

# Marie Curie Fellows Association

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## Letter to members

March 2007

Dear MCFA Members,

welcome to another issue of the “Letters to Members”!

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### *Editorial*

This month our Letter to members opens with great news.

The Board is pleased to announce that the new MCFA website has been launched. You can find it at: <http://mcfa.eu>.

A link redirecting you to the new website has been posted on the previous one. Not all of the pages have been updated, nor all of the utilities are yet available: we are still working on it with Josef, our Webmaster. Nevertheless, feel free to visit and use it!

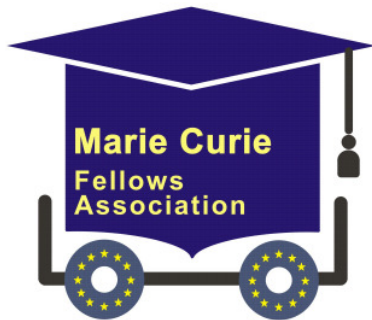
It is of great importance that you inform us in case you find a bug. You can do it in two ways: by clicking on the red “error button” or by writing to the Board. We earnestly encourage you to do this, since this is the only way we can improve the Website. Any contribution and opinion about the website is welcome!

As you might notice, the new Website still carries the “old” logo. In the last letter, we asked members to submit their suggestions for a new logo for the MCFA, to go with the new website. The previous logo has been with us for some time, and is actually “out of date”, since the full name of the MCFA was changed from “Marie Curie Fellowship Organization” to the shorter and catchier “Marie Curie Fellows Association”. The change was thought necessary to point out the MCFA is an association of “MC Fellows”, not of “MC Fellowships”. So far, four members have answered the call (coincidentally, three of the suggestions come from members who also participate in the Administrative Board of the MCFA).

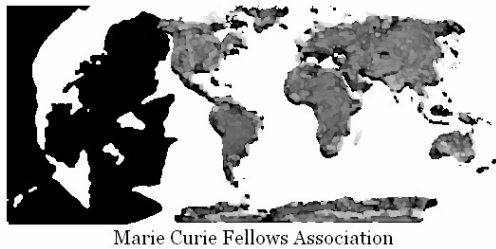
We have decided to let the competition run for another two weeks, until April 15<sup>th</sup>. So please send us your ideas!

➤ *New MCFA logo: Update*

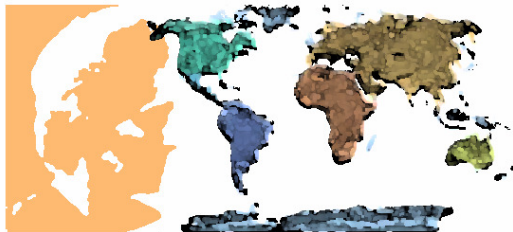
Margarita Sifnaiou was the first who dared to show her talent, she is also the wife of member Spyridon Kitsionas, Germany (astrophysicist). Her suggestion appears below:



Vanessa Diaz prepared the following logos:



Marie Curie Fellows Association



Marie Curie Fellows Association

Natalia Balcazar prepared this logo:



And Guggi Kofod prepared this logo:



After the 15<sup>th</sup> of April all the received proposals will be available at the new website and a voting round will be open to decide democratically which should be the new logo of the MCFA.

*Results of the Call for the Advisory Board:*

In the previous Letter to members a call for the Advisory Board was launched. The Advisory Board attends to provide assistance to the Administrative board of the MCFA and to take some responsibilities within the MCFA concerning specific tasks. So far, ten people answered the call:

- Eric Buchlin, Rixheim, France
- Ivana Casaburi, Barcelona, Spain
- Silvia Giordani, Trieste, Italy
- Frank Heemskerck, Overijse, Belgium
- Ansgar Huebner, Cambridge, United Kingdom
- Jaroslav Mysiak, Venezia, Italy
- Sophie Pinchinat, Canberra, Australia
- Alain Rival, Montpellier, France
- Raffaella Di Sante, Lecce, Italy
- Philippe Zinck, Lille, France

We are grateful to all of them!

If you are interested in joining, you are still welcome to submit your candidacy to [office@mariecurie.org](mailto:office@mariecurie.org), with a CV and a suggestion for your preferred area of contribution.

## *Publications and Communications:*

### ➤ *First MCFA Newsletter 2007*

The preparation of the new issue of **MCFA Newsletter, Spring 2007** will soon be over. Thanks to all the people who have participated!

If you want to publish an article in the next MCFA Newsletter (which will be released in approx. 3 months), you should send your contributions to [office@mariecurie.org](mailto:office@mariecurie.org) with the subject line '**Newsletter Summer 2007**'.

