



December 2017

# NEWSLETTER



You may already know that the next MCAA Board will be elected at the General Assembly on 3 February. If you want to become active behind the scenes of the Association, keep reading and submit your application!

The MCAA celebrated the 150th birthday of Marie Curie with a variety of events in Europe. Angela Bellia, Rohan Soman and Maria Górna sum up the festivities for us.

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The Falling Walls Lab – Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions is a science contest to showcase scientific projects. On 28 September 2017, 30 of today's MSCA researchers presented a three-minute pitch on their research to a distinguished jury representing science and business organisations. The scene for the presentations was the House of European History in Brussels, Belgium.

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# NEWS FROM THE MCAA

## ELECTION OF THE NEXT MCAA BOARD

You may already know that the next MCAA Board will be elected at the [General Assembly](#) on 3 February. If you want to become active behind the scenes of the Association, keep reading and submit your application!



Every two years, a new MCAA Board and Executive Committee are elected by the members present at the General Assembly.

The MCAA Board and Executive Committee are the two bodies in charge of governing your organisation. If you would like to be involved, you can now put your own name forward for election. You have until 12 January 2018

(24h00 CET) to present your candidacy for the upcoming positions.

Candidates are needed for 11 positions:

- Chair of the Board (and Executive Committee);
- Two Vice-Chairs of the Board (and Executive Committee);
- Treasurer of the Board (and Executive Committee);

- Secretary of the Board (and Executive Committee);
- Six Ordinary Board Members.

The term/mandate of the Board members is two years, renewable once. The position is not remunerated.

The responsibilities of the Board are described in the [Articles of Association](#).

# NEWS FROM THE MCAA

## ELIGIBILITY AND ADMISSIBILITY CONDITIONS

To be eligible for election, Marie Curie Alumni must comply with the following criteria:

- registered on the Marie Curie Alumni web-portal for at least 12 months before the date of the election;

- in possession of a personal and career profile in the MCAA web-portal; this should be 90% or more complete
- having filled in the Board Application Form (available below) before the stated deadline (midnight, 2018-01-12).

Candidates' profiles, the position(s) for which they are applying and a

short statement regarding their application will be published in alphabetical order on the MCAA web-portal and are thus available to all registered members. This compendium will be available online to MCAA members at least two weeks ahead of election day.



FOR ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE ADDRESS THE MCAA:

[contact@mariecuriealumni.eu](mailto:contact@mariecuriealumni.eu)  
[Board application form](#)



# EVENT

## SPECIAL COVERAGE: MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATING MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE'S 150<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY IN ROME

In Rome, Italy on 10 November 2017 MCAA members celebrated the 150th anniversary of Marie Skłodowska Curie's birth. [Angela Bellia](#) was there and told us all about the event.



Alessandra Luchetti, head of the Research Executive Agency, reminded those present why the European Commission decided to name one of its most important European research programmes after the Nobel Prize Laureate outlining her achievements. In addition to her scientific accomplishments, the Polish-French scientist is of course also well known for having crossed national borders. Daniela Corda, Italian Delegate

for the MSCA, stressed the importance of researcher mobility; Marie Skłodowska Curie was a pioneer here, inspiring researchers all over the world.

As the Chair of the Events & Networks WG, Angela Bellia highlighted the huge effort and the hard work by the MCAA over the past few years, which has given Marie Curie Researchers greater opportunities to develop their careers and make

an important contribution to wider European society. In addition, she emphasised that the association acts a 'bridge' between researchers and research institutions.

During the first roundtable, Vice Rectors Antonino Rotolo, Marcello Bonchio and Marco Sgarbi discussed the recruitment of Marie Curie Researchers at the Universities of Bologna, Padua and Venice. The Universities of Padua and

## EVENT



Venice provide the largest number of funded Marie Skłodowska Curie fellowships in Italy.

During the second roundtable, Ciro Franco from Sapienza University of Rome and Sonia Silvestri from the University of Padua, discussed the importance of mobility in academic careers. Luigi Caranti, Chair of the Italy Chapter and professor at the University of Catania, and Dario Pellizzon, Honorary Member of

the MCAA and Head of the International Research Office of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, highlighted the fundamental contribution of the MSCA to researchers' careers.

