



# Letters to members

February 2006

Dear colleagues and friends,

This is another issue of the "Letters to Members", aimed to inform you about the recent and future developments in the Marie Curie Fellowship Association. This issue features the renewal of your membership for 2006 and the updating of your records in the MCFA online database; announcements of several new IT services; reports from recent meetings with EC officials; and up-to-date information about the MC conference in Manchester and the UK/IE national group meeting.

## - **MARIE CURIE CONFERENCE (MC2)**

The MC2 will take place in Manchester from April 9 to 12. Most plenary speakers and session chairs for the conference are now confirmed. Abstracts for presentations on research results or work in progress and proposals for bottom-up "delegate forums" can be submitted until 20 March. For details please see the conference website at [www.manchester.ac.uk/mc2](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/mc2).

Apart from plenary sessions of a more policy oriented nature and scientific sessions in parallel streams (chaired by MCFA members), there will also be a number of practical training workshops, including a "Write it Right!" workshop offered by MCFA member Gadi Rothenberg ([www.write-it-right.org](http://www.write-it-right.org)). Other workshops will be given by Janet Metcalfe (UK Grad) and

(probably) Seema Sharma (ScienceCareers). A full plenary session (chaired by MCFA Chair Jaroslav Mysiak) will be devoted to the celebration of the MCFA's 10th Anniversary, with short presentations by former and current board members. Other highlights include a talk by Nobel Price Winner Tim Hunt on "How to win a Nobel Prize", an outlook on research careers and human resources in FP7 by Georges Bingen (EC), a presentation on the key findings of the IMPAFEL study (Impact Assessment of MC Fellowship schemes) by Bryony Gill and MCFA member Louise Ackers, as well as a delegate forum on the "European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment" proposed by former MCFA Chair Dagmar M. Meyer. Current fellows will also have the opportunity to discuss administrative issues related

to their fellowship with Commission staff and National Contact Points during special "surgery hours".

### **- MCFA JOINT UK/IE NATIONAL MEETING**

The MC2 Conference will be preceded by a joint meeting of the MCFA National Groups of Ireland and the UK. This will take place on Sunday, April 9 from 14:00 to 17:00 at the conference site. All fellows who would like to contribute with a short informal presentation on their personal experience as a MC fellow, please contact Silvia Giordani (giordans@tcd.ie, coordinator of MCFA Ireland), and Vanessa Diaz (v.diaz@sheffield.ac.uk, coordinator of MCFA UK).

### **- MEETINGS WITH EC OFFICERS**

**Erasmus Mundus Alumni Association, Brussels, February 9th 2006.**

Board members Natalia Balcazar and Christos Christoglou participated in a meeting concerning the set up and running of a new association, the Erasmus Mundus Alumni (EMA) Association. ACA (Academic Cooperation Association) was chosen to help with setting up the alumni association. The responsible project officer is Mrs. Karin Bagge. The meeting was also attended by the director of the German-American Fulbright Commission (Dr. Rolf Hoffmann), alumni coordinators from

various Universities (Uppsala – Mr. Johan Edman and K.U. Leuven – Mr. Erik Gobin), the German DAAD (Dr. Markus Motz), the Dutch Nuffic (Ms. Astrid Scholten), the European Voluntary Service (MR. Jens MEster) and the UK Socrates Erasmus Council (Mr. John Reilly), as well as Mr. Alan Smith, Ms. Aurora Iglesias Ortego and Mr. Vito Borelli from the EC.

In the near future the new alumni association is likely to take an active role in "advertising" science and research in Europe all over the world. It is hoped that the EMA fellows, after returning to their home countries, will start local/national EMA associations and promote the European Research Area all over the world.

The meeting was a good opportunity to present the MCFA and the ongoing projects of the association; and discuss obstacles the new association may face in the coming periods.

**Meeting with scientific officers from DG Research, Marie Curie Fellowship Unit, Brussels, January 25th 2006**

Board members Antonella Di Trapani and Jaroslav Mysiak met with Mr. George Bingen, Mrs. Annegret Ziller (ERA-MORE network), Mrs. Kiriaki Karachaliou and other EC scientific officers in Brussels. During the meeting, further collaboration between the EC and the MCFA was discussed.

In this context, the new Marie Curie Working Programme (available at [ftp://ftp.cordis.lu/pub/fp6/docs/wp/sp2/r\\_wp\\_](ftp://ftp.cordis.lu/pub/fp6/docs/wp/sp2/r_wp_)

200214\_en.pdf) foresees a subvention with indicative budget of € 100,000.00 for the Marie Curie Fellowship Association. This subvention is aimed at helping to identify obstacles to mobility, exchange of best practice, sharing of information, and providing services in domains and regions not covered by ERA-MORE.

During the meeting with EC officers, a closer collaboration with ERA/MORE network was discussed. It was suggested that MCFA could play a relevant role in providing constructive feedback to ERA-MORE centres and making them better known among the fellows/MCFA members. Other area of potential collaboration is tutorship or "mentoring" of new fellows by fellows already established in the host countries or fellows who returned back to their home countries.

An outline of the prepared projects will be published soon.

### **Meeting with US National Postdoctoral Association**

Board member Martin Hajduch met with representatives of US National Postdoctoral Association (NPA, [www.nationalpostdoc.org](http://www.nationalpostdoc.org)) to discuss collaboration between MCFA and NPA, especially in area of "MCFA welcome packs" for USA. The collaboration was later discussed also with Alyson Reed (Director of the NPA) and Jonathan Gitlin (chair of the NPA International Postdoctoral Committee). In the past NPA developed "Survival Guide" ([www.nationalpostdoc.org/committees/IPC\\_Committee/IPSurvivalGuide](http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/committees/IPC_Committee/IPSurvivalGuide)) for foreign

postdocs in the USA that might serve as basis for MCFA's welcome packages.

