



# Marie Curie Fellows Association NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2006

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## Contributed to this issue:

- Christos Christoglou
- Ursa Opara Krasovec
- Magda Lola
- Rosalie Luiten
- Antonio Marturano
- Jaroslav Mysiak
- Antonella Di Trapani
- Lucia Vergano

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## Editors and graphical design

- Jaroslav Mysiak
- Antonella Di Trapani
- Martin Hajduch

## Editor for language:

- Jan A. Miernyk

Please send your contributions - articles, reports, comments or suggestions to [newsletter@mariecurie.org](mailto:newsletter@mariecurie.org)

## MCFA 1996-2006: TEN YEARS OF TACKLING BARRIERS TO MOBILITY

### *The 10th Anniversary of the Association is getting closer by Jaroslav Mysiak*

It is almost ten years since a group of Marie Curie Fellows came together, encouraged by the European Commission, and laid down a base for a network of Marie Curie Fellows, later known as the Marie Curie Fellowship Association. A year later the Association obtained legal status as an international organisation under Belgian law, a prerequisite for a start-up subvention or “seed” money from the Commission. The approaching anniversary is a good occasion for looking back on the role and potential of the Association.

Today the Association has more than 3,000 fellows – current or past holders of the Marie Curie Fellowship. Not all of them are still in research; some have moved to industry or are employed in research management. Yet the research experience

gained during their fellowship probably played a crucial role in their careers. About one hundred fellows join the Association each year, a number which may significantly increase in the coming years. The web portal of the Association is visited by ca. 20,000 unique visitors a month, one fourth of whom spend more than five minutes reading the content of the web pages.

The main aims of the MCFA include tackling barriers to geographic mobility and helping Marie Curie fellows to overcome the administrative obstacles encountered. Great efforts have been dedicated to exploring new career opportunities and training. The Association manages about 20 mailing lists with about 3000 subscribers. Not all of them are MCFA members as the discussed topics attract interest of a wide research community. Since the beginning of the year more than twelve-hundred messages have been posted in the lists, with the most frequent questions regarding taxation of various allowances, reporting issues, administrative questions, job announcements and news regarding science policy in Europe.

To foster networking activities at national and regional levels, the Association organises meetings and encourages collaboration with other institutions and networks (e.g. National Contact Points or ERA-MORE mobility centres). Following the recent call, the post of the national MCFA coordinator has been filled in twenty countries, including Australia and United States. A complementary network of “mentors” –

Dear Reader,

After about three years absence, the MCFA Newsletter returns to the scenes! This is the first of, we hope, a number of issues that will follow, and you will certainly notice the new design!

This newsletter, published quarterly, will be the primary source of communication between the MCFA Board, its members and the scientific community. It will report on developments, activities and initiatives at European level that are of interest to Marie Curie Fellows. It will also be the voice of MCFA members in Europe and beyond, and we hope many more Fellows will contribute to it, with articles, reports, reviews, opinions and comments.

We welcome comments and feedbacks- positive or negative- regarding the content of this issue or future issues. Please contact us at [newsletter@mariecurie.org](mailto:newsletter@mariecurie.org).

A big thanks goes to all the contributors and we hope you enjoy the reading!

Antonella Di Trapani  
On behalf of the Editorial Team!

MCFE contact points at larger institutions is currently being created.

The Association publishes its own journal, the Annals of the Marie Curie Fellows. Its fourth edition was released in May 2006, increasing the number of papers published, so far, beyond one hundred. The Annals are currently being transformed into an electronic, open access journal dedicated to trans- and multidisciplinary research and science policy matter. The collaboration with Science NextWave (now Science Career) resulted in the publication of numerous 'personal journeys' of the our members. The Association is a well known and an appreciated stakeholder in the European Research Area (ERA). The Association is regularly invited to take part in science policy initiatives (such as the European Research Council ERC, the European Institute for Technology EIT, The European Charter of Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers C&C), and mostly in the Marie Curie Actions. The Association helped with establishment of other networks such as the Erasmus-Mundus Alumni Network or the European Platform of Women Scientists (EPWS). MCFE members participated at about one hundred international events on behalf of the Association, often as invited speakers or plenary panel members (e.g. Austrian Presidency Conference in June 1-2, Vienna; or Marie Curie Conference, April 10-12, Manchester).