### ➤ *Nature : Collaboration*

An article about MCFA has been published in Nature: "Researchers without frontiers" is the romantic title.

It focuses on distinctive features of MCFA, emphasizing the value of being an Association of mobile researchers. The article also points out the involvement of MCFA in Science Policy, such as in the development of the "European Charter for Researchers". Take a few minutes to read it! Just follow this link:

<http://www.nature.com/naturejobs/2007/070322/pdf/nj7134-466b.pdf>

### ➤ *Invitation for internship applications*

Related to the **MCFA Newsletter**, 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) with subject line '**Internship**'.

## *Career Development:*

### ➤ *Survey on researchers' mobility is still on-line!*

Please have a look at the MCFA survey on Researcher's mobility and give us your opinion! The **survey only takes a few minutes** of your time, and data will be treated confidentially.

Please follow this link to access the survey: [http://www.mariecurie.org/phpESP-/public/survey.php?name=mobility\\_MCF](http://www.mariecurie.org/phpESP-/public/survey.php?name=mobility_MCF).

The aim of this survey is to better understand the contribution of Marie Curie Fellows to developing a skilled labour force in both sending and host countries. While it is undisputed that a research period overseas forges new skills and knowledge, the role of mobility in forming and in reallocating knowledge across countries is at times debated, particularly with regards to skilled labour movements (e.g. the 'brain drain').

For more information contact Max Tani [massimiliano.tani@unsw.adfa.edu.au](mailto:massimiliano.tani@unsw.adfa.edu.au).

We are still trying to locate the login details of the people who have requested them, please bear with us until we can process all the requests.

## *National Groups and Mailing Lists*

### ➤ *News from MCFA National Groups and Call for National Coordinators of MCFA national groups*

It is not pointless to repeat that National Groups are central to the Agenda of the new board.

An activity report for each National Group has been asked to assess the level of activity and necessities of different National Groups.

We would like to thank all the coordinators who replied by sending reports and com-

ments. This is the only way we can stay informed of the needs and problems of the National Group Coordinators.

The active National Groups are now provided with new IT resources. This is of great importance according to the board, since today the web is the main way to join people.

Moreover, we are elaborating new strategies to support the National Coordinators in managing their tasks.

We are confident we will give you some good news in the near future.

For more information please get in contact with us by email: [office@mariecurie.org](mailto:office@mariecurie.org).

A list of mailing lists for the different National Groups can be found at the **Communication** area of the web site.

#### ➤ *MCFA German National Group meeting in May*

The German Group coordinators are planning to organise a meeting for MC Fellows in Germany on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2007, before the EUR Future Conference (see more about this at "*Diary of Events*"). All German fellows can participate. A notice will soon go through the MCFA-DE mailing list.

If you can help us arranging a meeting room in Stuttgart please contact [lyudmila.zinchenko@iais.fraunhofer.de](mailto:lyudmila.zinchenko@iais.fraunhofer.de) and/or [natalia.balcazar@mariecurie.org](mailto:natalia.balcazar@mariecurie.org). Thank you in advance!

#### ➤ *New Coordinator(s) of the UK National Group*

➤ Vanessa Diaz, who has been coordinating the UK group since February last year, is looking for people who might be interested in coordinating the MCFA UK group with her. A brief

activity report of the UK group is available in the DF (National Groups --> Assessment 2007). The idea is to distribute tasks among interested people and to widen the "Coordinator's team".

#### ➤ *MCFA UK WelcomePack: call for contributions on Social Security*

The Welcome Packs are documents designed to help Marie Curie Fellows to solve practical problems when arriving in a country, e.g. with respect to administration, social security and taxation. They are available from Publications -> Welcome Packs on <http://www.mariecurie.org/>, but most of them are outdated.

As already advertised in the last Letter to Members and on the mcfa-uk mailing-list, we are in the process of updating the UK Welcome Pack.

We have set up a Wiki so as to be able to perform this task collectively: <http://eric.buchlin.org/local/mcfawiki/>. Anyone wishing to help is strongly encouraged to register at this address, log in, and then update the document by editing its different sections (some help on how to do this is available online).

We are going to focus our efforts successively on different sections of the documents. We are now calling for contributions on the sections regarding Social Security in the UK: National Insurance, health services, pension schemes and unemployment. Come and share your experience, it will become valuable information for the next Fellows!

