

Marie Curie Fellows Association



Letter to Members

August-September-October 2010

Dear MCFA Member,

Welcome to a new issue of the Letter to Members with news concerning our Association!

The MCFA Board

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Life of the Association

MCFA Annual General Assembly and Career Workshop

Paris, 20-21 November

It is our pleasure to invite you to the MCFA 2010 Annual General Assembly of and Career Workshop which will be held in Paris, France, 20-21 November. Registration is open on the MCFA website:

<http://mcfa.eu/site/public/aga2010workshop.php>

Career Workshop: Join us!

Training in the so-called soft skills is a key component in researchers' careers. It enhances their portfolio of competencies and it can really make the difference along the hard way of building a scientific career.

“Don't neglect your soft skills. Employers value the ability to put colleagues at ease, to get things done without disturbing the delicate climate of teamwork and cooperation. They value the ability to communicate difficult ideas to technical as well as non-technical colleagues, and to other audiences. You may think of these as industry skills, but they matter in academia, too”, says Jim Austin, editor at Science Careers.

The need for courses on complementary skills had been addressed from MCFA members more than once. Thus, last year an inaugural MCFA workshop on soft skills finally took place! It focused on career plan, CV writing, interviews and others. The event was quite a success; you can still read the enthusiastic comments of participants in the last 2009 [Letter to Members](#).

This year, the MCFA proposes a second workshop: we decided to shift our focus and cover some other relevant themes. Project management and publishing are certainly required to succeed, whatever the stage of your career. Dr. N. Balcázar and Dr. F. Heemskerk will have plenty of tips for you all on project management while you can learn about scientific publishing from an editor of the prestigious magazine Science, Dr. Caroline Ash!

Researchers learn many different skills not traditionally recognized as such in research careers. These are often skills that they would have learned (probably without even noticing it) along the way while struggling with failed experiments, progress reports, deadlines, and grant writing among others. Not to mention the interpersonal skills acquired when dealing with difficult labmates and technical staff. Learning how to recognize and thus how to sell them to promote your career is a key step. Mr. Pierre Goldberg from the Association Bernard Gregory will share his experience on this subject with you!

According to our members' requests, proper space will also be dedicated to the transition from the Post-Doc stage to the Young Principal Investigator role. This difficult step requires accurate planning, knowledge about existing possibilities, developing new skills you may not be prepared at! At the MCFA workshop you will hear some MCFA Fellows experiences. You will also have the possibility to listen to two invited speakers: Dr. Chris Armbruster, who led a project dedicated to the Post-Docs' independence route and Mr. Inderjit Seehra, Director of Human Resources at Cambridge University.

Last but absolutely not least, you will get in touch with representatives from Euraxess and the European Commission. Take the chance!

“Being successful as a researcher requires you to think carefully and strategically about your skills, objectives and the areas in which you need to develop. (...) Work has changed out of all recognition in less than a generation. The balance of responsibility for career management has shifted from employer to individual. To maintain employability, you need to be able to adapt to these changes by continuously developing and transferring your skills”, you can read on the pages of the Vitae Portal, a website dedicated to researchers and their careers.

We wish our workshop will give you more tools to build your career, a difficult task in times of tough economies.

We hope to meet many of you in Paris!

Maria-Antonietta Buccheri

Become part of the Administrative Board!

The MCFA Annual General Assembly is going to take place in Paris on November the 20th. The AGA agenda includes elections of the new MCFA Administrative Board.

We encourage you to think about being a candidate for the Board!

The Association has gathered an active and enthusiastic team, which enlarged last year. However, to realize new projects and to have a stronger impact in the European science policy panorama, we need more hands! Every Full member is entitled to submit his/her candidacy. Do not be shy! If you are able to devote 3-4 hours a week to the MCFA, take the chance of being part of the Board!

As a Board member, you will have the opportunity to get involved in administration, management and organizational activities at the international level as well as in science policy. This experience will extend your skills, which may eventually open you alternative career paths.

If you are interested or would like to know more, please contact us at office@mariecurie.org.

MCFA Alumni Service

The MCFA would like to set up an alumni service and would like to know your opinion. Please let us know about your ideas about what you would like from our alumni service, by sending an email to office@mariecurie.org.

Thank you!

Careers, funding, and networking opportunities

European Research Council Starting Grants



ERC Starting Grants are designed to support researchers (Principal

Investigators) at the stage of which they are starting or consolidating their own independent research team or, depending on the field, establishing their independent research programme. The scheme will support the creation of independent and excellent new individual

research teams and will strengthen others that have been recently created.

