

Marie Curie Fellows Association



Letter to Members

May-June-July 2010

Dear MCFA Member,

Welcome to a new issue of the Letter to Members with news concerning our Association! Don't miss the reports about the Marie Curie Conference and the ESOF2010 which you will find in this issue among other past meeting reports and the regular readings about the association activities, upcoming events and careers, funding, and networking opportunities.

The MCFA Board

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Life of the Association

New payment option for membership fees

During the website migration (from April to June) the credit card payment form has sometimes not been available. We are sorry for the inconvenience. If you have paid by credit card on the website and still have not received a confirmation, please contact us at treasurer@mariecurie.org.



In the meantime we have introduced the possibility to pay by Paypal, as can be seen on the Members / Membership fees page (after login on <http://mcfa.eu/>). We hope that this will make payments more convenient and more secure. In the future it is possible that we remove the option to pay by credit card on <http://mcfa.eu/>, but then it will still be possible to pay by credit card on Paypal.

The treasurers

Annual General Assembly and Workshop on soft skills

We are delighted to announce that the next Annual General Assembly of the MCFA will be held in Paris on November the 20th and 21th!

A workshop dedicated to soft skills (e.g. presentation and writing skills, project management, leadership skills, etc.) will open the meeting on Saturday, while on Sunday MCFA activities are going to be discussed and new elections will take place.

After the positive experience of last year, we are planning a new workshop and we hope it will meet your interests! The programme of the workshop will be

online soon. Should you plan to come, please let us know at:

office@mariecurie.org. It will help us to plan facilities. The members who will have pre-registered will be given priority when the registrations will open.

Also, on November 19th, the European Research Career Fair will take place in Paris (see the Upcoming Events section). Over 1500 PhD students and researchers from all over Europe will be coming together with well-known figures from the world of Research and representatives of major institutions to discuss innovation strategies and new career prospects.

Don't miss the opportunity of both boosting your career and participating to the Association's life: take part to these events!

The MCFA Board

MCFA full members' benefit

Joint membership agreement between MCFA and Euroscience

We inform you that as a full member of the MCFA you can become a full member of Euroscience for a reduced fee of 20 euros whatever your age. Nevertheless, this option will be available in the Euroscience payment page only from October 2010, but you can still register in their website: <http://www.euroscience.org/membership-registration.html> and pay only from October 2010.



The MCFA Board

Registration form in the MCFA website: COFUND scheme

A modification has been made in the online registration form so that the COFUND programme scheme is now available as a choice.

If you had to register with a wrong programme name because the COFUND scheme was not available, please contact us at office@mariecurie.org so that we can make the appropriate changes in your account in the database. Thank you!

The MCFA Board

MCFA National Groups

The National Group (NG) of your country is a great way to get in touch with other Fellows. National meetings are arranged by our members in each individual country, and the MCFA will be very happy to provide financial assistance.

If you can't find out who is running the NG in your country, please get in touch

with the NGs Coordinators (Fernando: fernando.mcfa@gmail.com and Maria-Antonietta ma.buccheri@gmail.com). You can also have a look at each country blog.

If you are interested, organizing a national meeting is a very simple matter: you simply write a letter in this Letter to Members (office@mariecurie.org), and we will also distribute the information in our homepage. A national meeting can be as simple as meeting up in a café for a cup of coffee. You can also make it a larger event, and invite people to present or discuss. You can get more inspiration from the NGs Coordinators.

An NG meeting is a great chance to meet, exchange ideas and discuss problems, and for "older" members to share their experience and network.

Best regards,

*Fernando Perez-Cruz
Maria-Antonietta Buccheri
(NGs Coordinators)*

Careers, funding, and networking opportunities

The "European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for their Recruitment" – where are we now?

Most of the readers of this Letter to Members will hopefully be familiar with the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for their Recruitment. This Commission Recommendation from 2005 spells out the responsibilities and entitlements of the three main actors in the research process: the researchers, their employers and their funders. It provides a guidance framework for the career

management of researchers and for transparent and fair recruitment and selection procedures. Many stakeholders, from funding bodies and university networks to employer associations and professional bodies (including MCFA) were involved in the broad consultation process that took place when the Charter & Code were drawn up. Since 2005 more than 200 organisations from across Europe have endorsed the principles of the Charter & Code in writing, representing more than 1,000 individual institutions (the list of signatories can be

found on the EURAXESS Rights website at <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/rights>).

While these expressions of support represent a strong agreement with the principles of the Charter & Code, their effective implementation at institutional level (especially in the public sector) has not yet reached a satisfactory level. This is why in 2009 the Commission launched the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers initiative, which provides organisations with a simple framework that will help them to align their internal policies and processes with the Charter & Code, at the same time providing international visibility to their efforts. The 5-step programme is based on an honest internal analysis involving all key institutional stakeholders, followed by the development and publication of an Institutional HR Strategy for Researchers which addresses the identified shortcomings through a concrete action plan. The Commission acknowledges these steps by awarding a special logo HR Excellence in Research to the institutions concerned. Researchers who see this logo



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

on the website of a potential employer can be sure that the institution cares about its researchers and is making every effort to provide them with supportive framework conditions. So if you are a researcher, watch out for this symbol the next time you move to a new institution! The list of all organisations that have received the official acknowledgement can be accessed through the EURAXESS Rights website. As the process is quite new the list is not yet very long, but growing – the aim is to involve at least all research intensive universities, all major research organisations and all the main research funding bodies from across Europe.

First experiences with the HR Strategy process and issues related to the Charter & Code in general were discussed at a dedicated workshop at ESOF2010 (www.esof2010.org) organised by the European Commission. The three speakers (Thierry Boujard from INRA (France) which received the acknowledgement in April; Ellen Pearce from the organisation VITAE which is coordinating the process in the UK, and Izabela Stanislawiszyn, President of EURODOC) presented their views on the effectiveness of the process, and what more needs to be done to move forward at a broader European level. One of the key conclusions was that researchers themselves should be more proactive in promoting the principles of the Charter & Code, and that their associations (such as EURODOC or MCFA) have an important role to play in this. Many researchers (including Marie Curie fellows) are still unaware of the content of the Charter & Code. Information is the first step to a more effective implementation: whether you are an active researcher or an employer or funder of researchers, we invite you to visit the EURAXESS Rights website to find out more about the Charter & Code, about the HR Strategy process and about our other current initiatives in this area.

