

Marie Curie Fellows Association



Letter to Members

July-August 2008

Dear MCFA Member,

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

The MCFA board

Contents

Life of the Association	1
Fellows' paths	3
News in Brief	3
Funding and networking opportunities	4
Past meetings with MCFA participation	4
Upcoming Events	9

Life of the Association

First announcement: General Assembly in Potsdam!

The annual General Assembly of MCFA will be held in Potsdam on **15 November** (likely from 10:00 to 16:00). Please take note in you agenda, book your transportation tickets early (the nearest airports are the Berlin airports), and stay tuned for more details!

Become part of the MCFA administrative board!

MCFA has gathered an enthusiastic and active team, but it is obvious that we need more "hands" to have the association running smoothly and to realize more interesting projects. Every Full Member of the MCFA is encouraged to file their candidacy for the Board. If you are able to devote 3-4 hours a week to MCFA, it is a great opportunity for you to get involved in administra-

tion, science policy, gain invaluable experience in management and organizational activities at the international level.

To suggest your candidacy please write a short note about yourself in this dedicated area of our Discussion Forum: <http://www.mariecurie.org/cgi-bin/discuss/show.cgi?58/62628>. Alternatively, you can send a short note to office@mariecurie.org. You can also use this e-mail address for any questions you may have about the work in the Administrative Board.

“Old Fellows” - Participate in your National Group!

This call is aimed at those of you, who have already finished your Marie Curie Fellowship (although current Fellows may read this too!).

We would very much like to get in touch with you about helping us take care of the National Group of the country in which you are currently residing. We are especially interested in people who returned to their country of origin, however, everyone with a more permanent status should feel welcome to respond.

Our National Groups serve several purposes: a major purpose is to support people who are currently in the project phase. Further, we would like the NG's to engage with politicians and administrators in their country, to help improve the conditions for their foreign researchers.

This is YOUR chance to make a name of yourself in the country you are residing. Help us organize your NG, build a strong and supportive effort for younger researchers AND make a public engagement. With your efforts, we can make a strong MCFA and help researchers everywhere.

If you are interested, please get in touch with us at office@mariecurie.org!

Maria Antonietta Buccheri (Vice-Chair)
Guggi Kofod (Chair)

Pensions for mobile researchers

As an association of mobile researchers, MCFA has long been interested in the problem of retirement after a career split between multiple countries. Two articles have recently appeared about this:

- In the International Herald Tribune, *What's a peripatetic worker to do at the end of the walk?*, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/09/05/yourmoney/Mpensions.php>:
- In Science Careers, *A Comfortable Retirement* (http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2008_08_22/caredit.a0800125), with a testimony from Dagmar Meyer, former chair of MCFA.

If you find this topic interesting, please write an e-mail to the chair at office@mariecurie.org to help us develop a pension policy.

Meeting of the UK national group

The meeting of the MCFA UK group will be organized by Vanessa Diaz in September or October in London. The exact date and place, as well as the final program will be announced later here and on the UK national blog of the MCFA.

If you are interested in this meeting (even if you are not 100% sure), please send a quick e-mail to uk.mcfa@gmail.com just saying that you would be interested in participating. If you've got suggestions regarding the program, possible invited speakers or guests, please contact Vanessa.

Please keep an eye on <http://www.mariecurie.org/uk/> for updated information!

Fellows' paths

Another fellow cited in Science Direct's "Top 25 hottest articles": Lucian Dragut

This paper was published in *Geomorphology*, in cooperation with Prof. Thomas Blaschke. The article describes a new method to automatically classify landform elements using object-based image analysis. The work was part of my Marie Curie Fellowship at the University of Salzburg (May 2006-April 2008).

Before concluding my Marie Curie Fellowship, I successfully applied for a follow-up

project together with my former supervisor Prof. Thomas Blaschke. The project SCALA (Scales and Hierarchies in Landform Classification) is funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). I'm Romanian, now working with the University of Salzburg as Postdoc in the above mentioned project. In the same time, I'm a lecturer with the University of the West in Timisoara (Romania) and a collaborator of the Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies, University of Arkansas, my former host when I was a Fulbright Fellow (October 2005-March 2006).