The objective is to provide appropriate and adequate support to excellent researchers, whatever their nationality, located in or moving to the EU Member States and Associated Countries. The ERC is particularly keen to encourage excellent proposals which involve the establishment of a new research activity in the EU or the associated countries by a Principal Investigator who is moving from a third country into the EU or the associated countries.

The Principal Investigator must have been awarded his/her first PhD at least 2 and up to 12 years prior to the publication date of the call for proposals of the ERC Starting Grant (20 July 2010).

The “ERC-2011-STG” call consists of three sub-calls:

- [Physical Sciences & Engineering](#)
Deadline has passed
- [Life Sciences](#)
Deadline: 09 November 2010
- [Social Sciences & Humanities](#)
Deadline: 24 November 2010

Marie Curie Career Integration Grants (CIG)

[Marie Curie Career Integration Grants](#) are intended to improve considerably the prospects for the permanent integration of researchers who are offered a stable research post in Europe after a mobility period in a country different from the country where the researcher has been active during the past years. The duration of these grants is between 2 and 4 years.

Experienced researchers (with at least 4 years full-time postgraduate research

experience or a doctoral degree) of any nationality can apply who, at the time of the relevant deadline for submission of proposals, have not resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc) in the country of their host organisation for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the reference deadline. A researcher who has benefited or is benefiting from a FP6 or FP7 Reintegration Grant is ineligible for funding under this call.

Next deadline: 08 March 2011

Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES)

The [Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme](#) aims at strengthening research partnerships through short period staff exchanges and networking activities between European research organisations and research organisations from countries with which the Union has an S&T agreement or are in the process of negotiating one, and other third countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

Research organisations (non profit public or private bodies which carry out research) can participate in this action. A partnership in this action shall be composed of at least two independent partners established in at least two different EU Member States (MS) or Associated countries (AC), and one or more research organisation(s) located either in countries with which the EU has an S&T Agreement or in other third countries covered by the ENP. One of the MS/AC beneficiaries will be the coordinator of the project.

Deadline: 17 March 2011

The next Framework Programme: Voices

Dear everyone,

the 7th Framework Programme runs from 2007-2013. Already, the purpose and contents of the next framework programme are beginning to find their shape. We must voice our opinion now, if we want to be heard.

I invite you all to contribute with your opinions to this important debate.

Input will be collected in our Discussion Forum, which you can find via the homepage <http://mcfa.eu/>, under

Communications -> MCFA discussion: Science and science policy: The next Framework Programme - what do we want?

A few suggestions are in order, to make sure that your opinion will have effect:

- General statements are not helpful (example: "It is important to improve the conditions for young mobile researchers").

- Identification of a specific PROBLEM (with documentation if feasible) and a proposal for a WORKABLE SOLUTION is extremely helpful (example: "Dual careers are extremely difficult to maintain in the European workplace (I think there is a report somewhere)", solution: "Institutions and workplaces must ACTIVELY provide help in finding career-promoting positions for a spouse, and help in providing family support in case of children")

You can take examples from your own experience, or you can take a view at the grander picture. To get an idea of the purpose, have a look at:



http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/understand_en.html

Best regards,

Guggi Kofod
MCFA Chair

A new code of conduct for researchers

A new European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity was presented by the European Science Foundation at the World Conference on Research Integrity (21-24 July 2011, Singapore). The code addresses good practice and bad conduct in science, offering a basis for trust and integrity across national borders.

This Europe-wide code offers a reference point for all researchers, complementing existing codes of ethics and complying with national and European legislative frameworks. It is not intended to replace existing national or academic guidelines, but represents agreement across 30 countries on a set of principles and priorities for self-regulation of the research community. It provides a possible model for a global code of conduct for all research.

The code was developed from meetings and workshops involving the  European Science Foundation (ESF) Member Organisations who are 79 national funding bodies, research-performing agencies, academies and learned societies from 30 countries. They worked with the All European Academies (ALLEA). The next steps in implementing the code will be discussed in the autumn by ESF Member Organisations.

The code is published in the report [Fostering Research Integrity in Europe](#) which is available online at www.esf.org/publications.

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

Workshop on Scientific Visa

En route for the next step

8 November 2010, Brussels, Belgium

On 12 October 2005, the European Commission published the directive [2005/71](#) presenting measures for admitting third-country researchers in Europe. This is the "scientific visa", a familiar term used to define a permission to enter, stay and work in the EU for the purpose of carrying out scientific research. Legally speaking, it is more correct to speak about entry visa and residence permit for third-country researchers. More specifically, the scientific visa consists of three European instruments, a directive and two recommendations. Two of these instruments (the directive and one recommendation) cover long-term admission while the second recommendation addresses short-term visas, that is entry for less than three months.