Your views and comments are very valuable to us, so please don't hesitate to contact us at RTD-CHARTER@ec.europa.eu with any questions or suggestions for future action. And of course we will also be happy to guide you through the different steps if your organisation wants to endorse the Charter & Code or take part in the HR Strategy process.

*Dagmar Meyer,
European Commission (DG RTD) and
former MCFA President (2003-05)*

Questionnaire on Dual careers

In the past two years, the MCFA focused on the dual career issue, amongst other themes. A session entitled “Dual Career: how many computations to transform it into an advantage” has been organised by Maria-Antonietta Buccheri during the ESOF2010. The lively debate that arose during the session brought out the importance of exchanging direct experiences and the need for more information about dual-career support policies.

The MCFA collected several personal stories about how MCFA members could conjugate their mobile professional life with their personal life and duties.

We would like now to learn from your experience! Could you reconcile your career’s goal with your partner’s ones? What kind of measures could have served you better?

Please, take part to our survey at the following web page:
<http://mariecurie.org/limesurvey/index.php?sid=96231&lang=en>. It will be open until the 10th September 2010 at noon CEST.

It will take you about around 20 minutes depending on your past and present mobility experiences. This questionnaire is totally anonymous; no personal data that will identify you will be recorded.

It is open not only to the MCFA members or Marie Curie fellows but to all researchers from all disciplines who ever experienced a mobility period in their career. PhD students and experienced researchers are very welcome to participate.

According to us, this survey is a unique opportunity to express freely your opinion on a subject that each mobile researcher will have to face in his life.

The results of the survey will merge into a policy paper together with the stories collected and the contributions from the ESOF2010 session. The MCFA will present this policy paper to the European Commission.

These kinds of actions are a real and efficient tool we have in order to push things forward. Please, invest few minutes on this! It will help us in improving researcher’s conditions!

Don't hesitate to motivate your colleagues to participate to this questionnaire.

The MCFA Board

FEBS long-term fellowship

FEBS (Federation of European Biochemical Societies) [Long-Term Fellowships](#) are awarded to support long-term visits for the purpose of scientific collaboration or advanced training.

These Fellowships are originally granted for one year and may be renewed for a further year up to a maximum of 3 years.



Applicants must have a PhD and should normally be scientists with no more than six years post-doctoral experience.

In order to be eligible to apply for a Long-Term Fellowship, applicants need to be members of a FEBS Constituent Society, to be working in a laboratory in a FEBS country and to be seeking to work in a laboratory in a different FEBS country.

Deadline: 01 October 2010

Website: www.febs.org

EDIT-GAP Mentoring Programme

EDIT (the European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy) is a network of 28 major taxonomic institutions, devoted to making more powerful, more reliable and more applicable taxonomy. Its Gender Action Plan works towards achieving gender balance in all activities; it will promote women in science and consider family-friendly policies.



The Gender Action Plan (GAP):

The Gender Action Plan has created instruments within EDIT to provide financial support (fellowships and work-life balance grants) to researchers in their early career so that both the excellent female and male taxonomists can boost their promising career. A new activity has been developed to supplement the help to young researchers: an advisory support through an inter-institutional mentoring scheme.

EDIT GAP Mentoring scheme:

The EDIT mentoring scheme represents the first international collaboration of the kind guaranteeing the transmission of the expertise and excellence in taxonomy from senior researchers to female researchers in early career. Mentoring within EDIT partners aims at enriching the community of taxonomists in Europe and at creating bridges among disciplines and institutions.

Objective: Open the perspectives of female scientists in early career at international level through advice and informal knowledge

Launch of the scheme: June 2010

Duration: Implementation among EDIT partners in 2010 with a possible continuation after the end of the project.

Involvement:: EDIT partners' staff with senior scientists as mentors, and, scientists, women in priority, in early career (PhD, Post-docs) as mentees.

Structure: One mentee - one mentor (or several mentees with one mentor) meeting at least once till Dec. 2010. Exchanges through email and telephone are also encouraged. Financial support is provided for the travel of the mentee to meet her (his) mentor.

Criteria for the Mentees:

Up to ten mentee candidates will be selected by GAP according to the following criteria:

- The candidate is working at an EDIT partner institution either at an advanced stage of the doctoral work or is undertaking post-doctoral research;
- The candidate is working at an EDIT partner institution as a researcher and wishes to pursue a scientific career;
- The candidate from an EDIT partner institution wishes to reflect further on her (his) position in the academic field through regular exchanges with a mentor.

Note that men complying with the 3 above criteria and looking for career guidance can also apply but that priority will be given to women according to the scope of reducing the gender gap at top positions.

Criteria for the Mentors:

Scientists (man or woman) from an EDIT partner institution with more than 10 years of experience.

You can find more information at <http://www.e-taxonomy.eu> or contact editgenderactionplan@mnhn.fr.

Question: Nobel Prize and Marie Curie Fellows

Dear present and past Marie Curie Fellows,

We recently received an enquiry from someone who wanted to write an article about the Marie Curie Fellows who had

the opportunity to work with a Nobel Prize laureate while they were financed by a Marie Curie Action. It is an interesting question and if you are or have been in this situation could you send us a message (office@mariecurie.org) with your name, project number and the name of the Nobel Prize laureate with whom you collaborated?

Thank you for your participation.

The MCFA Board

Past meetings with MCFA participation

ITWIIN CONFERENCE & AWARD 2010

24 June 2010, Bari

After the success of the last year in Milan in the context of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, ITWIIN, Associazione Italiana Donne Inventrici e Innovatrici has brought this year in Bari its annual Conference & Award.