Lucian Dragut

News in Brief

From Science Careers

Please read these articles and others at <http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/> or click on the titles below (if you are reading the electronic version of this Letter to Members):

The post-doc experience: not always what you expect

Results of a survey about what post-docs think makes a post-doctoral experience successful — or not.

Learning the Ropes of Peer Reviewing

You've just received an e-mail from a journal editor asking if you could review a manuscript. The research is directly relevant to your field, and you've got a month to do the review. You're flattered this editor knows and trusts you, but you're filled with doubts. You've never reviewed a manuscript before. What exactly will she expect from you? How do you go about doing a proper peer review?

Careers in Research Support

Due to increases in external support for research provided to colleges and universities, the number of people employed in grant writing and research administration is increasing. Although these employees are not directly responsible for the advances in science that result from university research, they are facilitators, securing the money and managing the organizational structures essential for the research to move forward.

Tooling Up: Review Your Career

If you feel that you have a nice, stable career in front of you, then you're the ideal candidate for a career review. That's because there is no such thing as career stability. There is only career growth or career decay.

Europe: Research by the Numbers?

European research institutions seek to diversify funding sources as well as their work force; the ERC awards grants to individual investigators of any nationality strictly on the basis of scientific excellence.

Funding and networking opportunities

Positions in biotechnology, Dresden

The newly founded Centre for Innovation Competence Molecular Bioengineering, B CUBE, is to identify natural functional units, characterise them at the molecular level, and adapt them to specific needs and so design the materials and technologies of the future. The centre will initially comprise three complementary Junior Research Groups that will closely interact with three newly created B CUBE professorial chairs and be supported by a pool of state-of-the-art technology platforms. B CUBE, in collaboration with the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, invites applications for the following positions at the Research Group Leader level (equivalent to assistant professor):

- in bionanotechnological analysis and manipulation, or in biofunctional nanostructures.
- in bioresponsive materials

For further information, please go to <http://www.bcube-dresden.de>,

Another online network for scientists: ResearchGATE

The new network (<http://www.researchgate.net/>) includes, among others, a document management tool that assists in collaborative paper writing. It incorporates a paper version history, the possibility to set flags for others to see what is being worked on as well as tools to set appointments and deadlines. Further applications will feature a conference manager where posters and presentations can be uploaded and where researchers can stay in contact with interesting people they met at conferences. Also there will be available a co-author search which offers automated help in finding the right research partners, an instant peer reviewing tool and a wiki, e.g. for lab protocols. Further applications are being discussed and will evolve with the community.

Please note also that a Marie Curie Fellows group has been created.

Past meetings with MCFA participation

ESOF 2008, Barcelona

As announced in the last Letters to Members, the 2008 Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF, <http://www.esof2008.org/>) has been held in Barcelona in July, organized by the Euroscience association, and it was preceded by a Marie Curie conference organized by the EC. MCFA had a large participation to these events, with many members present, participating, speaking and even organizing sessions. Here are some reports about the Marie Curie conference and some sessions of the Careers programme of ESOF, as well as some pictures from this conference.

Marie Curie conference

The long-awaited Marie Curie conference for researchers currently funded under the Marie Curie Actions scheme of the European Commission was held on 17-18 July 2008 in Barcelona.

The conference was organized by the Marie Curie Unit of the EC DG Research as a satellite event preceding the EuroScience Open Forum 2008.

The conference was an undoubted success, with over 300 Marie Curie fellows from 55 different countries, currently based all over Europe attending and a number of exciting lectures and workshops given by excellent speakers. The conference was fully booked even before the registration deadline, and, unfortunately, many fellows could not attend because of the limited capacity. For those who could not attend, the programme with short abstracts of the presentations and biographic notes about the speakers is available at <http://www.esof2008.org/index.php?id=203>. Additionally, the presentations of the speakers were made available online at <http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/docs/presentations.zip>.

One of the main goals of the conference was

to broaden awareness of career perspectives and future opportunities for the fellows to help them fully exploit their potential as researchers. This was accomplished through presentations and workshops given by experts from very diverse fields, but all closely related to science: innovation and intellectual property, entrepreneurship, science writing, industry-academia partnerships, science and society, higher education, science management, etc.