This event also looked at Italy's recently adopted policy for the recruitment of Marie Curie Researchers at universities and research institutions. Many MCAA members can now benefit from

a fast-track application process. This achievement is unprecedented and currently has no equivalent in any other European country.

During the ceremony, 10 researchers and their projects hosted in Italian universities were presented with awards. The 'Marie Skłodowska Curie Researchers 2017 in Italy' award aims to highlight the presence of MC researchers in Italy.

The celebratory event was organised by the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, together with the MCAA's Events & Networks and Italy Chapter, and in collaboration with the European Commission and the Research Executive Agency.



### MORE INFORMATION

Angela Bellia



# EVENT

SPECIAL COVERAGE:  
MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATING MARIE  
SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE'S 150<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY  
IN POLAND



The MCAA - Polish Chapter celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Marie Curie with a variety of events. [Rohan Soman](#) and [Maria Górna](#) sum up for us the festivities.

The events included the Medicina-Scientia-Cultura conference (MSC2017) organised by the Polish Chemical Society and the Maria Skłodowska-Curie Museum in Warsaw as a finale to a series of events across Poland (<http://msc.warsawtour.pl/calendar/index.en.htm> and <http://www.warsawtour.pl/en/warsaw-for-everyone/in-the-footsteps-of-maria-sk-odowska-curie-160224.html>).

[MSC2017](#) took place in Warsaw on 6-8 November and celebrated Marie Skłodowska-Curie in the context of science, medicine and culture. Every day of the conference addressed a different topic at different Warsaw universities. Marie's involvement in medicine was discussed at the Medical University of Warsaw (module *Medicina*). The importance of science for modern society was the focus of the conference at Warsaw University of Technology (module *Scientia*). Finally,

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## EVENT

the socio-cultural aspects of women in science were considered at Warsaw University (module *Cultura*).

The conference concluded with a festive gala organised at the Warsaw University of Technology, attended by 22 MCAA members from around Europe to whom an exclusive invitation had been extended. The gala celebration was opened by Marie's grandchildren, H  l  ne Langevin-Joliot and Prof. Pierre Joliot. A multimedia dance show and a symphony orchestra played works dedicated to Maria Sk  łodowska-Curie. The gala dinner also provided an opportunity for other MCAA Fellows visiting Poland to meet and spend time together before the following day's intensive workshop

The 'Standing up for Science EU' workshop on 10 November was organised in association with the Voice of Young Science network of the charity Sense about Science. This was the first VoYS media and policy workshop held outside of the UK or Brussels. MCAA Polish Chapter members Michał Karpiński (Vice-Chair) and Maria Górna (ex-Chair) co-organised the workshop and secured generous financial support from the host University of Warsaw.

The event was attended by over 50 participants representing the event's sponsors, as well as 22 MCAA Fellows. The focus was standing up for science in everyday life and in policy-making. The programme covered presentations from scientists who have contributed to the popularisation of science in mainstream media. Scientists shared their bitter-sweet experi-



ences of sharing information and how this had had an impact on their understanding and execution of their research. The perspectives of policy-makers and their advisors were also covered in a session on how scientific research is used to determine policies for the near and long-term future. Another session provided insights into the role of journalists, what they expect from researchers, and their point of view on the process of communicating science to the general public. Participants heard about good practices for clearer communication and were encouraged to volunteer to disseminate their work through different media.

The workshop was very well received by participants and partners. As a pilot event of the international 'Standing up for science EU' series it paved the way for future workshops in Brussels and Spain in 2018.

In addition to the conference and the workshop, a get-together was

organised in Klub Zak in Gdansk on 7 November – Marie Skłodowska-Curie's actual birthday. The event helped recruit two new members and opened channels of communication to a few more. Flowers were also laid during ceremony in front of the monument of Maria at the site of Warsaw's former Radium Institute.



ROHAN SOMAN,  
MARIA GÓRNA



# MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

## SPECIAL COVERAGE: FALLING WALL LAB - MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The Falling Walls Lab – Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions is a science contest to showcase scientific projects. On 28 September 2017, 30 of today's MSCA researchers presented a three-minute pitch on their research to a distinguished jury representing science and business organisations. The scene for the presentations was the House of European History in Brussels, Belgium.