ITWIIN 2010 has been organised by DISTI (Distretto Informazione Scientifica e Tecnologica), in collaboration with ARTI (Agenzia Regionale Tecnologia e Innovazione), Consiglieria di Parità della Regione Puglia, the Comitati Femminili Plurali di Confindustria Bari – Bat e Puglia, CNR, CIHEAM-IAMB, TELPRESS, ITALGEST, FCRP (Fondazione Cassa Risparmio Puglia). The initiative gained the patronage of EU, Economic Development Work and Social Politics Ministries, the local administrations and the University of Bari (the full list is under the website www.itwiin.it).

The event took place on the 24th of June, in the Congress Hall of Confindustria,

with the aim to involve both the scientific and entrepreneur worlds: here, with the participation of a competent women and male public, authorities, members of institutions, culture, scientific and entrepreneurs worlds and representatives by media, took place the round table “The information in the research-enterprise match”. The main discussion was on the strategic value of a right information and efficient communication in exploiting the research results and in the transfer ring them to the industry and society.

To underline this facet, then, ITWIIN choose to meet in Confindustria site, and asked the entrepreneurs to evaluate the projects that have been selected by a technical committee, consisting of experts of intellectual property, technological transfer, and innovation. A committee of entrepreneurs coming from all Italy representing different productive sectors (ICT, robotics, mecatronics, ...) expressed for the first time its own judgement in assigning the Price “Best Inventor” and “Best Innovator”, after having listen the ideas of the women innovators and inventors and evaluated their abilities to

present effectually the potential economic impacts of their own project.

The meeting was introduced by Elisabetta Durante, who organised the event in collaboration with DISTI (Distretto dell'Informazione Scientifica e Tecnologica per l'Innovazione), and Confindustria.

She managed a round table, while in a separate room the entrepreneurs were auditing the women finalists. The speakers were Francesco Estrafallaces, responsible of the economic area of Censis, Manuela Arata, responsible of the technological transfer office of the Italian CNR, Tina Luciano, young President of the section Mechanics of Confindustria Bari and President of the District of Mechanics, Olga Capasso, consultant of DeSimone&Partners and expert ITWIIN for the IPR, Eleonora Ciciriello, consultant of enterprises for SMEs, Martina De Sole of APRE agency, Elisabetta Olivi, EU Commission representative in Rome, Annamaria Annicchiarico, current director of the technological and scientific park TECNOPOLIS and expert in technological transfer, Giuliana Trisorio Liuzzi, ARTI President, Paolo G. Di Caro, Director ANG of the Ministry of Youngth.

Conclusions were given by the district councillor Elena Gentile and by Culture Commission of Confindustria Bari and BAT, Alessandro Laterza, who have provided a framework of the women work which is very critical in current crisis situation., From it is highlighted some data, particularly problematic and discouraging, of a unemployment which in Apulia region is tackling, more than other places, the young women and men graduated: such a data is contrary to the development perspectives of a country

called to face the competition challenges and to enter the "Knowledge Society".

Elisabetta Durante closed the sessions underlining how a unique word is sufficient to express the aim of ITWIIN action, the merit: "By women aiming to take and relaunch the merit challenge, comes the only road to reach the two aims of equality and development of the country. This is the real cultural revolution which we have to undertake and manage".

THE COMPETITION AND THE AWARDING OF PRIZES

In the 2010 edition, the Competition ITWIIN offered as a prize 5000 euro and consultancy service to the women Best Innovator and Best Inventor. The participation to the competition took place this year through the presentation of an application as requested from the announcement of the competition, open from 16th of March to 26th of May. The main requirements for the candidature to the Prize Best Inventor was ownership of a patent as inventor or co-inventor, while the Prize for the Best Innovator was reserve to the researchers, entrepreneurs or members of enterprise and promoters of spin-off. The candidature (more than 50) came from all parts of Italy, from universities to qualified research centres and innovative enterprises. A first "technical" panel selected the six finalists, and a second panel, consisting of entrepreneurs, listed and evaluated in Bari the following titles:

Best Italian women Inventor 2010 to ANGELA SERPE researcher of Cagliari University and Vice-President of the spin-off "3R Metals", for a project on the green recycle of raw materials from garbage (in particular, recover precious materials such as the Palladium from high-tech garbage such as computers, cell phones, etc.).

Best Italian women Innovator 2010 to CARLA FERRERI, First Researcher of CNR Bologna and founder of the spin off “Lipinutragen”, Who presented the project “Lipidic Profile of cellular films: a molecular approach applied to human health”.

Other candidates as finalists were Alessandra Fierabacci (Hospital Bambin Gesù of Roma, Immunology Department) and Emanuela Simonetti (founder of Bioaesis of Jesi involved in the genetic traceability of wines).

There were assigned also the following prizes:

The PRIZE ITWIIN Puglia to the microbiologist PAOLA LAVERMICOCCA, who develop innovative systems in ISPA-CNR di Bari (stock with antimicrobic abilities) for the preservation of vegetables and foods.

THE PREMIO AWARD – BEST WOMEN ITALIAN RESEARCHER IN THE UNITED STATES (funded by the italian-american business association “Bridges to Italy”, Los Angeles) was given to STEFANIA MONDELLO for a project focalised on the analysis and study of biomarkers correlation with clinical data, with the aim to provide the first emetic test for diagnosis, monitoring and evaluation of the prognosis of the brain damage.

The PRIZE DISTI-TELPRESS for the communication to DEBORA FINO, researcher of Turin Polytechnic, active in the treatment of polluting substances (Diesel emission, catalytic combustion of the methane, catalytic filters, nono particles pulling down, etc.).

The Award AIWECA (Award for an Innovative professional Women in the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in Agriculture) to SANAA ZEBACK, who after a learning and research experience in

IAMB of Valenzano, currently works on International cooperation projects in the field of innovative agriculture.

Special mentions were given: for the Culture and Safeguard of the Environment to Franca Severini (innovative’ editor of the “ZonaFranca di Sevim”, Lucca), and for the Future of teh Economy to Giuseppina Grimaldi (innovative’ goldsmith, holder of the “Naoto” of Vicenza).