Vanessa Diaz, coordinator of the UK National Group of the MCFA, participated in the round table discussions "Careers outside academia: more perspectives for PhD holders", which were intended to encourage the young scientists to look at the whole range of professions and fields of activity beyond academia where their scientific qualifications and experience are badly wanted. After the round table discussions Vanessa received numerous requests from the participants regarding the need for more workshops on career alternatives for young scientists, complementary skills development, etc. The MCFA is planning to organize similar workshops for Marie Curie grantees in Europe with speakers invited from outside and from within the most experienced MCFA members.

The MCFA representatives Vanessa Diaz and Yegor Domanov have had fruitful discussions with the senior staff of the Marie Curie Unit of the EC, where the need for a tighter collaboration between the MCFA and the EC was stressed by both sides. The first step towards this goal had already been made recently: the MCFA Chair, Guggi Kofod, was invited to represent MCFA in the External Advisory Group for the PEOPLE programme of FP7, which meets regularly in Brussels to discuss and formulate recommendations on strategy, relevant objectives and scientific and technological priorities, and the topics on which proposals are to be invited.

The social programme of the conference was great mix of a lot of informal communication among the MC fellows and with the speakers and organizers, delicious Spanish refreshments in the breaks between lectures, plenty of sun, Barcelona sightseeing, and, of course, the warm waves of the Mediterranean! The cocktail party at the SHÔKO lounge right on the beach in Vila Olimpica was a perfect conclusion to the busy first day of the conference with Catalan cava, de-

licious food, and a truly relaxed and cheerful atmosphere.

At the end of the conference the winners of the "Best poster" and "Best Marie Curie video" awards were named and each received an iPod touch. The best poster prize went to Sarah Zohdy from the University of Helsinki, Finland, for the poster describing her adventurous research into the ageing of brown mouse lemurs conducted in Helsinki and Madagascar. The best video award was won by Dr Danielle Laurencin from the University of Warwick, UK; her video clip "A Day in the Life of the Researcher" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QFBQW2vXmQ>) shows how a scientific discovery can be made, described, and published -- all the same day!

Following the Marie Curie conference most of the participants stayed for the Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF) 2008 held in the same building from 18-22 July (the MC conference registration fee included the access to the ESOF as well). The ESOF meeting had 4000 registered participants from the media, funding bodies, governments, science research, and industry. The meeting provides an open forum for debate on science and technology, strengthening the links between science and society in Europe. These ideas are also central to the Marie Curie network and the ESOF meeting was an excellent opportunity for the Marie Curie fellows to participate in these important discussions.

We are all looking forward to the next Marie Curie meeting that will most likely be held next year!

Yegor Domanov

Session "Should I stay or should I go?"

The room was full of people who wanted to know the answer to our title question. The moderator and organizer, Vanessa Diaz-Zuccarini (the former vice-chair of MCFA), clarified very soon that each person has to find their own answer and that the aim of this session was to show them some ways that are possible to follow after a research career, based on the experiences of the panel members. By the way, most of the panelists are/were Marie Curie fellows and members of the MCFA.

Antonella di Trapani (former chair of MCFA) started with a short presentation about her job

career, from the time after finishing at university until her current job at the ESF (European Science Foundation). She has done research, gone to industry, come back to academy and finally made project management at the ESF. She presented the advantages and the disadvantages of each position.

Natalia Balcazar (current treasurer of MCFA) explained as short as possible her change from research to "free economy", first as employee at an environmental consulting and after 3 years being director of her own company. She explained her motivations to be entrepreneur, the difficulties (mainly with the entrepreneurial background, nearly missing at the beginning), the importance of networking and the necessity to be multitasking to go ahead successfully.

Frank Heemskerk (from the MCFA advisory board) explained also his career development, from research to management to entrepreneur. Probably the most interesting point for the audience was the explanations about the reactions of the colleagues as he decided to leave research and his motivations later on to start his company after have managed a very successful development of the company were he was managing research and patents.