The above list of achievements, which is far from being exhaustive, is impressive, especially because the Association works on a voluntary basis. In the last ten years, going through various ups and downs, the Association has created its own identity and style. Yet there are significant challenges facing the Association. First, the concept of the Marie Curie Fellowship is evolving and will also encompass, under the FP7, national programmes with mobility component. To reflect this change, the MCFE statutes need to adapt accordingly. Currently, only beneficiaries of Marie Curie Fellowship may join the Association. Opening it up to all mobile researchers, while preserving the Marie Curie Action programme as the flagship of corresponding endeavours, may significantly increase the potential for the MCFE to become the truly European voice of mobile researchers. Secondly, the Association will need to get established in third Countries such as China, Canada, Brasil, Mexico, India or Russia. This is because of the increasing number of outgoing and

incoming fellows, out of the reach of ERA-MORE network, who are facing high mobility obstacles. Finally, the Association needs to develop an attractive portfolio of membership benefits which motivate an active involvement beyond the mobility period. This may prove to be the most important challenge.



*Jaroslav Mysiak, Chair of the MCFE and Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, Venice, Italy.*

### MANAGEMENT OF MARIE CURIE FELLOWSHIP IN FRANCE - AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. DE GRAAUW



Mr. Vincent de Graauw is a legal expert at the Fondation Nationale Alfred Kastler (CiUP) which assists foreign researchers in France, facing legal and administrative issues.

**MCFE:** Mr. de Graauw, many Marie Curie (MC) fellows ask for an English copy of their employment contract. Are the host institutions in France obliged to translate the contracts which are normally in French?

**Mr. de Graauw:** Yes and No. In the private sector: French law stipulates that the work contract must be written in French. This contract can be translated into the language of the foreign researcher, but only if the researcher asks for it. For the moment, this is only possible in private companies. So the translation is possible in France if the salaried worker requests it (Work Law article L121-1, point 3).

In the public sector: Unfortunately, a translation is only possible in common private work law. As scientists are typically working in public organizations, this is not possible. When working as a contractual civil servant (contractuel de la fonction Publique), the common work law does not apply and you must refer to the specific Decrees that give the rules of each organization. There exist many specific decrees that are sort of "work codes" for the public sector. In this type of work contract, the translation is not possible, because a work contract signed with a State organization must be written in French.

**MCFE:** The Marie Curie fellowship is divided various categories, including the salary, monthly mobility allowance (MA), annual travel

allowance (TA), and finally career exploratory allowance (CEA). The European Commission recommends to pay MA, TA and CEA net, i.e. not included them into the salary.

**Mr. de Graauw:** Indeed. That is why this is only a recommendation from the commission and has no legal aspect in all countries. They "suggest" those allowances should not be included in the salary, but this is only a suggestion. French law must be applied.

**MCFA:** In France some institutions, mainly universities, pay these categories net. In the CNRS, MA and CEA are added to the salary, but MA are paid net. Does the French law allow to pay all categories net? If this is not the case, why MA are not taxed as the other categories?

**Mr. de Graauw:** This question was discussed on Monday in Brussels, during a meeting with the Commission. Indeed, there is a problem with those allowances. The problem comes from the URSSAF (the administration in charge of collecting social contributions in France). The URSSAF is actually controlling all public research organisms regarding the employment of foreign researchers; this administration considers that when an amount of money is granted monthly it must be included in the gross amount of the salary and not added as a net amount. Thus they consider that these allowances must be taxed (social contributions paid on it). So the CNRS has received instructions to add these allowances in the gross amount and to pay the social contributions. The Universities will certainly also be controlled on those points. Actually I don't have more information on this point, but as you know it also differs from one CNRS to another!! French law stipulates that if there exists a travel allowance, it must be an exceptional income, and "exceptional" is not "monthly"! To be considered as "exceptional" income, the scientist must normally prove he has used the money to travel and not used it for something else. Apparently a travel allowance is not given monthly, and thus can be considered as an "exceptional" income and not taxed by social contributions. But other allowances are typically paid monthly, and thus considered as part of the total salary and taxed.

**MCFA:** Do the categories paid net to the researchers have to be declared?

**Mr. de Graauw:** All income in France is taxed. Once a year, every salaried worker or people who have earned some money, must declare this income at the French fiscal administration to pay

the income tax. Even if those allowances are included in the gross salary or added to the net amount of this salary, they have to be declared. The difference is that the income is to be declared in the "income tax declaration form" at point 1, AJ (salary and incomes), and the other allowances have to be declared in point 5: "revenus exceptionnels ou différés" (exceptional incomes). But, both are taxed. The Ministry of Finance is actually thinking of exempting those allowances of any taxes and making them tax free. But this won't help if those allowances are included in the total gross salary and first taxed via the social contributions then taxed a second time via the income tax.