The different prizes were contained in elegant containers created by the firm “Made in carcere” of Luciana Delle Donne (ITWIIN member) and given to the winners by the equality councillor Serenella Molendini, by Elena Gentile, ITWIIN President Rita Assogna, EUWIIN President Bola Olabisi (come from London for this purpose), by President of Women Committee of Confindustria Bari Teresa Caradonna and Apuglia Stefania Mandurino, by the Director of the IAMB Cosimo Lacirignola, by AD of Telpress Pasquale D’Innella Capano.

Gianna Avellis

Women in Science: Initiatives promoting gender equality in research

European Platform of Women Scientists 2010 Annual Conference

10-11 June 2010, Brussels

“Equal pay for equal work” (Treaty of Rome, 1957) should imply “equal career opportunities for equal qualifications”, but, presently, our old-fashioned society is organized in such a way that the barriers are still too high to make these statements a reality, especially in Science but not only.

The MCFA, represented by Esperança Manuel, has been invited to attend the

European Platform of Women Scientists (EPWS <http://www.epws.org/>) Annual Conference “Women in Present and Future European Research”, in Brussels, Belgium, from 10-11 June 2010, in the Royal Belgian Museum of Natural Sciences.



The aim of the Conference was to report on recent and current projects from across Europe to raise awareness and improve the gender balance in Science. A number of important European projects supported by the DG Research under the 7th. Framework Programme, tackling the issue of gender balance in science were presented as well as projects encouraging girls into science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The Conference was attended by about 60 representatives of European organizations of women scientists from 13 countries from all over Europe.

In order to highlight the actions presented by each participant, you can find more detailed information and useful links in the following web page dedicated to this conference and their participants <http://mcfa.eu/site/public/womenInScience.php>.

I would like also to draw your attention to the last “She Figures” data collection ([She Figures 2009](#)). This data collection is undertaken each three years as a joint venture of the Scientific Culture and Gender Issues Unit of the Directorate-General for Research of the European Commission and the group of Statistical Correspondents of the Helsinki group.

In this third publication, you learn that as of 2006 only 30% of researchers were women in the EU-27, but there are positive signals indicating that women seem to be catching up with men over the time as their share of the total research

population has been growing at a faster rate over the recent years. But these numbers are not enough to indicate that the gender imbalance in Science is self-correcting. Moreover, these results refer to the EU-27 average and as such mask important cross-country disparities. For example, in engineering and technology, the low proportion of female researchers observed in Malta (4.5%), Austria (7.3%), Denmark (7.4%) and Cyprus (7.6%) contrasts sharply with the much higher shares in Romania (35%), Luxembourg (28%) and Bulgaria (24%). This brings to the conclusion that the countries can agree on a common goal (gender balance in all fields of Science) but they cannot set a common strategy to reach it, only measures specific to the country could help achieving the goal. The way is long and complicate to change mentalities and Human Resources employment culture and practices, but the policy initiatives are here and give encouraging signals.

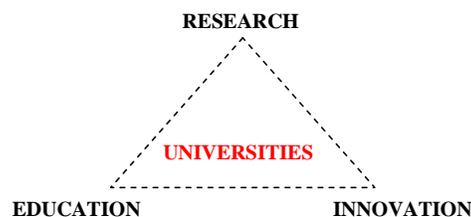
Esperança Manuel

Universities 2020

17-18 June, 2010, Salamanca

Universities: the lever towards a knowledge-based Society and a sustainable economic growth in Europe

The Universities have an essential role in the knowledge triangle: education, research, and innovation.



They should be perceived as a key for sustainable socio-economic developments

in Europe ([“Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Universities for Europe”](#)).

The MCFA, represented by Esperanca Manuel, has been invited to participate to the conference “Universities 2020” organised by the Spanish Presidency in Salamanca, on June 17-18, 2010. This conference had three defined objectives:

- Explore the interfaces between the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA). Towards new European Knowledge Area (EKA) instruments.
- Debate on the development of European Research Schools.
- Discuss the potential Modernization Agenda for Universities:
 - Connections between higher education and innovation
 - University contribution to socio-economic development in the knowledge society.

Around 130 experts come from Europe, Africa, North America, Latin America and Asia, were able to meet in Salamanca, with occasion of the above referred Conference of the Spanish Presidency. Based on their own debates and considering the state of the art and recent trends in the evolution of universities, the experts agreed on the following conclusions:

- The experts welcome the focus of the new Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs on knowledge and innovation with priority objectives and shared targets on research and development, innovation intensity and on the improvement of the education levels, increasing the percentage of population completing higher education.

- The impact of the economic crisis in the EU and the failure in the delivery of the Lisbon Agenda shows that the EU still needs to pursue reforms in their knowledge-related sector in the process towards the knowledge-based society.
- Europe has still a sub-optimal university system with too much fragmentation and homogeneity and too little specialization. There is an urgent need for drastic reforms. Though reforms on curricula (Bologna process), governance and funding are underway in many countries, they are still too little ambitious.
- Universities are key to reach the objectives of the new strategy to recover from the economy crisis with a new model of knowledge-based socioeconomic growth, but in order to do so they still have to deliver their modernization agenda in many areas: excellence in teaching and research, partnership with businesses, increased transparency and openness, specialisation, contribution to a sustainable socioeconomic development of the environment, social responsibility returning knowledge to society.
- To build a knowledge-based society the engagement of society is crucial. Universities must become more closely involved in community life and vice-versa. Knowledge sharing with society, interaction with civil society organisations and improved communication between universities and society is urgently needed. The creation and development of platforms involving universities, newspapers and businesses can play a key role in activate society support for education, research and innovation.