Whilst the Directive is legally binding on Member States, the two recommendations do not impose legal obligations on Member States – they rather constitute a

political commitment to facilitate researchers' mobility.

The directive is fully transposed to Belgian law and comprises several parts:

1. The procedure for obtaining a visa and residence permit for any third-country researcher who has signed a hosting agreement with a previously- approved research organisation has been simplified.
2. Any researcher coming to Belgium in the framework of such an agreement is also exempted from the work permit requirement.
3. Public or private research organisations wishing to obtain approval must make an application for approval.
4. The application must be submitted to the Federal Science Policy Office and presupposes a capacity to provide evidence of R&D activities.

Once a Research Organisation has been approved, it can sign hosting agreements that fall under this facilitated procedure. Approval is



granted by the Federal Science Policy Office for a period of 5 years.

On the basis of a hosting agreement signed by both parties, the researcher can submit an application for a residence permit lasting longer than three months to the Belgian diplomatic or consular post in the country of residence or place of stay abroad.

The workshop will be held between 9:00 - 17:30 at the Museum of Musical Instruments (Hofberg 2 Montagne de la Cour B-1000 Brussels).

All discussions will be held in English. Participation is free, but you need to register:

<http://www.belspo.be/WorkshopVisa/meeet.stm>

The Career and Mobility of the Researcher

9-10 November 2010, Brussels, Belgium

The Career and Mobility of the Researcher Conference 2010 will be held in Brussels from 9-10 November at the Square.



To support the further development and consolidation of the European Research Area (ERA), one of the main challenges in science and technology is to ensure a high quantity and quality of human resources. In close collaboration with the European commission (DG Research), the Belgian Presidency of the European Council organizes a conference on Mobility and Careers of Researchers.

Grasp the opportunity and share your experience with highly mobile researchers, R&D and HR managers, business leaders, high-level policy makers and academic representatives, and contribute giving a new vital impulse to the mobility and

career of the researchers, towards a prosperous ERA!

<http://www.researcherscareer2010.be/>

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.

<http://www.researchcareerfair.com/>.

News in Brief

[22nd EU Contest for Young Scientists: best young brains battle it out in Lisbon](#)

On 28 September 2010 in Lisbon, young scientists from Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary were acclaimed as 1st prize winners of the European Union Contest for Young Scientists 2010. The projects, which analysed physics, biology and social sciences were selected from 85 projects coming from 37 countries by an International Jury. Second prizes, third prizes and the International prize were awarded to 7 other projects, from Poland, Germany, Portugal, Latvia, Italy and Brazil.



[Marie Curie Actions:](#)

[Record number of applications for EU research grants](#)



MARIE CURIE ACTIONS

Nearly 5 000 researchers have applied for EU-funded Marie Curie fellowship grants this year, an increase of 20% on last year and 70% on 2008. Around 800 fellowships worth a total of €150 million will be granted to researchers working on projects of up to three years in another country. For the first time, a funding category is available for researchers who want to restart their career after a break.

FROM SCIENCE CAREERS

[Scientist Dads Step Up](#)

Although women still do most of the parenting, some scientist dads are taking on the role of primary caregiver.

[Job-Search Plan for the Person Without One](#)

A successful job search involves more than posting your resumé on the Web. Here are some pointers for honing your job-seeking skills.

[Part Two](#) of the article details that the key to a successful job hunt is to precisely target particular jobs and to demonstrate that you can solve the hiring manager's particular problem.

[The Postdoc Experience: Taking A Long Term View](#)

Faced with a shaky economy and an increasingly competitive job market, postdocs are being forced to take a long-term view of their positions.

[The New California Postdoc Contract](#)

After lengthy talks, and some strategic arm-twisting, the University of California comes to terms with its postdoc union.



National Groups and Mailing Lists

Call for coordinators of MCFA National Groups

We are looking for MCFA members who are willing to become MCFA National Group coordinators in their country, or to participate in organizing the activities in their own country. National Group coordinators can be current or past MC fellows who are currently resident in the given country.

The National Groups can help the current Fellows meet each other to exchange experiences. This is very simple: a Coordinator announces that s/he would like to organize a meeting, then we announce it on the website, and help you write to all the current members in your

country. The meeting can be in a cafe, at a university or wherever you think it is practical. If you organize a meeting, we can help you also with some funds. We would also like your help in maintaining the Welcome Packs for your country. These can be found in mcfa.eu homepage. If you go there and find the Welcome Pack for your country is out of date, please help us improve it. Help us organize your NG, so we can build a strong and supportive effort for younger researchers. With your efforts, we can help researchers everywhere. For more information please get in contact with us by email: office@mariecurie.org, with the text [National groups] in the subject.

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.