The winners are:

- 1st prize: Fabien Wagner - Breaking the Wall of Paralysis with Neurotechnologies
- 2nd prize: John Palmer - Breaking the Wall of Mosquito-Born Disease
- 3rd prize: Lisa Wilson - Breaking the Wall of Autism

- Audience prize: Murad Tayebjee - Breaking the Wall of Dirty Energy

Brian Cahill, Chair of the MCAA was a judge at this event and represented the association.

The first two winners were invited to the Finale in Berlin in November 2017.



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Manel Laporta Grau & Ferrando Raffaele

### ABOUT THE FALLING WALLS LAB IN BERLIN:

The Falling Walls Lab is an international forum, which aims at building and promoting interdisciplinary connections between academics, entrepreneurs and professionals from all fields. All participants get the opportunity to present their research work, business model or initiative to peers and a distinguished jury consisting of experts from academia and industry. Each pitch lasts three minutes.



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**MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT THE**  
[Falling Wall Lab - Marie  
Skłodowska-Curie Actions](#)

**MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT THE**  
[Falling Walls Lab](#)



# MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

SPECIAL COVERAGE:  
FALLING WALL LAB - MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE  
ACTIONS

INTERVIEW WITH BRIAN CAHILL, MCAA  
CHAIR AND JUDGE AT THE FALLING  
WALL LAB - MSCA



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We caught up with MCAA Chair [Brian Cahill](#) to see what he thought of the Falling Wall Lab, and to hear his recommendations for future events.

the world. The speakers needed to show the societal relevance of their research – that is central question to the development of a business idea, but not always in academic research. Academic researchers are not always comfortable presenting their work in this way.

*In your opinion, what did the lucky winners have that other participants didn't?*

I think the winners were the participants who best showed how their research could achieve impact in the real world. Fabien Wagner showed a video of how the technology he developed could help someone with a spinal cord injury to walk again: within a few seconds you can see how that improves a real person's quality of life.

*What would you advise for future events?*

I would recommend that the organisers prepare for the event longer

in advance and give more time to the speakers to prepare suitable presentations. The speakers need to prepare a pitch that is quite different to their usual 'academic' presentations. It must be more accessible to an audience of ordinary people, shorter and much more direct. Falling Walls Lab is much more like the pitching of a business idea to a potential investor.

*How challenging was being a judge at the Falling Walls Lab?*

The main point of Falling Walls Lab is to break down the walls between academic research and the rest of

# MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

SPECIAL COVERAGE:  
FALLING WALL LAB - MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE  
ACTIONS

INTERVIEW WITH FABIEN WAGNER,  
1ST PRIZE

Fabien is the lucky winner of the first prize – Breaking the Wall of Paralysis with Neurotechnologies.

*Congratulations on your first prize in the Falling Wall Lab contest! Tell us about your winning project.*

I am working on novel approaches to stimulating the spinal cord in real-time to enable patients with paraplegia to walk. After spinal cord injury the neuronal connections between the brain and the spinal cord become interrupted, but the part of the spinal cord controlling

leg movements is usually spared and located below the level of the injury. It can be activated artificially by electrical stimulation applied directly to the spinal cord. Our group, led by Prof. Courtine at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), is conducting a clinical study to test the effects of this approach in a small cohort of patients. One of my goals is the development of technologies that

will enable our patients to use this stimulation paradigm outside the laboratory environment.

*Do you think this prize will broaden your horizons? How?*

First of all, I would like to say that I am deeply honoured to have received the first prize from the European Commission and the Falling Walls Foundation. Simply



# MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

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meeting all the other Fellows who have received prestigious MSCA Fellowships and been selected to participate was a great experience. The contest and prize were also an opportunity to get in touch with the people who steer science in Europe by selecting the recipients of these fellowships and grants. They made me aware of the opportunities available for someone in my position in terms of future grant applications once my current fellowship finishes. Finally, being selected to attend the Falling Walls Lab finale in Berlin was also an immense opportunity; I was able to meet people from different disciplines and envision possible interdisciplinary interactions.

*How important are such contests in the life of a researcher?*

Researchers have a duty to present their work to the international

scientific community. However, most presentations are open only to scientific experts in one particular field. This kind of contest gives the opportunity to present to and interact with people from many different fields. They are also great training for science communication, which is becoming increasingly important, not just for career purposes but also for keeping people aware of the importance of science, its challenges and limitations. It is important not to create a gap between the scientific community and the rest of the population.