- Being at the interface between the recently officially launched European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the, still in progress, European Research Area (ERA), universities are also crucial to reach the aspiration of a European Knowledge Area, where free circulation of knowledge takes place.
- The reform of doctoral programmes, where the links between the EHEA and the ERA are more evident, is a must. We need to develop more attractive research careers paths and improve the working conditions of doctoral candidates, improving research training broader in disciplines and research skills.
- The experts acknowledge the generalization of Doctoral Schools providing institutional framework and responsibility, openness to diverse supervision schemes and access to common services, such as training and career support, to doctoral candidates.
- The EU has a tremendous but still untapped potential in the number of doctoral graduates it produces (15% more doctorate degrees per capita than US and 23% more per capita than Japan). The creativity skills acquired during research training should contribute more to the development of the knowledge society by developing new ways and imaginative solutions to solve businesses and social problems.
- With over 50% of doctorate holders moving into work positions outside from the academia, employability and input from the labour market, should be addressed in the reform of doctoral education. Collaborative doctoral programmes with businesses should be encouraged. The interaction university-businesses in the supervision, training on transferable skills and IPR issues should be addressed and facilitated.
- There is a need of increasing public support for doctoral education as one of the most advanced and specialised form of education and training in our societies. Greater awareness of the value of the skills acquired through doctorate should be needed in all economy sectors, and specially in SMEs.
- At EU level joint doctoral degrees promoting transnational inter-university networking and collaboration with other research institutions and businesses in frontier, interdisciplinary research domains should be promoted.
- The development of European Research Schools, combining transnational Doctoral Schools with joint research programs concentrating enough human and financial resources is a possibility that should deserve consideration at EU level.
- The experts welcome the announcement of a new Commission Communication on universities by 2011. The Commission should have a visible and supportive role in certain aspects such as: the development of a European multi-dimensional methodology to assess standards, support grouping of universities in view of excellence, mapping of different universities profiles, promoting public – private partnerships.
- Mutual learning and exchange of knowledge and best practices among universities, other research agents and businesses should be encouraged. Peer Learning Activities carried out in the

- frame of ERAC can elucidate the reform initiatives and trends in the EU university-based research sector.
- They can give inputs for evidence-based policy making on issues such as: Institutional reform - merging, world-class excellence, capacity building, early career researchers and funding models. The continuation of this work by ERAC working groups is welcome by the experts.
 - The development of international campuses of excellence where the interaction of universities with other research centres, businesses, science parks and other knowledge-related agents may lead to territorial education, research and innovation communities oriented towards international excellence in specific domains.
 - Universities can contribute to create territorial environments of university life socially and economically integrated within the urban or regional territories, paying special attention to achieve a high quality of services and environmental sustainability, i.e. healthy and sustainable university campuses contributing to increase the attractiveness of the territory for international students, academics and researchers as well as for knowledge-related investments.
 - There is a need to foster the contributions of universities to the regional socioeconomic development. The specific needs of border regions should be particularly addressed. They could be a laboratory for the European integration process and cross-border cooperation in which asymmetries, legal and administrative differences and physical and psychological barriers can be removed

in favour of the whole cross-border territory development

- The new EU 2020 strategy should support universities to develop their untapped potential to effectively contribute to the achievement of a knowledge-based society and economy, where knowledge flows freely as well as would help to improve the coordination and synergies between the institutional and national strategies on universities, aligning the national efforts towards a common and shared objective.

The experts attending the Spanish Presidency Conference on Universities 2020, asked the Spanish Presidency to elevate these agreed conclusions to the political level, as an input for next discussions at the Education Council of the European Union.

Esperanca Manuel

Marie Curie Conference

1-2 July 2010, Turin

The Marie Curie Conference was a 2-day satellite event organized by the European Commission before the Euroscience Open Forum in Turin, Italy, in the beginning of July. The meeting was aimed at current beneficiaries of Marie Curie grants, both individual fellowships and networks of early-stage researchers, with some 400 young mobile researchers from all over Europe present this year. Unfortunately, the available places filled very quickly, and many Marie Curie fellows could not attend. This showed, once again, that the training and networking opportunities provided at these meetings are in great demand among young researchers, because they can directly benefit researcher's future careers. Up until now the conference was

organized once every two years, and the preceding event in Barcelona in 2008 was also fully booked (300 participants). The need for an annual MC event is therefore emerging. Hopefully the EC will start organising these meetings every year, so that more fellows can attend.

The programme of the conference was very diverse and fascinating; the programme and the speakers' profiles are available at <http://www.esof2010.org/mariecurie>. Plenary lectures covered topics that are often not included in the standard MSc/PhD curriculum: patenting, entrepreneurship, science communication etc. They were followed by workshops on how creative academics can exploit their research potential in the private sector, how researchers can become entrepreneurs and how they can better communicate their research. There was also a session on how to access EC funding and how to write successful grant proposals.

A number of current members of the MCFA participated in the conference. The Association was also represented by Vanessa Diaz-Zuccarini, former Vice-Chair of the MCFA, who was a speaker and moderator in two different sessions. The European Commission kindly provided a stand for the MCFA in the poster area where Yegor Domanov, Vice-Secretary General of the MCFA, presented a poster describing the Association's activities, met fellows and answered their questions and distributed the MCFA leaflets and other PR material.

The representatives of the Association had fruitful discussions with Mr Georges Bingen, head of policy unit for Marie Curie Actions, as well as other officers of the EC and Research Executive Agency. Both the MCFA and the Commission are interested in strengthening their collaboration for the benefit of young

mobile researchers in Europe. The Association is the best way for the Commission to unite the past beneficiaries of the Marie Curie grants and to be able to contact them after many years to follow their career progress. Further steps of collaboration and development of the MCFA's activities will be discussed at a meeting with the EC officials planned for the end of September in Brussels.

Yegor Domanov

ESOF 2010

2-7 July, Torino

Dual Career: how many computations to transform it into an advantage?