**MCFA:** If an institution realises, even after several months, that by mistake the paid TA was too high, can they ask to change part of the contract? Or even, is the fellow obliged to pay back the difference? What can the fellow do in such a situation?

**Mr. de Graauw:** It is always the contract that is the legal document. If something is written in the contract, both sides must apply it correctly. If they made a mistake, I don't know why you should pay it back! If they have signed the contract, this document is the law to be applied. The contracts follow the French work law and do not contain illegal clauses.

**MCFA:** Do MC Fellows from other EU member states need a work permit (license de travail) in France? Do the fellows from Associated Countries (e.g. Romania) need the permit?

**Mr. de Graauw:** No. Since law of November 26th, 2003, Europeans from the 15 "old countries" plus Cyprus and Malta no longer need any resident's card or work permit. Concerning the eight "new European countries," if the Fellows sign a work contract they need to ask for a resident's permit at the Prefecture. This resident's permit will have the mention "travailleur temporaire" "voir APT". This means that the card allows them to live in France and also to work here. All other countries (third countries) still pass via the "scientific" procedure (Protocole d'Accueil, and resident's card with the mention "scientist"). This card allows the Fellow to live and work in France.

**MCFA:** How much time in advance has a fellow to inform his employer in France that he is quitting? Can the employer ask for a specific time period different than the stated in the contract?

**Mr. de Graauw:** This all depends upon what type of contract the Fellow has signed. If they have signed a permanent work contract (CDI: contrat a durée indéterminée), there is typically a waiting period of two or three months. They must write a certified letter (lettre recommandée avec accusé de réception) to officially resign from the contract.

If the researcher has signed a temporary work contract (CDD: contrat a durée déterminée) it is very difficult to resign, because they are supposed to be engaged in the work contract for the whole period. The only possibility is to see if there is an article in the work contract that permits to resign from this CDD, sometimes with a waiting period of one to three months. If not, a Fellow can only resign if the employer accepts this resignation (bilateral agreement on the resignation) or if the employer has made an error (faute grave).

**MCFA:** Are the fellows entitled to receive unemployment benefits, after having worked in France for more than 24 months, regardless whether they completed the fellowship or not? Do the same rules apply for researchers from all EU States? If some categories are not allowed to receive unemployment salary, are they still obliged to pay social contributions towards unemployment?

**Mr. de Graauw:** European citizens are entitled to receive the unemployment allowance after the end of the contract. In France, if you resign you have a waiting period of four months before receiving the unemployment allowance. If you are fired, or it is the end of the temporary work contract, this waiting period is reduced to one week. Third countries: as their carte de séjour are typically given for the same period as the work contract; they cannot renew their card and do not have the allowance. Furthermore, they cannot obtain this allowance, due to the fact that their carte de séjour is not valid to register at the work administration. Indeed, to get this unemployment allowance, you must be registered at the Agence Nationale pour l'emploi (national work agency, ANPE). To register, a researcher must show his resident's permit. If it is a "scientific" resident's card, he is not allowed to register and is not entitled to obtain the unemployment allowance (Warning: some scientists succeeded in getting registered, but that is a local solution).

Even if some scientists can not receive the unemployment allowances, they still must pay the social contributions every month. There is no official text that permits reimbursement. But I suggest that all scientist in this case (non

Europeans) send a certified mail to the URSSAF asking to be reimbursed because they have paid contributions to a Social Security benefit they are not allowed to receive! This costs only a letter. The answer could be no, but you never know!!



*Christos Christoglou, MCFA secretary general; CNRS-CIRIMAT Toulouse, France*

### **SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN ITALY: WHICH FUTURE? by Lucia Vergano**

The Lisbon Agenda set in 2000 the ambitious goal, then re-launched in 2005, of making Europe the most competitive and dynamic economy of knowledge by 2010.

Italy seems to be really far from reaching such a goal. By devoting only about the 1% of the GNP to scientific research, while other EU countries invest on average double the resources, Italy is toward the bottom of the list after Spain, Portugal, and Greece. Brain drain is often the only alternative for researchers who refuse to become a brain in cage.