*You were invited to go to Berlin for the final, how did it go?*

The Falling Walls conference in Berlin was a contest between all 100 finalists, followed by one day of presentations by established scientists at the top of their field. The young researchers selected

for the finale were both brilliant scientists and very good communicators: it was a great experience to see everyone presenting their ideas in three minutes. Although I did not win one of the top three prizes, I enjoyed presenting my research and I broadened my horizons by seeing what other people are working on, sometimes in very different fields. The second day, with 15-minute presentations by top scientists in several different fields, was even more inspiring and an example for all the young researchers present.

*Do you have any advice for researchers considering entering this contest?*

I would advise researchers to apply at the right time in their research project: the jury needs to see a proof-of-concept that the project is more than an idea and has true potential. They also need to make sure that their personal role in the project is clearly defined and easy to explain. Finally, they should make sure they have a convincing and simple way to tell the story: this is both about science AND communication. In my opinion, it is also very important to practise a lot in front of several people. For this purpose, the coaching sessions organised by the European Commission / Falling Walls foundation was extremely useful: don't miss them!



# MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

SPECIAL COVERAGE:  
FALLING WALL LAB - MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE  
ACTIONS

INTERVIEW WITH MURAD TAYEBJEE,  
AUDIENCE PRIZE

Murad was awarded the Audience prize - Breaking the Wall for the Dirty Energy.

*Murad, congratulations on winning Falling wall lab audience prize! Could you tell us about your project?*

My work is focused on engineering the solar spectrum to better match solar cell technologies. The solar spectrum is made up of all the colours of the rainbow, but conventional solar cells are designed to harvest one colour of light efficiently. Our solution is to change the colour of the sun. At least the colour that a solar cell 'sees'.

*Do you think winning this prize will broaden your horizons? How?*

Yes. The Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellowship has offered me great opportunities like this. It was incredible to meet so many inspiring people working to improve the world in fields ranging from biotechnology to teaching to car safety. I have made contacts that I plan to stay in touch with.

*How important are such contests in the life of a researcher?*



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This event helped me develop as a science communicator. Obviously this is important in academic environments. However, effective communication to the broader community is also extremely important in a global climate where facts and opinions are often given equal importance. The training provided by the European Commission was brilliant: I was given effective and simple advice to improve my presentation style.

*What would you advise any researchers considering entering this contest?*

Give it a go! If for no other reason than it refocuses you onto the larger goal of your research. It is very easy to concentrate on the details of research – and this is important – but it is also nice to remember why you embarked on your research in the first place.

# MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

SPECIAL COVERAGE:  
EUROPEAN YOUNG RESEARCHERS' AWARD  
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The European Young Researchers' Award (EYRA) has been granted to researchers demonstrating outstanding research performance and leadership since 2010. It aims to inspire early-stage researchers to incorporate a European dimension and perspective into their research.

## WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATION CRITERIA?

- The research must have a clear European dimension, either because it involves collaboration between researchers in different European countries, or because as a research project in one European country it addresses a research topic of European added value. The research should be of demonstrably excellent quality (publications, prizes, grants, patents, references in newspapers, etc.).
- The criteria taken into account by the jury are: quality of the research results obtained, role in the definition of the research project, inspiration to others (fellow students, members of the research group), and outreach to wider audiences.

**The lucky winners of the 2017 edition are Alejandra Consejo and Pavlo Bazilinsky.** Read our interviews with them to find out more about their recipes for success! The prize-giving-ceremony will be held in July 2018 at the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) in Toulouse.



INSPIRED BY THIS SUCCESS? A CALL IS OPEN FOR THE 2018 EDITION!

**MORE INFORMATION**  
[on the EYRA](#)

# MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

SPECIAL COVERAGE:  
EUROPEAN YOUNG RESEARCHERS' AWARD  
INTERVIEW WITH ALEJANDRA CONSEJO

Congratulations to [Alejandra Consejo](#) for her project, which looks into the surface of the eye and investigates how this changes under certain conditions.



*Alejandra, congratulations on winning the European Young Researchers' Award 2017. Tell us about your winning project.*

Thank you! I was awarded a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Early Stage Researcher scholarship to carry out my PhD at Wroclaw University of Science and Technology (Poland), within a European network.