Eric Buchlin

## News from the Board:

### ➤ EURODOC Conference and Gender issues

Gianna Avellis, member of the board of MCFA and WiS, was invited to give a talk in the Workshop on Gender issues in the framework of EURODOC conference, held in London (UK), at London University Union, 16-17 March 2007, partially supported by EURODOC.

Both academia and industry were very well represented in keynote lectures and round table sessions. Mr Cornelis-Mario Vis (European Commission, DG Research, Directorate C: ERA) introduced the conference with interesting issues on the challenges in Human Resources Management in European Higher Education and Research, and attended the Workshop held in the afternoon on the Implementation of the European Charter and Code, chaired by Francis Vella, EURODOC. I would like to point out the results of the second round table on Research, Entrepreneurship & Technology Transfer, where representatives of both academia and industry shared a common opinion that:

- science is important and leads business
- applying science in business requires multiple skills
- innovators requires adaptation
- academics should listen more and lecture less
- business should experiment more and control less

Prof. Teresa Rees, Pro Vice Chancellor for Staff and Students, Cardiff University, UK, reported in her keynote lecture very impressive list of gender and evaluation issues in Academia, pointing out the need for a change in the directives of the so-called “super-thinkers” in Academia and Industry on gender issues, such as how to decide what is “scientific excellence” as well as understanding gender contribution to

scientific excellence, change current leave policies, gender balance in committees allocating resources, stereotypes in recruitments, how science is organised, and others. Teresa also attended the Workshop on Gender issues, chaired by Gerlind Wallon, EMBO (European Molecular Biology Organisation).

Gelind, Women in Science, EMBO, and organiser of the future *Women in Science: The Way Forward* conference in Heidelberg, [www.set-routes.org](http://www.set-routes.org), presented the results of the EMBO Long Term Fellowship programme 1996-2006 applicants with the aim to establish a success rate for women and a success rate for men. She highlighted a comparable success rate within LTF analysing the bibliometric data for all 680 applicants, 1993 to 2006, publications and journal impact factors. There was a big difference in competence score (of about 16%) which is a function of the scientific productivity, and then she analysed in details the personal characteristics or factors that have helped them most during their career, that were for 80% of both male and female respondents:

- Persistence and endurance
- Self-motivation
- Curiosity
- Ambition and determination

Besides, three factors stood out when the respondents were asked to rank the importance of a variety of factors:

- Inventing or discovering something significant
- Being successful at work
- Living close to family and relatives

In the conclusions, she summarised the main results, i.e. at time of application, women and men with a given core have a comparable quality of their publications, but thereafter, female applicants generally get a weaker publication record than the male applicants. A possible explanation could be that female respondents more



often adapt their own careers to their partners. A final interesting conclusion was that male respondents with children have a stronger publication record than male respondents without children. The opposite is seen for female respondents.

Gianna Avellis, Board of MCFA and WiS, presented the gender issues related to mobility of researchers, based on the results of the case study performed in December on the mobility stories of female Marie Curie Fellows, mainly the founders of WiS Working Group. In particular, the topics addressed were the impact of gender, age and country in establishing a successful career in Industry and Academia by MC mobility programme, and conclusions mentioned the need of a mobility policy rewarding women researchers and dual career within MC fellowship scheme. She started underlying the emphasis put in the Return Fellowship of the PEOPLE programme, the new MC programme in the 7<sup>th</sup> FP to address brain drain, especially female brain drain which are in the critical age to set up their family abroad, and suggested measures such as dual career promotion not considered in previous MC fellowships and not yet in PEOPLE programme, but promoted for example by Research Council in UK.

Lack of information access is another barrier that prevents mobility, especially for women, and this will be addressed by our WiS group. How to manage the links between the host and home institution and reintegration problems have been highlighted, based on the personal experience, underlining that there many advantages to set these links for knowledge sharing, and career development in the future. The need of role models and a development of open mind attitude towards new fields of investigation with direct impact to society have been pointed out.

Finally, the topic of work/life balance was addressed, and some examples were given on how very often private and working life interfere, and this is usually something that

happens to be not on the women side. The gender issues in PEOPLE programme were also addressed underlying the increasing participation of women promoted by ensuring gender mainstreaming by benchmarking gender participation, with a target of 40% women participation.

A common policy to reward mobility, regardless gender and country is underlined as WiS objective as well as to promote all the instruments to encourage mobility of women researchers.

Finally, the last speaker in the workshop was Hilary Farnworth, who runs a Center of Micro Enterprise (CME) at London Metropolitan University, and plays a key role in the steering committee of European Union of Women Inventors and Innovators Network (EUWIIN).