Gene Russo (Nature) presented his own career too, including aspects like to converge own interest (to write) with the science aspects. He is a successful journalist at Naturejobs and like a lot the possibility to learn new people and new developments in different areas of science, trying to explain it in a way that also non experts can understand.

Yegor Domanov (current general secretary of MCFA) presented as well his career, even as he is in a very early stage. He explained his decision to get some skills through his work at the Association and how much this has enriched his personal baggage. He urged the audience to try to look over the border of the dish to learn about possibilities and to get experiences without to fear to loose their professional position.

There was then an intense discussion but the time was limited. Some of the participants wanted to know more details about the experience from Frank and other asked about the possibility to get into a good life-work balance. The

panelists answered from their own experience. At the end Natalia summarized it in a sentence: "If somebody asks you to do something different and your intuition says "I like it" then say only "yes!"; you will find the way to realize it".

Natalia Balcazar

Session "Working in science or politics – or both?"

This session has been organized by Dunja Počnik and Karoline Holländer from EURODOC, in parallel with the session "Should I stay or should I go?". MCFA was also represented among the speakers of this session, by Eric Buchlin, who argued in his presentation that an interest in both lab politics and science policy is a new imperative for young scientists. The other speakers presented their own experience as people doing research and at the same time having policy responsibilities.

Session "Concrete career perspectives in the EU for researchers"

The session started with the short presentation of Christian Carter (Personnel Manager, Bristol University, UK) about the biggest University in UK, the Bristol University, with 6.000 employees (40% of them researchers). His speech concentrates on "what is success?". He shows that to reach the aims of the planned strategy (that keeps the University on the front of the field), it is necessary to base on three aspects: learning, discovery and enterprise. The Mission of the University will be supported through 10 key objectives, among which the research staff is involved in 8 objectives. He stresses that even if the output of the measures carried out to reach the well-being of the staff it is hard to measure, it is possible to affirm that this strategy get into success.

Karoline Holländer, the current president of EURODOC (European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Young Researchers), explained the aims and actions of EURODOC. She insisted that the current evaluation systems for young researchers are not optimal and argued that mobility should not be compulsory at the evaluation of post-docs¹, as well as that they should be evaluated depending on their actual experience.

¹In my opinion however, if you want to reach a high position at any place you have to show your experience – and the most experiences (also in private life) can be lived if you are alone in a new environment: mobility is a chance.

She stressed that it is important to reach a bigger commitment of the institutions with the Code & Charter for Researchers.

Fluvio Esposito presented the situation at the Camerino University. This small University has applied the Bologna Process and signed the Code & Charter in 2005. This opportunity was used to make a deep reform of the university statutes. Among others following measures are now applied: all job openings are at <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess>; the same conditions are applied for all the contracts; the gender balance at the management and selection process is established and from the university side, interdisciplinary mobility, public-private-partnerships and spin-offs are supported. For instance, one of the main aims is to support the evolution from team member to team leader, including communication skills in the process. In September it is planned to make an “internal” university exchange to explain the success of these measures to other Italian Universities.

The discussions concentrated on the Code & Charter (and it seemed that only 10% of the audience knew them), and in the (weak) position of visiting researchers at the host institutions. For instance a German young researcher with a fellowship in France has no access to soft skill courses in English, they are only offered in French. I used this opportunity to tell the audience about MCFA and to stress that mobility is the key to networking, which is the key of a future career.

Natalia Balcazar



Antonella, Frank and Natalia



Vanessa and Yegor

iKNOWPolitics meeting, March 2008, Brussels

Gianna Avellis attended in Brussels, at the European Parliament premises, in March, the launch of iKONWPolitics (International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics) in Europe. The workshop was very interesting with Madeleine Albright, the first woman to become United States Secretary of State, nominated by President Bill Clinton, giving the welcome address in an on-line TV session from New York, and several women Ministers of Europe and outside involved in a discussion managed by Lilli Gruber, Italian member of the European Parliament. View the website: <http://www.iknowpolitics.org/> for more information. Gianna became member of iKNOWPolitics and open a E-Discussion Forum on women in decision-making processes. She received many contributions concerning political decision processes. Gianna invites you to visit the website and share your thoughts and experiences related to gender in politics.