The aim was to study how the human eye changes with age.

Using a very specific technology and novel measuring devices I was able to study the anterior eye map as a whole. My work has a strong mathematical and computational component (design of algorithms to automatise routine processes, three-dimensional modelling and

parameter estimation) as well as clinical fundamentals and relevance. My most important research achievement to date is proving that the surface of the eyes significantly varies from one person to another, which has important consequences for everyday activities, such as reading or wearing contact lenses; but it might also be important if certain ocular procedures are being considered.

*How important is the European dimension in research?*

I would say that it is fundamental. In my personal experience, crossing borders between physics and mathematics, and biology and physiology, was only possible thanks to continuous collaboration with diverse experts (physicists, engineers, optometrists and medical doctors) all around Europe. Team work and continued collaboration is a key to success.

*What does ESOF mean to you [Alejandra will receive her award at ESOF 2018]? Have you been able to attend previous events?*

This will be my first time at ESOF



## MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

and I'm very excited about it. ESOF to me is an opportunity to network and to expand my horizons in other scientific fields or disciplines that I'm not that familiar with. I'm expecting a large knowledge-sharing event. I'm sure I will come away with new ideas, advice and valuable experiences, while I expect to share my own experience and expertise with others. I'd love to make contacts and discuss not only pure science, but also about pure scientific matters but

also about soft skills, career development, business innovation and so on.

*What would you advise others planning to apply for the European Young Researchers' Award?*

I would strongly advise them to apply. It might sound like silly advice, but I think we sometimes miss good opportunities (like this one!) because we consider that we might not be good enough

and we tend to think, 'why would I bother if I'm not going to get it?' Well, if you don't try you definitely won't! Besides, if you don't get it, the work put into it and the experience gained are likely to be useful for future applications. Trial and error is as fundamental to developing science as it is to developing a researcher.



# MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

SPECIAL COVERAGE:  
EUROPEAN YOUNG RESEARCHERS' AWARD  
INTERVIEW WITH PAVLO BAZILINSKY

The judges were impressed by [Pavlo Bazilinskyy's](#) project on the automation of traffic and improved road safety.



*Pavlo, you will receive the European Young Researchers' Award 2017. Congratulations! Please tell us about your project?*

Thank you! It's a great honour to accept this award. I am now a final-year PhD student at TU Delft. The focus of my project is solving human factor challenges in highly automated driving. Improving road safety by means of automating traffic is a challenge worldwide. It has the potential to save millions of lives; and this is exactly the reason why I wanted to be involved in this industry. Within the project I

cooperate with Volvo Trucks, Toyota Europe, and Continental.

*How important is the European dimension to your research?*

Very important. I have experienced education systems in five countries. I was born and studied in Ukraine. I obtained a BEng degree from Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences (Finland). Then I concluded a Erasmus Mundus Double MSc at the University of St Andrews (Scotland) and Maynooth University (Ireland). Now, as an ITN fellow in the Netherlands, for me there is no way around cooperating with companies and universities across Europe. A few months ago I came back from Sweden, where I led an on-road study with Volvo Trucks. Now I am preparing for my last secondment.

*What does ESOF mean to you [Pavlo will receive his award at ESOF 2018]? Were you able to attend previous events?*

I have not attended any previous events. But I have heard great things about this forum. The quality of the event is really high and I

am excited about being a part of ESOF 2018. I have submitted a proposal for a Science to Business session during ESOF 2018 and, together with the Bridging Science and Business working group we hope to actively contribute to the event.

*You'll receive your award in Toulouse in July 2018. What are you expecting from the event?*

I am expecting great sessions, amazing people, and lots of sun!

*What would you advise anyone who is considering applying for the European Young Researchers Award?*

Engage in activities outside your study or office hours. Volunteering after lectures or doing sports – that's how I met some of the most fascinating people. They helped me to take part in great projects and meet other active and motivated people. Find something that you love and work hard on it. But be careful, time flies when you are passionate about what you do.



# NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

## CYPRUS CHAPTER: READY TO KICK OFF IN JULY 2018



Marinos Ioannides reveals some of the Cyprus Chapter's plans in the run-up to its official launch in summer 2018.