The workshop on dual career related issues that the MCFA organised at ESOF2010 has been a real success. About 50 people (male:female ratio = 1:2) carefully listen to the introductory presentation given on the topic by Maria-Antonietta Buccheri, who explained how this problem is currently addressed in the USA and Europe. She also outlined several typical ways couples deal with dual careers and reported some case stories. "Sometime, it is difficult to find information on existing programs in EU (universities, research centres, private foundations) interested in sustaining dual careers" Maria Antonietta said. A few existing successful examples in Switzerland (The Swiss Federal Equal Opportunity at Universities Programme) and in the UK (The Royal Society Relocation Fellowship) were provided. Maria-Antonietta also reported the approach followed by the private sector, often offering the help of a broker specialised in finding available job positions for the trailing partner.

Many comments from the public confirmed Maria-Antonietta's findings. The need of more information on partner's chances, of a dedicate web site or, even better, a link on the current EU platform could increase the interest in researcher's application for mobility. The Marie Curie program already offers support to dual-career couples, but the public suggested that it could even consider offering the help of a broker to successful holders of MC fellowships.

Maria-Antonietta's presentation was followed by the report of two former Marie Curie Fellows' direct experience. A researcher's mobility may turn out in a positive result for the trailing spouse: Gianna Avellis showed in details how her partner has been able to benefit from her mobility. Following her in a foreign country for part of her MC grant, he dedicated to deepen his knowledge by enlarging his own research interests and starting new projects. The new approach has been very welcomed once back to his home country, increasing his visibility and success.

Manuela Giovanetti showed instead a different situation: the work of her husband does not allow him to long absences, so they coped with distance, two houses, many trips. She underlined how important is the understanding among partners and how money gave them the chance of carry on with Manuela's mobility. "If you want to be a dual-career couple, you need a lot of money ... and a lot of enthusiasm both in the work you are doing and the relationship that you are keeping", Manuela said.

Again the public found very interesting these presentations. Exchanging direct experiences is probably the best way to consider how to deal with personal situation. The workshop organizers have

been asked to give free access to individual reports, information that may be coupled with the ones related to partner's chances during one's mobility. The video of this lively session is still on line on the ESOF2010 website, so you could have a look at it!

The audience added new hints to the discussion. One of them is the importance of planning at the personal/family level: what will a young researcher do in the next 5 years? Maybe he/she will have a partner, a family, children: in such cases, mobility is currently perceived as an obstacle. It can result in a wrong choice for children needs and being mobile can only be limited in time if first priority is living together with one's own partner. Mobility is also considered mainly in two different perspectives: looking for a better place to live or increasing experience to be brought back. These two ways should be addressed differently.

Mobility is a key opportunity in researchers' careers but difficult to couple with personal lives. All the former MC fellows in the audience underlined the importance of training your partner and your family, explaining to them the role mobility may play in your career, the way you feel and what you want to do. In order to find the compromise that better suite your situation.

*Manuela Giovanetti
Maria-Antonietta Buccheri*

ESOF 2010

2-7 July, Torino

Project Management for young researchers

As the MCFA has noticed that there would be a great demand for additional training among young scientists the



association has taken ESFOF210 in Turin as occasion to organize for the first time a short workshop on project management skills for this target group.

The room Copenhagen was really crowded (a room for 50, but more than 80 people attended, many sitting on the floor) when the workshop on project management organised by the MCFA started. Well, proper project management increases the chances of success for a research project!

Dr. Natalia Balcázar and Dr. Frank Heemskerk introduced the audience into the world of project management: they explained some basic definitions and key words and told about their first experiences in managing research projects. Then, the speakers illustrated different kind of approaches. First, they described a traditional approach which is characterized by five steps: project initiation stage, project planning stage, project execution, a monitoring phase and finally the project completion. They went into details for each phase, giving useful hints and tips to the public.

They carried on depicting network models to manage a project: so the scene was all for the “Gantt chart” and “PERT models”. But speakers warned researchers: “do not make it too complicated”, said Dr. Balcázar.

Dr. Heemskerk emphasized that communication is a key point for the successful completion of a research project. A good project manager has to

describe in a very clear and comprehensible way to the participants the vision behind the project as well as goals, working packages and deadlines. Also, different working cultures have to be taken into account when it comes to an effective communication, underlined Dr. Natalia Balcázar.

Finally some tips for good proposal writing and an example of a successful EU project was shown to illustrate how application of these aspects of good project management can help young scientists to attract more funds for their science.

Dr. Balcázar and Dr. Heemskerk alternated in a nice rhythm and conveyed key messages by comics also! The public enjoyed the presentation and the following debate was very lively. How to deal with unforeseen activities and risks was one of the first questions. Some participants were wondering how a PhD student could bring a significant contribution to project management. Speakers, together with Dr. Buccheri who organised the session, were happy of sharing their direct experience with the audience and discussed the issues raised.

Did you miss this session and are you curious about it? Do not worry: you can find the videos on the ESOF2010 website (Project Management session: <http://nubes.esof2010.org/stored?vid=111> and the Dual career session: <http://nubes.esof2010.org/stored?vid=108> or, you can read the presentation made by Dr. Natalia Balcázar and Dr. Frank Heemskerk on the MCFA website!

*Natalia Balcázar
Frank Heemskerk*

The Speaker's Corner



We would like you to share with us your experience as a Fellow, good or bad: has your funding been taken away by someone else in the lab? Were the conditions of the contracts different than promised? Did you feel a lack of support from your lab or the EC

management? Or on the contrary everything went fine and the MC fellowship helped you start a successful career. More generally, we also welcome articles about your views on European Science policy. Please send an email to office@mariecurie.org (Subject line: "Speaker's corner") to be published in this section in the next Letter to Members.

Upcoming events

ICT 2010

27-29 September 2010, Brussels Expo



This biennial event has become a unique gathering point for researchers, business people, investors, and high level policy makers in the field of digital innovation. This year ICT 2010 will focus on policy priorities such as Europe's Digital Agenda and the next financial programme of the European Union for funding research and innovation in ICT.