To contrast such a trend, the Italian Ministry of education, university and research (MIUR) has financed since 2001 a national programme, brain buster. Tax breaks and specific research projects have been introduced to attract Italian researchers working abroad as well as foreigner researchers. At present, the results are not very encouraging: only 2.7/1000 Italian workers are researchers, while in other European countries there are on average 5.1/1000. Political myopia, plus the weak economic performance of the country and the dreadful trend of the main aggregates of public finances, makes available to research only limited resources. And these limited resources are not efficiently allocated.

The MIUR is the main source of financing, but funds are allocated for both teaching and research according to questionable criteria. A limited number of projects are also financed by other Ministries (Agriculture, Defence, Industry, Health, Environment and Innovation), as well as by the Italian institute for research (CNR), the Italian Regions, and the Italian Agency for Pharmaceuticals (Agenzia Italiana per il farmaco). The financing system is so fragmented

that management costs multiply without any valid reason. To increase the efficiency, many suggest creation of a research funding agency independent from the Ministries and similar to the American National Science Foundation and the European Science Foundation. All public resources should be allocated and managed by such an agency, working in close connection with the recently introduced European Research Council. Policies of researchers recruiting and promotion should introduce strong quality incentives, such as competitive salaries, differentiated according to meritocratic criteria.

A first step in this direction has been achieved by the MIUR with the establishment of a national committee to value research (Civr). Panels of experts with a high international profile in each area of research have been charged of evaluating the scientific work of all of the 77 Italian Universities and some of the most relevant Italian research institutes (12 public and 13 private), produced during the period 2001-2003. The results of the evaluation were published within a reasonably short time. Experts (25% of whom were foreigners) have worked in an open manner, looking at international standards of research quality, relevance, originality, and competitiveness. The former Italian Minister of MIUR, L. Moratti, has declared that the 30% of the total amount of research funds will be allocated among Universities according to the evaluation exercise results. But it is not clear if any consistent economic incentive for better performing Universities is in the Ministry agenda? It is not known if and when the evaluation exercise will be repeated. We hope the next Italian Minister will quickly answer to these questions. The country can wait no longer!



*Lucia Vergano, University of Padova, Italy*

## **RIDING THE WAVE OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION – THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

*by Antonella Di Trapani and  
Jaroslav Mysiak*

It is almost certain that the European Institute of Technology (EIT), the European counterpart of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), will be founded. The question is merely what form it will take and how the current research

landscape will change once the institute is established.

The Institute was proposed in 2005 by the president of the European Commission, Mr. Jose Barroso, alongside other measures to re-launch the Lisbon Agenda.

At that time it became clear that the Lisbon objectives are very ambitious and unlikely to be attainable if political commitment is not followed by tangible actions. Although the idea is not new, the intent behind it is appealing as never before. The EU is investing increasing amounts of money in research and technological development: the total budget of FP6 increased by 17% with respect to FP5 and it is likely to increase once more by 40% in the FP7. Yet these investments have not been translated into economical growth in the same way as they did in the USA and Japan.

The EIT proposal elicited different reactions. It was supported by some companies such as Nokia and Pirelli, but challenged by others such as the European University Association (EUA). The main criticism regard the perceived overlap with the European Research Council (ERC) and the funding. To resolve all doubts, the EC launched extensive consultations, first in autumn 2005 and later in spring 2006. While the concept itself was never at stake, the consultations aimed at collecting opinions and proposals regarding the Institute's structure and operation.

There are still many issues to be resolved, including the relation between the staff of the Institute and their home institutions, incentives for taking part in the Institutes, and the relationship with the European Research Council (ERC).

The Institute will be a network, consisting of 'Knowledgeable Communities' (KC) coordinated by a Governing Body (GB). Kcs are teams consisting of academic and business departments, jointly engaged in addressing key challenges with high business relevance such as Green energy, Nanotechnologies, and Climate Change. First KCs are expected to be identified by 2008 and will encompass first only a few areas. The Institute will enjoy large autonomy and will have its own legal status. Indeed, the GB, once established, is expected to define the final structure of the institute. The results of public consultations, which informed the last two EC Communications (published in February and June 2006), provide only the cornerstone of the idea.

Initially, the Institute will received public funds

but is expected to attract significant resources from the private sector. The period of EU secondment will probably be restricted to 5 years, compared with 10-15 years discussed at the beginning.

The Institute will be able to award diplomas, although its main focus may be on postgraduate study. The expected research focus will lie somewhere between fundamental research and downstream applied research.