She presented the achievements and scope of Women in Enterprise Project (WIE), 2004-2006, directed by CME, addressing the issue of mainstream business support services, especially for women owning micro-enterprises. This was part of a wider UK initiative to improve business support services for women. This was achieved by sharing research results and recommendations, analysing data, networking and lobbying at national and European level, and by producing summaries and dissemination papers throughout the project and producing the final report.

As results, WIE founded a large number of women over 50 who are poised to become self-employed to achieve a file change or in response to redundancy. This not only will promote an important part of the economy, but will also avoid to draw on state benefits. WIE activity led directly to a partnership between London Metropolitan University and the Global Women Inventors and Innovators Networks (GWIIN) for the development of a European network for innovative Women in Enterprise to influence national and international policy to take account of women entrepreneurs.

## The Speaker's Corner

On March the 25th, the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome occurred. On that occasion, in the German Historical Museum in Berlin the Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel as President of the European Council, President of the European Parliament Hans-Gert Pöttering and President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso signed the so-called "Berlin Declaration".

In her speech, the Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel pointed out the symbolic value of celebrating this anniversary in Berlin. "A city that until 18 years ago was divided by a Wall (...). In which people paid with their lives for seeking to escape to freedom." A symbol that "nothing ever has to stay the way it is".

But she did not forget to emphasize that it is necessary to "preserve, strengthen and deepen what has been achieved until now, so that it stands the test of the next 50 years at least".

In this context, I would like to invite you to consider the long way to acknowledge the importance of promoting knowledge as the base of a dynamic Europe. The first efforts in creating common policies in Europe about research issues date back to the seventies. It is true that a long path has been traced from the first documents signed to the FP7. But things do not evolve by themselves. Participation in the European Science Policy is a key point. As Marie Curie Fellows, I guess we have to give our small contributions to the building of a Europe in which a research career is "sustainable", in which researchers' career paths are uniform among different countries thus permitting free exchanges between European researchers, and in which men and women really have equal opportunities beyond declarations.



Maria Antonietta Buccheri

Please send your email to [office@mariecurie.org](mailto:office@mariecurie.org) (Subject line: '**Speaker's corner**') to be published (in excerpts) in this section in the Next "Letters to Members".

## Diary of Events

### ➤ Meetings with MCFA participation

- Gianna Avellis participated at EURODOC Conference held in London on 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> March, 2007 with a talk in the Workshop on Gender issues (see report on page 5 of this [Letter to Members](#))

### ➤ Upcoming meetings with MCFA Participation

- The MCFA has been invited once again to the **Intermediair** event to be held in the Netherlands on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2007. We will have a booth together with ERA-MORE NL
- **Research in Europe** - National and European Funding Possibilities for Young Researchers, National event at the University of Jena, Germany. Date: 8<sup>th</sup> Mai 2007. Organizer: KoWi.
- "**Women in Science: The Way Forward**". It will take place in Heidelberg, Germany from 9<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> May 2007. The meeting is organized by the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) as the starting point for a joint initiative with the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN).

"The Way Forward" will look to the future of women in science.

<http://www.set-routes.org/-conference/>

- **Conference EUR Future *European Researchers of Tomorrow – Crossing the Borders of Academia and Industry*** will be held in Stuttgart from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Mai 2007. The Conference will underline the need and benefits of co-operation between academia and industry. The aim of the conference is to highlight the importance of the promotion of young researchers for Europe and to effectively document and increase Europe's attractiveness for scientific talent. More information available at <http://www.eur-future.eu/>

- The **European Materials Research Society (E-MRS)** will hold its annual conference on May 28<sup>th</sup> - June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 in Strasbourg (France). The MCFA needs somebody (possibly based in Strasbourg) to assist. Antonella is representing the Association during the meeting. MCFA can provide a free entry and a free E-MRS membership for one year, in case somebody is interested.

- The German Coordinators are looking for someone to assist on behalf of the MCFA German Group in the **6<sup>th</sup> ERA-MORE** Workshop, to be held from 31<sup>st</sup> Mai to 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007 in Bonn, Germany. Please contact [lyudmila.zinchenko@iais.fraunhofer.de](mailto:lyudmila.zinchenko@iais.fraunhofer.de)

- **19. KoWi Bundestagung** - "FP7 – Synergies between Research and Industry", at the Johannes Gutenberg-University in Mainz, Germany,. Date: 20th to 21st June 2007. Organizer: KoWi in cooperation with the Johannes Gutenberg-University, Mainz

Please feel free to forward this Letter to Members to your colleagues and friends, even if they are not Marie Curie Fellows!

*The MCFA Board*