At ICT 2010:

- Discover latest research trends in information and communication technologies
- Identify European priorities for 2.8 billion Euros research funding in ICT (2011-2012)
- Meet potential research and business partners at dozens of networking sessions

- Venture through our 5000 m² exhibition of Europe's latest cutting edge ICT research

Find out more at the ICT 2010 website: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/events/ict/2010/index_en.htm

EurOCEAN 2010

12-13 October 2010, Ostend, Belgium

The EurOCEAN 2010 Conference (Ostend, 12-13 October 2010) will provide a unique forum for the European marine science community to consider, discuss and respond to new policy developments and achievements since the last EurOCEAN conference (2007, Aberdeen), and to highlight new challenges and opportunities for marine research in the next decade. The EurOCEAN 2010 Conference and Ostend Declaration (October 2010) will come at a crucial time for the European marine science community to influence how marine science is supported in Europe in the coming decade. It will provide a timely opportunity to



reinforce the importance of marine science in effective maritime policy making and the key role it will play in the path towards economic growth and recovery in Europe.

EurOCEAN 2010 Conference is a Belgian EU Presidency event, organised in close collaboration with the European Commission and the Marine Board-ESF.

Registration deadline: 01 September 2010

Read more at <http://eurocean2010.eu/>

Research Career Fair

19 November 2010, Paris, France



APEC (French association for the employment of executives and managers) is pleased to announce the new session of: RESEARCH, the European Research Career Fair in Paris, Centquatre, 19 November 2010.

For European companies and SMEs, research centers, cluster, universities, State-owned institutions... RESEARCH is an opportunity to:

- Diversify your competences and recruit new talents to build your future R&D teams.
- Increase your visibility and attractiveness in Europe, promote your action plans
- Find new contacts to develop strong European partnerships for your research projects

Researchers, PhD students attend RESEARCH and:

- Meet major European Research organisations which are recruiting

- Benefit from personalised professional advice for your career and European mobility

- Exchange ideas with other researchers and take contacts.

Well-known economic and institutional key players will testify about their career in research and discuss about researchers' career challenges in Europe.

The MCFA will be present at the Research Career Fair with its own stand.

For further information please visit <http://www.researchcareerfair.com/>.

3rd International Conference on Drug Discovery and Therapy

7-10 February 2011, Dubai, UAE

This unique international conference provides a platform for all pharmaceutical scientists, internists and primary care physicians to discuss and learn about all the important international breakthrough developments on drug discovery and on new therapeutics.

A conference organized by Eureka Science with support of the Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE, it focuses on the interdisciplinary fields of drug discovery, drug therapy and translational medicine.

After the overwhelming success of the previous conferences held in Dubai in February 2008 and 2010 (where many Nobel laureates attended), the third conference will promise to be a much larger event with over 500 talks delivered and 35 thematic sessions with poster presentations and an associated commercial exhibition.



Throughout the course of the four day conference, you will have the opportunity to both network and hear leaders from the international pharmaceutical, academic and clinical communities.

Online registration is available at: <http://www.icddt.com/>

Deadline for early-bird registration: 02 November 2010

BioVision.Nxt 2011

26-29 March 2011, Lyon, France

BioVision, the World Life Sciences Forum, is inviting a 100 promising PhD students and Post-docs to attend the 3 days Forum thanks to a Fellowship programme called BioVision.Nxt.



The next edition of BioVision will be held on March 27-29th,

2011 in Lyon, France and aims to

- explain Life Sciences discoveries and discuss their societal and ethical implications with all stakeholders: scientists, industry leaders, national and international policy-makers and civil society.
- engage key international leaders from different backgrounds in debates on global issues involving science and society.
- build tomorrow's Life Sciences community with next generation scientists thanks to the BioVision.Nxt fellowship programme.
- foster discussion between the four communities involved by offering networking opportunities during the Forum and beyond, through the Internet.

Preliminary Themes of BioVision programme:

Health: Systems biology, Cancer, Infectious diseases,

AG/Food: Functional food, Probiotics, Nutraceuticals

Environment: Algae, Biofuels, CO2, Bio-based industry

Business in science: emerging markets, new business models, open innovation, bioethics

Who can apply?

Applicants must meet the following criteria and provide relevant documentation:

- He/she is under 35 years of age at the time of application
- He/she is a PhD student, a doctoral candidate or a Post-doc in the following fields related to Life Sciences: Biology, Healthcare, Agriculture, Food and Nutrition, Environment.
- He/she has demonstrated a commitment to serve society at large through contributions and extra-curricular activities, and has a global perspective.

Candidates with the following skills will be encouraged:

- Strong interest in dialogue between Science/Society
- Communication skills, capacity to network and disseminate information, fluent English.

To apply, fill in and submit the application form, which is available online at: www.biovision.org, BioVision.Nxt section

When you will apply for this fellowship could you please state that you obtained the information from the MCFA or that you are a member of the MCFA? Thank you!

Deadline for application: 30 September 2010

GIEE 2011

Gender and Interdisciplinary Education for Engineers

23-24 June 2011, Paris, France

Does Interdisciplinary Education improve the gender balance and attract more young people in Engineering and Technology higher education?

Attracting more young people, particularly women, in Engineering and Technology (ET) is a major concern in Europe today. Their participation in engineering occupations appears to be a key-issue for European economic and technical development, as well as a central achievement towards gender equality and social justice. Increasing young people interest in the sciences and mathematics and underlining the importance of Engineering and Technology developments in shaping our collective future is an ongoing project in the education sector. In higher education in Europe, women are overrepresented in the humanities, education, arts, health, welfare, agriculture or veterinary studies, while men opt for science, mathematics and computing. If we look more closely at engineering, manufacturing and construction, 18.5% of males graduate in this area, compared to 6.9% of women.

Two factors may explain these differences of choices:

- 1) It seems that the attractiveness of ET sectors differs from males to females because of its gendered representation, which is a masculine one.
- 2) The lack of interdisciplinary content in ET curricula may act as a foil to potential SET students, both men and women. Several previous studies suggest, first, that young people and particularly women, want more interdisciplinarity (such as subjects from the humanities and

social sciences) in their engineering degree courses; and second, that many non-engineering students may have considered studying engineering if there had been more subjects from the humanities and social sciences included. A more interdisciplinary approach of ET would stress the social utility of ET and the societal challenges attached to the profession, which is something important in students' choice.