*Antonella Di Trapani,  
MCFA treasurer and  
Johnson Matthey  
Technology Centre,  
Reading, United Kingdom*

*Jaroslav Mysiak, MCFA Chair and Fondazione  
Eni Enrico Mattei, Venice, Italy*

## OPINIONS AND COMMENTS

### CAMPAIGN FOR A TAX-FREE MOBILITY ALLOWANCE

*by Antonella Di Trapani*

'Is the mobility allowance tax-free?' This is the most frequent question in the MCFA mailing lists. Recently, more than 50 messages were posted on the subject on the MCFA-INT mailing list. Different organizations and tax offices vary in what they interpret as the Fellows' 'salary' and therefore how to tax it and what to tax.

In the Marie Curie Fellows Association we believe that something must be done soon to solve this problem.

Since 2002, with the introduction of FP6, Marie Curie Fellows enjoy three allowances: mobility, travel and career exploratory, compared to 'old' fellows who received only the mobility allowance. The European Commission recommends that each of these allowances be tax-free, as stated in each handbook of the Marie Curie Actions. This is also the understating of Marie Curie Fellows before taking up their fellowships. Then, after moving to a new country, with a different taxation system, they find out this is not the case. So the Fellows begin a struggle for at least smaller deductions or to have part of the allowances considered tax-free. Mobility allowances are paid to cover expenses that Fellows incur as a result of being in a different country such as renting accommodation, family

charges, language courses, etc. When taxed, the allowances are not sufficient to cover additional expenses related to mobility. The other two allowances (career exploratory and travel) are taxed more or less at the discretion of the tax office or the institution, so even in the same country some fellows receive them tax free while some are taxed.

The consequences of all of this are that Fellows are treated differently from each other not only in different European Union countries, but also within the same country.

There are cases where some Fellows have managed to get their allowances tax-free. In fact, according to the Marie Curie Fellowship handbook, because the mobility allowance should cover expenses incurred for renting accommodation, it would follow naturally that the Fellow should be allowed to claim it against presentation of the receipts.

While this is a workable solution in the short-term, the Marie Curie Fellows Association plans to initiate a campaign, aimed at different governments, for harmonised taxation of EU MC Fellowships and allowances.

We invite all MC Fellows to share their experiences with us, by sending an email to [office@mariecurie.org](mailto:office@mariecurie.org).

## EVENT REPORTS

### Researchers Initiative Closing Event, Dublin, Ireland, December 2, 2005

*by Magda Lola*

The aims of the meeting were to celebrate the end of the Researchers in Europe 2005 Initiative, a large-scale series of events for promoting the attractiveness of research careers, to summarise the lessons learned from this 6-months experience, and to establish guidelines for the future.

The conference was structured around plenary talks and workshops, aiming to involve all participants and to foster exchange of experiences, ideas, and reflections. From MCFA, Magda Lola has been the Chair of the Workshop dedicated to the most relevant means for communicating research.

During the workshops it became clear that in communicating research and promoting the attractiveness of researchers careers we should

use all possible means, adapting them to the target audience, and combining them in a complementary way. Some of the actions suggested were; fairs, open exhibitions where people (particularly young ones) can experience experiments themselves, open days at big universities and laboratories, user-friendly science publications, and portraits of researchers that focus not only on the top scientists and not only on research achievements but also on their daily lives and satisfaction that everyone can get from science. The role of the media is very important, and using the Internet may help in reaching a large audience (even those with limited financial means). It was emphasized that researchers must break their isolation and become key actors in teaching those outside of science what research is about. However, to this end the infrastructure needs to be improved. As long as

research careers are typified by a lack of job security and low salaries, their attractiveness will continue to be low relative to alternative career paths.



*Magda Lola, former MCFA secretary general and University of Patras*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the ERA-MORE Network,  
Bled, Slovenia, 23.-25. November 2005**  
*by Urša Opara Krašovec*

The ERA-MORE network was officially launched in June 2004, to address barriers to scientific mobility. The main mission of the network is to assist mobile scientists and their families to integrate in the host countries or resettle after they return home. More than 200 mobility centres have been established across Europe.

During the event staff from mobility centres met with policy-makers and mobile researchers to find ways of enhancing their services and to identify new opportunities that will allow the centers to remain sustainable in long term (EC guarantees financial support for 4 years only). Other issues such as the European Charter for Researchers, and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers were discussed too.

Three MCFA members were invited to contribute to the conference, as “end-users” of the service. Magda Lola participated in the plenary panel discussion on family issues for researchers, and presented MCFA survey results, feedback from

fellows, and possible steps to be taken in order to provide a more supportive environment for researchers and their families. Jernej Iskra and myself contributed our personal experiences about family issues and mobility. Through the personal stories, the services provided by the MCFA received a high appreciation.



