, licences, approved uses, data handling and any project-specific ethics requirements.
Datasets	Potential access to health, demographic and socioeconomic data relevant to social-science research.	No dataset is guaranteed; custodian, legal, ethics, security and licensing requirements apply.
Library and computing	RSU library databases, secure storage, HPC and data-processing/visualisation tools.	Project-specific access and support arrangements apply.

RESEARCH FACILITIES AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS RSU provides dedicated workspace and access to the equipment and IT infrastructure necessary for the agreed research project. Access to specific software, platforms, external facilities, participants and datasets is subject to project-specific arrangements, applicable approvals, training, licences, capacity and agreed cost coverage.

Research culture and integration

- Postdoctoral researchers are embedded in active research groups and participate in regular research meetings and seminars
- The food-systems group comprises approximately ten researchers, including a research professor, doctoral researchers, postdoctoral researchers and researchers
- The information-manipulation team brings together early-career and senior scholars and hosts international students, including through Stanford University's Global Internships Programme.
- Depending on experience, postdoctoral researchers may contribute to teaching, summer school activities, supervision, and academic mentoring activities
- Collaboration across disciplines is encouraged, particularly between the social, health, and life sciences
- Research activities include engagement with external stakeholders and policymakers where relevant.
- Research teams collaborate with international partners and regularly host visiting researchers and students.

Interdisciplinary and societal-impact opportunities

- Food and nutrition work connects social-science analysis with cancer care, tumour immunology, clinical practice and public-health expertise.
- Information-manipulation work connects health communication, psychosocial determinants of decision-making and patient susceptibility with biomedical and autoimmune-disease contexts.
- Both environments support engagement with policymakers, healthcare actors, civil society and international research networks.
- Both research areas address real-world societal challenges, creating opportunities for policy and practice impact.

Potential secondment and collaboration pathways

Potential pathway	Indicative contribution	Important qualification
University of Iceland	Food science, nutrition, public health, cancer and nutrition, evidence assessment and applied dietary research.	Potential pathway for food and nutritional-security research. The precise secondment arrangements require confirmation.
Nagasaki University	Comparative Europe–East Asia research on information consumption and trust in health institutions in Japan; health misinformation, infodemics, radiation-health and risk communication; strategic narratives and security-related disinformation.	Potentially aligned with information-manipulation research; the precise unit and training plan must be agreed.
University of Skövde	Digital health, person-centred health, sustainable digitalisation and information-driven care.	Relevant where the individual project includes a substantive digital-health component.

Potential pathway	Indicative contribution	Important qualification
SIA APPLY	Applied AI, predictive analytics, computer vision and secure data-platform development.	Relevant only for a methodologically and ethically justified AI component; GDPR and EU AI Act implications must be assessed.
RSU biomedical and clinical collaborators	Disciplinary expertise to ground social-science questions in patient, clinical or biomedical contexts.	Clinical data, participants and samples are not implied by collaboration alone.

SECONDMENT STATUS Participation in a mandatory secondment of 6–12 weeks forms part of KEY-RSU. The precise host, duration, objectives, supervision and outputs will be agreed for each postdoctoral researcher and aligned with the approved KEY-RSU rules and Career Development Plan. The postdoctoral researcher remains employed by RSU throughout the secondment. Additional host organisations may be considered, subject to confirmation of their suitability, compliance with KEY-RSU requirements and any necessary approvals.

Feasibility boundaries

- Postdoctoral researchers must not assume direct access to national registers, hospital data, patient groups, proprietary platforms or partner-held datasets.
- Large-scale surveys, computational data acquisition, transcription, translation and fieldwork must be proportionate to time, staffing and available research costs.
- Research involving multiple countries or languages must include a credible plan for access, contextual expertise, ethics, translation and comparative validity.
- Postdoctoral researchers should identify essential resources, permissions and fallback methods in the proposal.

DATA AND PARTICIPANT RESEARCH Projects involving vulnerable groups, patients, sensitive personal data, online communities, information manipulation or cross-border data require early ethics and data-protection planning. Recruitment routes, consent, lawful basis, data minimisation, security, retention, sharing and publication controls must be specified before data collection.

Social Sciences Research Centre Thematic Research Areas

Research at the Social Sciences Research Centre connects social, political, economic and environmental processes with questions of health and wellbeing. Its interdisciplinary environment brings social-science perspectives into dialogue with public health and biomedical research, examining health challenges in their wider societal context. Within KEY-RSU, this scientific foundation is reflected in two complementary research areas: food and nutritional security in severe illness, and information manipulation at the intersection of medical and social sciences. Both build on established research within the SSRC and create opportunities to connect scientific understanding with healthcare practice, public policy and societal needs.

Purpose and interpretation

This profile defines the scientific scope within which applicants may develop an original and feasible research proposal. It identifies relevant questions, expertise, methods and collaboration pathways without prescribing a fixed protocol or guaranteeing access to every resource mentioned.

- Applicants are expected to formulate their own objectives, research questions, methodology and work plan within the selected thematic scope.
- Indicative questions and approaches are examples, not mandatory components and not evaluation checklists.
- The proposal must be realistic for the KEY-RSU timeframe, host capacity, available research costs and applicable ethics, data-protection, biosafety and legal requirements.
- Access to facilities, samples, participants, datasets, software and partner environments is conditional on project fit, capacity, approvals, training, licences and cost arrangements.
- The profiles must be read with the relevant Supervisor Profile, Position/Opportunity Profile, Full Call Text and applicant guidance.

RESPONSIBLE ASSESSMENT Applicants should demonstrate the quality, relevance and credibility of their experience. Evaluation will not rely on journal impact factors, h-index thresholds or publication counts as proxies for research quality.

Profiles at a glance

Code	Host	Thematic research area
SSRC-1	SSRC	Food and Nutritional Security of People with Severe Medical Conditions
SSRC-2	SSRC	Information Manipulation at the Intersection of Medical and Social Sciences