The GIEE 2011 conference is being organised by the HELENA



research project consortium (Higher Education leading to Engineering and Scientific Careers), funded by the EU commission in the frame of the 7th FP. This project collected and analyzed literature and data from higher education engineering programmes across the range of levels of interdisciplinary content in order to answer the question of whether interdisciplinary education has an impact on the gender balance of students in the discipline. Results will be presented during the conference, with the opportunity for open debate with other participants on the research findings.

Abstract submission:

We invite scholars and specialists of engineering training to contribute to this conference by sending abstracts of no more than 500 words (including methodology and relevant references) online at the following website before 15th October 2010:

www.fp7-helena.org/conference2011

The Conference will be organized using the following broad structure (detailed content of each theme on www.fp7-helena.org/conference2011):

- Theme 1: Teaching and learning Contents and Cultures.

- Theme 2: Students' experiences.
- Theme 3: Other ways to attract more women.
- Theme 4: Policies.

Possibility of submission of posters:

The researchers who wish to present a poster are invited to submit a short description of the poster (one page) using the same form provided on line for the submission of papers, preceding the title by the word "POSTER". The deadlines

are the same as for oral presentations (15 October 2010).

Submission of posters on line: www.fp7-helena.org/conference2011

Proceedings will be published; authors of accepted papers will be invited to send a full paper. Conference languages are English and French.

Venue: Les Cordeliers, Conference Centre of the Paris University, Paris (France)

News in Brief

Social security and pensions of researchers: A pan-European Pension Fund for Researchers

Researchers increasingly rely on supplementary pension schemes to provide for their retirement but are often confronted with unfavourable conditions for acquisition, preservation and transfer of these rights when they undertake mobility. However, according to the results of a feasibility study, it is now possible to set up a pan-European pension fund for researchers that could provide a possible practical solution to overcome one of the barriers to the mobility of researchers.

Executive Summary:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/pension-exec-summ_en.pdf

Full report:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/docs/en/pension-full-report-en.pdf>

Top European research organisations and the EU Commission foster their collaboration

The European Commission and seven of the foremost European scientific research organisations, which constitute EIROforum, signed a renewed and strengthened "Statement of Intent" to reinforce their cooperation and to join efforts in developing the European Research Area (ERA).

In particular, EIROforum and the Commission decided, in a common resolve, to consult each other on topics of mutual interest such as, research programming, training and mobility of researchers, research infrastructures, intellectual property and knowledge sharing, and international cooperation in research, and to build on this collaboration by concluding further bilateral agreements if useful. They also intend to continue to strengthen their collaboration in e-science, science education and communication.

[The 1000th top researcher funded by the ERC](#)

Just over three years after its launch, the European Research Council (ERC) has reached a new milestone. The 1000th top researcher is about to be funded by the ERC to perform innovative blue sky research in Europe. To mark this event a ceremony was organised to celebrate the signing of the 1000th ERC grant, awarded to immunologist and paediatrician Prof. Dr. Erika von Mutius of the Dr. von Hauner Children's Hospital at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.

In the presence of the 1000th ERC grantee as well as distinguished representatives from the scientific community and political research scene, the ceremony took place on Thursday 24 June 2010 at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in München, Germany.

[The EU associates the Faroe Islands to FP7](#)

The European Union signed a Science & Technology Cooperation Agreement with the Faroe Islands. This agreement will associate the Faroe Islands to the Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7, 2007-2013) and will further promote their involvement with the European Research Area. It brings the total number of countries associated to FP7 to 13.

[Scientix: The new web-based community for Science Education](#)

The European Commission has launched Scientix, a new web-portal targeted towards teachers, researchers, policy makers, local actors, parents and anyone interested in science education. Scientix

will give access to teaching materials, research results and policy documents from European science education projects financed by the European Union and by various national initiatives. The new platform will facilitate regular dissemination and sharing of news, know-how, and best practices in science education across the European Union.

[Online survey launched about the Seventh Framework Programme](#)

This open consultation is part of the Interim Evaluation of FP7 which is a major exercise to examine progress and provide recommendations to help both the implementation of FP7 as well as contributing ideas for the possible next Framework Programme.

Please give us your opinion by taking part in this consultation:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/consultations/fp7/consultation_en.htm

FROM SCIENCE CAREERS

[Taken for Granted: Intimate Collaborators](#)

Scientists' strong propensity to pair up romantically, research shows, can either help or hurt their careers.

[Tooling Up: The Medical Writing and Corporate Intelligence Career Tracks](#)

Medical writing is a good starting place in industry, because, besides the fact that it's a solid, integral career track by itself, it can



also be a gateway into other positions within pharma and biotech.

[Ten Years of Bologna: Threats and Opportunities for Students](#)

If implemented well, Europe's Bologna-process reforms may offer students opportunities to shape higher education around their needs.

[Taken for Granted: Making a Federal Case of Young Scientists' Concerns](#)

Two issues important to postdocs and other science trainees have been elevated recently to the federal level.

[Time to Hire a Housekeeper?](#)

Scientists – especially women – may need to set traditional gender roles aside and pay someone to help them with the housework.

[Tooling Up: Be the Candidate](#)

Your chances of finding a job are immeasurably better if you are considered a candidate and not a mere applicant.

An applicant is a person who has applied for a position. A candidate, on the other hand, is a person who is deemed by people who matter to fit the job, someone who has risen above the applicant hoards.

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

We also remind you that you are encouraged to use the MCFA flyers, available from the Internal Documents: <http://mcfa.eu/site/memberArea/internalDocuments.php>.

This Letter is edited by the Association des Boursiers Marie Curie a.i.s.b.l. (Marie Curie Fellows Association), <http://mcfa.eu/>. Editors: Anett Kiss (anett.z.kiss@plantphys.umu.se) and Samer Zaky (shz33@pitt.edu) Director of publication: G. Kofod. Please send requests about articles in this Letter and submissions for the next Letter to Members to office@mariecurie.org.