*Urša Opara Krašovec, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia*

**Communicating European Research: the importance of explaining science to the public**  
*by Rosalie Luiten*

Europe possesses a wealth of research covering a broad range of sciences and providing unique opportunities for innovation and socio-economic progress. But are we in Europe able to keep our research on a competitive level with the United States or with upcoming countries like China? Less interest of new students for science and technological education has decreased the research potential in European countries. Science has increasingly become isolated from society and is not attractive to the public. Apparently science has to be better explained to the general public. How are we going to achieve this? To find answers to this question, the European Commission organized the conference “Communicating European Science 2005,” held in Brussels on November 14-15.

In the plenary lectures of the EU Commissioners Janez Potočnik and Viviane Reding, both stressed the importance for communicating science to the public. Including more science communicating skills in the education of scientists might be a way to achieve this. A number of approaches to science communication to reach the broad public were presented and discussed during the conference. Science on TV or the radio might have a positive impact, but what about science on the street or even at the beach? Numerous science events have been organized around Europe, and the organizers met great enthusiasm of the public. The success of “bringing science to the people” also reached those who would never enter a scientific centre in the first place. All initiatives are published in a “white paper” that can serve as a source of inspiration for new initiatives! A good example of promoting science was presented by ASIMO, the world's most advanced humanoid robot. The robot ASIMO walks and talks almost like a human being, and his show is a unique way to promote the

fun of science at special events in schools and science centers.

Communicating science is not only a responsibility of science journalist but also of the researchers themselves. This is not always easy. How do you prevent your results from being misinterpreted, or how do you get the attention from the media in the first place? The conference provided numerous opportunities to learn about media skills in specialized workshops. Practicing a “30-second sound bite,” in which you must explain what your research is about, makes one realize that good communication requires training! Science journalists are key players in communicating science in the media. They want to tell stories that are important to the public. A series of forums provided opportunities to discuss the success and difficulties of science communication. For example, news about nanotechnology, medical research, or interdisciplinary research all have specific problems that were addressed in these sessions.

In conclusion, the meeting created an excellent opportunity for researchers, journalists, and policy makers to exchange ideas about science communication. Importantly, awareness of the need for explaining science to the general public is a good start to enhance the impact of scientific knowledge in society.



*Rosalie Luiten, University of Amsterdam*

### **Europe's hope: The strategy of togetherness**

*by Rosalie Luiten*

Building a world with enough resources to feed the population without exhausting energy resources: Utopia? Hopefully not. Here lies an important task for Europe in the near future. In the Thursday meeting of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels, organized by President Ms Anne-Marie Sigmund, Franz Alt, and Josef Riegler (former Vice-Chancellor in Austria) presented a plan to achieve a worldwide Eco-Social market economy in the Global Marshall Plan Initiative. In passionate speeches they pled for more efforts to decrease world food shortage and increased investment in sustained energy. Most energy is still generated from petroleum, but in order to avoid global warming, by 2050 all energy should be derived from

sustained sources, with most energy coming from solar power. Mr. Alt presented examples of solar energy systems integrated in houses which generate more than is consumed by the inhabitants. Solar energy systems on churches even raise the idea to a “higher” level.

But who is going to pay for implementation of these plans? The international community aims at investing 0.7% of the Gross Domestic Product for developmental aid, but actual levels are around 0.2%. Promoting the Global Marshall Plan Initiative in civil society, to increase public awareness of the need of these measures, will put more pressure on governments to keep to their promises. In addition, global tax systems and special loan regulations, such the IMF special drawing right, contribute to the necessary budget.

The initiators of the Global Marshall Plan Initiative envisage a worldwide Eco-Social market, in which trade regulation are linked to social, ecological and procedural standards to form a balanced and convincing “Global Governance System” oriented towards sustained development. As Europeans, it is now our turn to support this plan for justice, peace, and sustained development in the whole world!

### **Erasmus Mundus Alumni (EMA) Association expert meeting**

**Brussels, Belgium, February 9, 2006**

*by Christos Christoglou*

On the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2006 in Brussels, the MCFA, represented by Natalia Balcazar and Christos Christoglou, participated in a brainstorming about what is the best way for organising the Erasmus Mundus new alumni network. The meeting, organized by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture was the preliminary kick-off meeting of the Erasmus Mundus Alumni Association.