**The Cyprus Chapter was established in May 2017** as a voluntary initiative for five Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows at the Cyprus University of Technology. The main aim is to network with other MSCA Fellows in Cyprus and abroad and initiate activities that add value to the Alumni network, while providing input for the general public.

**The Cyprus Chapter has already attracted more than 15 members.**

We are trying to locate, attract, encourage and motivate all the Cypriot MSC Fellows on the island and abroad to join our Chapter and to be actively involved. Our main objective is to establish fruitful and beneficial relationships among the MSCA Fellows in Cyprus and among professional associations

and the policy officials.

**At the same time, the Chapter aims to promote the main mission of the MSCA initiative** and to encourage different stakeholders to actively participate and become mobilised in Europe. Another important goal is to organise language courses for all the foreign Fellows in cooperation with the



# NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS



language centres of the state universities, as well as other workshops that help Fellows to develop transferable skills and broaden their career perspectives.

**The kick-off meeting will take place on 4 July 2018 in Cyprus** (memorial date of MSC). By that time, we hope to have more than 25-30 members so that we can establish a sustainable board.

We are planning to hold the kick-off meeting in the presence of the Minister and other officials responsible for research, development and technology. In addition, we are planning to invite representatives from Cypriot industry and graduate students from all of Cyprus' tertiary educational institutions (private and public).

Next year has been declared as the European Year of Cultural

Heritage by the EU and we would therefore like to focus on this thematic area and network with other professional associations, such as ICOMOS, ICOM, the associations of Archaeologists', Architects, Civil Engineers, Europa Nostra, etc. We will also be actively involved in different events, such as the Museums Night, Cultural Heritage Day, the 2018 researchers' night and a special event on Digital Heritage organised with the European Commission, the European Parliament and UNESCO, which will take place next year. We will give more details of this special event

very soon.

Moreover, we have very good relations and excellent cooperation with several foreign embassies in Cyprus. Some Ambassadors have welcomed our idea to co-organise some events in 2018 and to invite key professionals from their countries to give a special presentation on issues of importance to the public, like climate change, public health, energy, finance, immigration and so on.



**Join the network and become a key player within the next generation of researchers. Be actively involved so that you can contribute to the community of players shaping future of the world!**

# NEWS FROM WORKING GROUPS

## BRIDGING SCIENCE AND BUSINESS WORKING GROUP: CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN SCIENTISTS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Pavlo Bazilinskyy is the Chair of the Bridging Science and Business Working Group. Here is his round-up of 2017, as well as the group's plans for the year ahead.



*Mr Bazilinskyy, you are the Chair of the Bridging Science and Business Working Group. Could you tell us about the group?*

The main objective of the working group is to bring together representatives of both science and business. We strive to establish a fruitful conversation between these all-too-often separate worlds. To mediate such a conversation, our working group organises events, webinars, and training sessions. The ultimate goal is to build a platform and establish well-defined guidelines for science-to-business collaboration in Europe.

### *What were the main achievements in 2017?*

The highlight of this year was the event in Gdansk, which the BSB WG organised together with the Polish chapter in September. It took place at the Institute of Fluid Flow and Machinery. The event covered different aspects of intellectual property and included an introduction to the different types of IPR by Dr Mugdha Joshi of King's College London, as well as insights into IPR from the perspective of patent lawyer Darren Smyth. Another highlight was a workshop on Design Thinking by Daria Nikulina, which guided participants through the entire process of designing interviews and reaching solutions through critical analysis and thinking. We concluded with a series of presentations by the researchers who have successfully commercialised their research.

BSB often represents the MCAA during events. In October, a few WG members joined a meeting

at the EPO HQ in Munich and a EURAXESS workshop in Madrid. Three more members will benefit from attending EURAXESS workshops in November and December.

Another major focus during 2017 was our matchmaking tool. Development was launched by Claudia Simao, the previous chair of the WG, and is intended to be a solid bridge between MCAA members and companies in Europe. Stay tuned to hear more about it soon!

### *What is in the pipeline for 2018?*

The next year will be very exciting. After our successful event in Gdansk our group is now full of motivation and spirits are high! We want to build upon our experiences of months of preparation for the event. Our next big milestone is the next Science-to-Business conference, which we plan to organise for May in Paris. We are preparing a very exciting programme for this 2.5-day event with quite a special beginning on the first day, so stay tuned.