ICWES14 in Lille, France, July 2008

Gianna Avellis and Raffaella Di Sante (m-WiSET/MCFA) attended ICWES14 (International Conference of Women Engineers and Scientists), with over 500 participants from 60 countries, addressing issues and challenges to be met in today's globalizing world. The thematic sessions dealt with sustainable development, strategies to attract more girls into scientific education and gender perspectives for scientific and engineering careers. Gianna presented a paper tackling the issue of women in decision-making processes. The aim was to attract women participants interest for a future European project on this topic. The equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels is a worldwide critical issue. Women's participation in decision-making bodies involves their increased representation as well as their real empowerment through its presence. In fact, women's presence as critical actors in decision-making processes allows them not only to enhance women's presence, but to transform the content and the ways in which public policy is

made in all fields.

We tackle this issue in the mobile Women in Science Engineering and Technology (m-WiSET) working group of MCFA. Statistics show that women are currently under-represented in the rank of Academia and in Scientific Boards and bodies committed to set the research agenda focusing on specific areas and eventually assigning public research funding to different research institutions, at local or national levels. In order to achieve women's full participation and representation at all levels of research decision-making, there must be gender equality across a range of decision-making levels, including professional associations, regional and international organizations and both business and private sectors. Future priority of the EC is boosting numbers of women in research leading positions to 25% in 2010.

Our aim is to analyse the current situation and positive action schemes adopted in several countries in Europe and outside, and to monitor women's representation in the areas mentioned above through the production and availability of statistics from Europe, US, Australia and Canada. The second objective is to compile already-tested "best practices" to increase the proportion of women in decision-making positions. The third main goal is to discuss effectiveness and efficacy of the different mechanisms to support women researchers, and also to understand to what extent positive schemes may be adapted in Europe, for example, through a comparison analysis which takes into account the specificity of the various contexts, and in general to allow fruitful and useful exchange/transfer of knowledge on best practices. The further aim is to raise awareness on the conditions that facilitate women's representation in decision-making processes in order to adopt policy recommendations to advance women's participation in this area.

Our working group will disseminate and spread results, findings, best practices, diverse opportunities, updated pertinent statistics as widely as possible at a local, regional and international level. The objectives are mainly to: raise awareness on the role that women leaders may play in science governance by influencing topics, needs, trends and making in general the research decision-making processes more

“gender-aware”; to ensure women’s equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making by promoting a new knowledge base of best practices and working for them to be translated into policy; to increase women’s capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership by promoting, organising, advertising training and mentoring activities.

To achieve these aims we ask volunteers from MCFA fellows in Europe, United States, Canada and Australia to address diverse women needs at national, regional and international level. Fellows from Third Countries will also be taken into account to allow us to establish useful synergies of resources and actions and to offer proper high level perspectives of their socio-cultural context.

Upcoming Events

Researcher’s Night: 26 September

The 2008 Researcher’s Night will be held on the 4th Friday of September - the 26th this year. This is a EC funded pan-European series of public events aiming to facilitate the understanding and acceptance of the scientific research by the general public.

The table with a series of information about the national activities for different countries can be downloaded from http://www.helsinki.fi/people/yegor.domanov/08_NIGHTS_ORDER.doc.

The EC is also rebuilding the Researchers’ Night website and as from early September all relevant information will be found through a click on the respective country. The list of events and cities will appear, as well as the websites from which all relevant information can be downloaded in original language as well as for most of them in English).

This will all be linked via the Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/researchersineurope>

Marie Curie Networking Event in Dresden, 23 October 2008

Dear Marie Curie Fellow,

We would like to draw your attention to the IEEE International Nuclear Science Symposium (NSS), the Medical Imaging Conference (MIC), and the Workshop on Room Temperature Semiconductor Detectors (RTSD) being held together as the 2008 NSS/MIC/RTSD. This annual conference will be this year in the German City of

Dresden, 19- 25 October 2008. It is the third time that the conference is in Europe; having been held in North America since 1954.