The Erasmus Mundus programme is a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education. It aims to enhance quality in European higher education and to promote intercultural understanding through co-operation with third countries. The programme is intended to strengthen European co-operation and international links in higher education by supporting high-quality European Masters degree courses, enabling students and visiting scholars from around the world to engage in postgraduate study at European universities, and encouraging the outgoing mobility of European students and

scholars to third countries.

The aim of this project is to create a solid foundation for a long lasting and active Erasmus Mundus Alumni Association for all students graduated from the Erasmus Mundus Master courses. The purpose of the Erasmus Mundus Alumni Association is to promote cooperation among alumni from different countries, and to become a prestigious network of Erasmus Mundus graduates from Europe and third-country students.



*Christos Christoglou, MCEA secretary general; CNRS-CIRIMAT Toulouse, France*

### BOOK REVIEW

**Ethics, Computing, and Genomics. Edited by Herman T. Tavani. Sudbury (Mass.): Jones and Bartlett, 2005.**

*by Antonio Marturano*

Computational genomics is an emerging field that is encompassing computer science/information technology and bioethics/biotechnology. It is at the junction between information technology and new genomics. Herman Tavani's book contains an introduction and four sections: Moral, Legal, Policy, and (Scientific) Research Perspectives (including four papers); Personal Privacy and Informed Consent (including five papers); Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and Genetic/Genomic Information (including five papers); and Challenges for the Future of Computational Genomics (including three papers).

The first section identifies and briefly examines a cluster of ethical issues affecting computational genomics such as ownership of personal genetic data. Gert examines aspects of the HGP from the point of view of moral theory. He argues that standard ethical theories, including utilitarianism and deontological theories, are both artificial and simplistic, and thus are inadequate models for analysing ethical questions such as those raised by the HGP. R. Chadwick and A. Marturano examined some public policy implications of genomic research, which they argue has increasing relevance to policy issues. Christiani and others addressed some controversies surrounding genomic technologies which have arisen at the intersection of genomics research and environmental health.

The second section consists of two subsections; the concept of privacy in computational genomics

and the other about non-consensual secondary uses of personal information. J. Moor applies his own control/restricted access theory to controversies involving the collection and transfer of personal genetic data. He argues that computers can help protect privacy by restricting sophisticated access to genetic information. DeCew continues with an analysis of privacy-and-technology issues in the context of genetic/genomic research. D. Baumer and others point out that medical records are increasingly stored in computer databases. Authors note digital storage of medical and genetic records has diminished patient privacy and increased the potential of misuse.

The third section, devoted to the use of data-mining in genetics, consists of two chapters in which the problem of non-consensual secondary uses of medical and genetic records is linked to data mining in two different contexts: epidemiological and environmental genomic research.

Section 4 is about IPR and Genetic/ Genomic Information. A. Moore's opening chapter provides an overview of two different types of argument used by proponents of IPR: the natural rights theory viz. utilitarian/incentives-based property theory. Spinello looks at the property-rights claims involving the ownership of personal genetic information from the point of view of privacy rights. Marturano, in examining some analogies between molecular geneticists and computer hackers, claims that the "shotgun method" can be viewed as a kind of "computer hacker" technique. Moreover, he argues that Open Source Movement (OSM) provides an answer to regulating genetic information in a fairer way. Burk continues the discussion of the OSM theme, agreeing with Marturano about similarities between hacker ethics and the Open Source with genetics, but concludes that the viability of a copyleft scheme, as embodied in the GNU Public License, depends on the threat of lawsuit involving copyright infringement. Boyle continues the discussion on patent theme, and invites us to consider some general points that can be learned from the "squabbles over patents" involving genomic data.

The last section of the book is devoted to the challenges computational genomics will face. This chapter focuses on three challenges: the increased dependency on computational tools in genomic research, and the impact that this will likely have for biology and for social issues affecting the ELSI Research Program. This

challenge is addressed by Collins and others, who claims that genomics research has created new opportunities for research on social issues, helping us to understand more fully the capacity of defining humankind. Another challenge is the need to establish clear guidelines for health professionals in light of developments in bioinformatics. The last chapter of the book is about concerns raised by nanotechnology for the future of computational genomics.



*Antonio Marturano, University of Exeter (UK)*

## SCIENCE POLICY INITIATIVES

The European Commission has just launched a "Public consultation on transnational research cooperation and knowledge transfer between public research organisations and industry". Deadline for online submission of comments is 19 July 2006.