# NEWS FROM WORKING GROUPS



## What works in workplace learning?

Christianne Fenech, Projects Manager  
Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning  
and Employability



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Then, in the second half of the year, I plan to bring MCAA to my home country of Ukraine. I am now discussing possible collaboration with EMA (Erasmus Mundus Association). The idea is to establish a dialogue on running start-ups in the EU and Ukraine, as the

country is witnessing a tech innovation boom. We also hope to raise awareness of both the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and Erasmus+, in order to provide a stepping stone for motivated young Ukrainians and enable them to discover their own potential.



In addition, I have assembled a task-force responsible for a series of webinars on the topics of start-ups, IP, and patent law. We expect to hold the first webinar later in November. We are also discussing the idea of launching an 'MCAA incubator'.

*What are today's most important challenges for the science-business sphere?*

The worlds of science and business rarely meet and when they do misconceptions about methods and the alignment of goals often prevent productive cooperation. Our group is motivated to make

lives easier for both researchers and entrepreneurs by eliminating such obstacles.

*Increasing numbers of researchers are creating their own start-ups. What are the advantages and drawbacks in your opinion?*

Start-ups are the future and we are now at a turning point. I think it is great that researchers understand this and are taking advantage of the positive climate for start-ups in Europe. For example, I live in the Netherlands and the government here is restructuring the economy so that there is a focus on efficient small and medium-sized companies in the future. If you have a good idea that can make money, all doors are now open.

**Learn more about the Polish Chapter 2nd meeting and PC-BSB WG joint event:**

<https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu/posts/polish-chapter-2nd-meeting-and-pc-bsb-wg-joint-event>



# RESEARCH

## HOW DOES ICT AFFECT CHILDREN-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS?



Marina Everri was recently awarded a Horizon 2020 SME Innovation Associate grant. She is investigating the impact of information and communication technologies (ICT) on education and children-parent relationships while working as a family therapist. Intrigued by the topic we met her to find out more.

### *Tell us a few words about yourself?*

My name is Marina Everri and I am an Italian social scientist. I was trained as a psychologist at the University of Parma, Italy. As a young student I was imbued with the myth of psychoanalysis. I was fascinated by Freud's great insights and I remember I used to think that I really wanted to become a psychotherapist. As soon as I started studying psychology I realised how contemporary psychology, or at least most of the psychology taught in today's higher education institutions, had little to do with psychoanalysis.

In my second year, I encountered social psychology, which made me realise that we, as individuals, do not live in a void and that 'the social' actually contributes to shaping psychological processes. I became more and more interested in the study of communication and interpersonal relations (a topic of social psychology), especially when I attended a course on the psychology of family relations taught by Professor Laura Fruggeri (now my mentor). Studying that subject I came to realise that families are micro-social systems that provide care and protection. In fact, they are the 'cradle' of our

first interactions. However, families can also become a source of suffering and emotional discomfort.

### *What is your current research focus?*

I am particularly interested in the study of social relations and communication processes within families, especially when children enter adolescence. I think I am particularly fascinated by theory and method development (e.g. systems and ecological theories), which consider families as dynamic systems involved in a continuous exchange with external contexts. Similarly, I am interested in

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children and their development. In my view, we cannot separate the individual from the social. These interests have led to me conducting research across different disciplines, such as sociology, developmental and social psychology as well as anthropology. I have also collaborated with colleagues from different backgrounds in both the USA and Europe. I find that transdisciplinary research should be at the core of any research concerning complex study subjects, such as families.

*You've been awarded an MSCA for a project on the role of digital media in child development, parenting and family communication. Please tell us more.*

Well, the project built upon observations I had made in families with adolescents. I was conducting interviews with families and their adolescent children to study parenting in adolescence and families were reporting how a 'new thing called Facebook' was a cause of conflict. This was a recurrent topic in Italian families and made me realise that I could not ignore the role of ICTs.

The project's core goal was to provide new knowledge on how ICTs are changing interpersonal relations within families, as well as operational advice for parents, children and practitioners with respect to ICT use. In fact, both scientific research and public opinion tend to either be enthusiastic and supportive, or pessimistic and condemning of the harm and risks linked to ICT. More empirical evidence was needed to overcome such dichotomies.