The NSS/MIC/RTSD Marie Curie Team, on behalf of the Program Committees, chaired by Professor Rolf-Dieter Heuer (DESY) (NSS), Professor Wolfgang Enghardt (Oncoray, Technische Universität Dresden) (MIC) and Dr. Michael Fiederle (Universität Freiburg) (RTSD) encourage you to participate in this conference and to meet with colleagues from around the world. The attendance is expected to be 2000 scientists and engineers. You are invited to submit an abstract and summary for a paper or poster on interesting new research results. Please take a look at the conference website and note that the deadline for submission is 9 May 2008:

General programme: <http://www.nss-mic.org/2008/>

As we expect the attendance of a significant number of Marie Curie Fellows to this conference, the Conference Program will also include a dedicated ‘Marie Curie’ Networking Event, scheduled for Thursday, 23 October, 18.00 - 20.00. This ‘Special Event’ will be open to all registered participants and we will explicitly invite all attending Marie Curie Fellows along with a number of senior scientists. This will also be a good occasion to converse with representatives from the European Commission.

More info: <http://www.nss-mic.org/2008/Public/Events.html>

The Organizing Committee of the Conference is most anxious to create opportunities for the Marie Curie Fellows in our community and to highlight their research activities. A book-

let with substantial details about participating Marie Curie Fellows will be included in your registration package. We will send each responding Marie Curie Fellow by e-mail a template to submit a brief description of their project, a photograph, biography and contact information.

Please register for the conference as soon as possible and send your template with brief description to us by the end of August, so that we can prepare the booklet well in advance of the conference. Please mention (checkbox at the end of submission form) that you are a Marie Curie Fellow when submitting a paper and also when you make your conference registration on the website.

With our best wishes for you in 2008,

*Dr Erik H.M. Heijne, Dr Mike Letheren
and Ms Winnie Wong*

Sustainable Energy and Environment Forum, Roskilde, Denmark, 21-22 October

We would like to inform you of a new opportunity to help you get more value out of your academic and industrial collaborations, organized in the framework of the Match2BioSME project (<http://www.match2biosme.com>): the Sustainable Energy and Environment Forum.

This partnering event aims to:

- Facilitate relevant contacts between biotech SME's and relevant Research Institutes.
- Allow researchers and the emerging biotech SME's to present to a European Biotech audience of Universities, Corporations and other related entities.

Attendance is free, but by invitation only. Please follow this link for registration: <http://www.e-unlimited.com/events/p200246/>. The event will give you an exclusive opportunity of targeted networking.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Roskilde on 21-22 October 2008.

On behalf of the Match2BioSME team,

Frank Heemskerk

Intellectual Property workshop, Munich, Germany, 17-18 November

Dear Marie Curie Fellow,

We would like to take this opportunity to inform you of an important workshop on Intellectual Property Rights and Patenting, which has been designed by the European Patent Academy (an arm of the European Patent Office) in conjunction with the European Commission specifically for researchers who are, or have been, involved in the Marie Curie Actions

The 2-day workshop will be aimed at researchers in European research centres and laboratories, have a practical perspective and aims to be useful to the broadest scientific base.

The workshop will take place on 17-18 November in Munich, Germany. To cover the costs we would like to advise you that a participation fee of about EUR 300 per person will have to be paid to the organisers. The number of places will be strictly limited to 20 and so it is important to register your interests as early as possible.

These costs, plus the cost of travel and accommodation, would be allowable costs under your Marie Curie fellowship scheme if you are a current fellowship holder. You should seek the agreement of your supervisor if you decide to attend of course.

A preliminary programme and some background for the event will be available from the MCFA website, and in case you are interested please reply to the coordinator at academy@epo.org, in the subject line you should indicate the start by the reference "Seminar AS64-2008 Marie Curie IPR".

Yours,

Mike Rogers

The Source Event 2008, London, 26 September

The Source Event - a career fair organized by NatureJobs in London - had a huge success last year. Now it is organized for the second time on 26th September 2008 at the Business Design Centre, London.

Program, registration, and more info at <http://www.nature.com/naturejobs/sourceevent/index.html>

The registration fee is £45 to attend the workshop and conference sessions. This includes delegates packs and exhibition attendance. Exhibition attendance only is free!

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