<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=KTconsultation>

The next [General Assembly of the Initiative for Science in Europe](#) (ISE) will take place in Munich during the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) 2006. The meeting is provisionally scheduled for Saturday 15 July from 11:00 to 15:00. The agenda of the meeting will include a discussion on an ISE concerted response to the proposed European Institute of Technology (EIT) and, possibly, the organization of an ISE conference on the EIT.

<http://www.initiative-science-europe.org/>

Consultation on the Draft research agenda for Theme 8 "Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities in the 7th Community RTD Framework Programme (2007-2013)". The full text under consultation is also available in the following website:

<ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/citizens/docs/draft-research-agenda-theme-8.pdf>

The [Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research \(NWO\)](#) wants an extra 433 million euros per year for top research. The organisation announces this on 22 May with the launch of its strategy for 2007-2010. The money is intended for excellent researchers, consolidating strengths and improving the benefits for society.

<http://www.alphagalileo.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=readrelease&releaseid=512343>

Intermediar has published a new version of its [Orientation Guide PhD](#), containing lots of useful information for career planning, job-hunting etc. The guide can be ordered at following link: <https://secure.abonneren.nl/intermediar/specials.jsp?id=608>

The Commission has adopted a new [Communication on universities: "Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation"](#).

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006\\_0208en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0208en01.pdf)

The European Commission has published its latest figures on the [participation of women in science](#), confirming that while numbers are increasing, a significant gender imbalance persists. To access the pdf navigate to

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/pdf/she\\_figures\\_2006\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/pdf/she_figures_2006_en.pdf)

## DIARY OF EVENTS

:: 5. Workshop of ERA-MORE Germany

Place: Bonn at the Humboldt Foundation

Date: 02/11/2006 - 03/11/2006

Organizer: Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung

:: BRAIN,MIND,MATTER

Date: 22/09/2006 - 23/09/2006

Organizer: Academia Europaea with the Central European University, Europaeum, István Bibó Center for Advanced Studies

URL: <http://www.acadeuro.org/>

:: 2<sup>nd</sup> EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF)

Place: Forum am Deutschen Museum and the Deutsches Museum; Munich, Germany

Date: 15/07/2006 - 19/07/2006

Organizer: EUROSCIENCE

URL: [www.esof2006.org](http://www.esof2006.org)

:: North American European Summer Academy

Place: Schloss Hofen, near Bregenz, Austria

Date: 10/07/2006 - 29/07/2006

Organizer: The Centre International de Formation Européene

URL: <http://www.cife.org>

:: Forschen in Europa: nationale und europäische Fördermöglichkeiten"

.....  
Place: Technical University Hamburg  
Date: 29/06/2006 - 29/06/2006  
Organizer: Kowi European liaison office of the  
German research organisations  
URL:  
<http://www.kowi.de/youngscientists/juwi/default.htm>

:: The potential of CSR to support the  
implementation of the EU Lisbon Strategy  
Place: FEEM, Milano, Italy  
Date: 22/06/2006 - 23/06/2006  
Organizer: Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei  
URL: [www.feem.it](http://www.feem.it)

:: Conference on EU Research Funding in  
Weimar - Getting Ready for FP 7  
Place: June 21-22, 2006 at the Bauhaus-  
University of Weimar  
Date: 21/06/2006 - 22/06/2006  
Organizer: KOWI and Bauhaus-University  
URL:  
<http://www.kowi.de/services/veranstaltungen/buuta/default.htm>

:: An event on European Research Council  
inside a wider programme of debates on the

incoming 7th Framework Programme for  
research  
Place: Bologna  
Date: 20/06/2006 - 20/06/2006  
Organizer: Italian Conference of Rectors (CRUI)  
<http://www.cruai.it/>  
URL: <http://www.cruai.it/link/?ID=2025>

:: A researchers' labour market: Europe a pole of  
attraction. The European Charter for  
Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the  
Recruitment of Researchers as a driving force  
for enhancing career prospects  
Place: Austrian Federation of Industry,  
Schwarzenbergplatz 4, Vienna  
Date: 01/06/2006 - 02/06/2006  
Organizer: Austrian Presidency Conference  
URL:  
<http://www.eracareersaustria.at/conference/>

:: Best Practices in Transfer of Science and  
Technology'  
Place: Turku Conservatory, in Turku  
Date: 31/05/2006 - 02/06/2006  
Organizer: The Association of European Science  
and Technology Transfer Professionals (ASTP)  
URL: [www.astp.net/turku\\_2006.htm](http://www.astp.net/turku_2006.htm)