### **- ISE LETTER TO THE EU COMMISSIONER J. POTOČNÍK**

The Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE) has drafted a letter entitled "Crucial choices for the nascent ERC" which will be sent to EU Commissioner J. Potocník, the Ministers of Research of the 25 EU Member States and the Members of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) of the European Parliament. The letter stresses the need for a rapid operational start of the European Research Council (ERC) and calls for a significant budget for the Council. Like a previous letter issues last year, the letter was endorsed by Presidents, Chairs, and Directors General of a number of European organizations (including the MCFA) under the aegis of the ISE. The letter has been accepted for publication by Science.

### **- NATIONAL GROUPS AND MAILING LISTS**

We are still looking for MCFA members who are willing to become National MCFA Groups Coordinators in several countries (Austria, Hungary, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Poland, Finland, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Belgium, Estonia, Lithuania, China, Japan). If you would like to set up a MCFA National Group or help existing Coordinators in any other country please let us know. National Group coordinators can be current or past MC

fellows who are currently resident in the given country. For more information please get in contact with us by email: [office@mariecurie.org](mailto:office@mariecurie.org) or [antonella.di.trapani@mariecurie.org](mailto:antonella.di.trapani@mariecurie.org).

The Latvian and Slovenian NG are currently setting up a webpage and it should soon be available online.

## **- NEW FEATURES ON THE MCFA WEBPAGE**

Besides the new format of this message, we are happy to announce two other newly installed IT services. The first is the web calendar (accessible at [www.mariecurie.org/webcalendar](http://www.mariecurie.org/webcalendar)) connected to the database of different events of interest.

The second is your electronic, personalized business card with MCFA motive, reserved to the members (who paid the membership fee). The business card must be activated first. (what does it mean?) If you are interested in the business card, visit your membership record (available from member area [www.mariecurie.org/index.php?frame2=/members/only/show.php](http://www.mariecurie.org/index.php?frame2=/members/only/show.php)). In the sections "Permissions" you may enable the personal business card which is the last on in the list of permissions. Once activated, you can access the business card under [www.mariecurie.org/c?no=<insert your membership number>; e.g. www.mariecurie.org/c?no=4096](http://www.mariecurie.org/c?no=<insert your membership number>; e.g. www.mariecurie.org/c?no=4096).

## **- OPEN CALLS AND COMPETITIONS**

### **1) Invitation for internship applications**

We invite applications for internship (up to 3 months) in the MCFA. Journalism students, graphic designers, journal and media managers are encouraged to submit the application. Please send enquires and applications to [office@mariecurie.org](mailto:office@mariecurie.org).

### **2) Public competition for a new logo of the association**

As informed in the last letter, we have launched a public competition for the design of a new MCFA logo.

Regarding to the logo, the board has adopted a change in the English translation of the association's official name which is in French "Association des boursiers Marie Curie". The English translation in use from now on will be "Marie Curie Fellows Association" which better fits to the French version than the currently used "Marie Curie Fellowship Association". The current name was often confusing and we have been often contacted by people who confused the association with the EC. Please consider this when designing the new logo. This change does not affect our statutes. Please address any questions to [office@mariecurie.org](mailto:office@mariecurie.org).

### **3) Available bursaries**

Bursaries are still available for the conference "Quality Assessment in Institutions of Higher Education in Europe", organised by Academia Europaea (<http://www.acadeuro.org/>). More information can be found at:

[www.mariecurie.org/src/AE%20Pavia%20Programme.pdf](http://www.mariecurie.org/src/AE%20Pavia%20Programme.pdf). Please post the application as soon as possible, but not later than February 27th.

Funds are also available for the Euroscience Open Forum 2006. Please find details about how to apply at [www.euroscience.org/esof.htm#grants2006](http://www.euroscience.org/esof.htm#grants2006)

#### **4) REMINDER - Call for papers for MCFA Newsletter**

As we already informed you in the last letter, we are collecting contributions for the next issue of MCFA Newsletter. The newsletter will feature short scientific articles presenting results of your projects in a way understandable to non-experts; reports from the past conferences; short notes from the mailing lists; book reviews; interviews; useful tips; news from the ERA; and a list of the planned events. The next issue will feature a retrospective on the past MCFA activities, in light of the 10th anniversary of the association, and will present an overview of the ongoing projects. As this newsletter is intended to give the MCFA fellows the chance to present their work and opinions, please contact the office with your contribution.

#### **- MCFA-RO MAILING LIST**

You are kindly invited to subscribe to the newly installed MCFA-RO mailing list which provides

information on open positions, various scholarships and scientific events mostly in East Europe, especially Romania. The official language is English. The list has currently ca. 50 subscribers.

To post messages on this list, send your email to: [mcfa-ro@mariecurie.org](mailto:mcfa-ro@mariecurie.org)

For subscription and more information, please visit: [http://mariecurie.org/mailman/listinfo/mcfa-ro\\_mariecurie.org](http://mariecurie.org/mailman/listinfo/mcfa-ro_mariecurie.org)

#### **- MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

The deadline for membership renewal has been postponed to 28.2. 2006. After this date the status of those who did not renew their membership status will automatically be set to "MCFA affiliate". You will be able to upgrade to regular membership by paying your membership fee at any moment of the coming year, should you change your mind later on.

Many thanks for your constant interest in the MCFA,

Jaroslav Mysiak  
Chair of the MCFA