This project not only provided new knowledge at the methodological level, testing SEBE (never used before with families and adolescents) as a procedure to collect data, but also allowing adolescents to become more aware of the use of ICTs. But the project also led to new findings that could inform future research and interventions in this field. Specifically:

- adolescents privilege the use of smartphones to accomplish everyday tasks ranging from entertainment to school duties;
- adolescents show 'bittersweet' emotions (mixed positive and negative) or emotional problems, especially anxiety, regarding the 'full-time connection' afforded by their smartphones;
- a small number of adolescents were able to develop coping

strategies, thereby showing resilient behaviour as well as positive emotions in relation to smartphone usage;

- adolescents' individual characteristics (skills and self-efficacy), family relational dynamics (quality of family communication and level of parental monitoring), and allocation/affordability of digital technologies in the household had an impact on the domestication of smartphones, i.e. their harmonious appropriation and integration in everyday tasks and routines (e.g. homework).

*How would you describe your Marie Curie experience?*

I think I would describe it using three words: unique, challenging, inspiring!

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*You were recently nominated a Horizon 2020 SME Innovation Associate. Could you tell us about the project and your role?*

This is a pilot call launched this year by the European Commission, which aims at building a partnership between 'talented researchers' and small enterprises that will help the latter to develop innovative ideas. Every two months researchers can attend seminars on how they can use their research expertise to help the enterprises to innovate.

I decided to apply for this position as I thought it would represent the productive evolution of my MSC project. I liked the idea of having the option to transfer my research results to something that could have a 'real impact' on society. In addition, this call can translate into practice what higher education institutions have tried to do in the last years, namely build a stronger relationship with industry.

So I am currently working at an education technology start-up (Zeeko) based at University College Dublin, and I am in charge of investigating

the side effects of virtual reality on child development and parent-child communication, while helping Zeeko to improve its content.

*You are also a family therapist. How do you combine research and practice?*

It took me a while to understand how I could become a good therapist as well as a good researcher. At the beginning it was quite hard even though the 'object' of my research and intervention was the same, i.e. families. I had to develop very specific competences in both sectors. I spent four intense years following both clinical and research training, which also affected my private life. However, a process of 'professional maturation' made it possible to integrate both. I used to have a private psychotherapy practice in Italy to which I dedicated one day a week. Having a private practice allowed me to integrate my lessons with clinical cases; students found that particularly motivating and provided me with positive feedback. When I was awarded the MSC, I had to quit the practice in Italy, since I moved to London.

*In your opinion, what are the consequences of ICT for family relations and the development of teenagers?*

I think that ICTs are actually transforming the ways in which we communicate. We still do not know what will happen in the long run, but it is clear that digital devices (smartphones and tablets), besides the Internet, are ubiquitous. However, my findings showed that parents and teenagers are trying to find solutions to cope with both perpetual connection and the increasing pace of technological innovation. In addition, I could provide evidence of the fact that technologies are not good or bad per se, rather that families try to 'domesticate' them, namely they attribute meanings, set regulations, devise strategies that allow them to incorporate ICTs in their everyday tasks and routines. For some families, those processes can be smooth, for others they can be more complicated. Through my research, it was possible to identify good and bad practices with ICTs, as well as investigate participants' experiences.





# EVENT

## MCAA FINANCIAL AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP REPRESENTED AT THE BCF CAREER FAIR BELGIUM

The second edition of the BCF (Bio/Life Sciences, Chemistry, Food or Pharma) career event took place on 16 November 2017 in Ghent (Belgium). [Zsafia Butell](#) was there and told us how it went.

The [BCF Career Fair Belgium](#) is the largest career event in bio/life sciences, chemistry, food or pharma and an excellent networking opportunity for everyone who is currently seeking a job in this sector. An impressive number of exhibitors (over 60) were present to gain exposure and advertise their open vacancies or services. Participants were able to attend exciting plenary talks and round-table discussions on career-related topics, have their CV checked and get advice from a professional career coach.

The event was a great opportunity to advertise our upcoming [Annual Conference and General Assembly](#)

and to seek industrial partners to support the MCAA. Over the past few months the Financial Affairs Working Group (FA-WG), together with our contractor, has been working hard to develop a financial framework to attract sponsorship, and thereby secure sustainability and the means to meet the MCAA's future needs. These efforts resulted in an attractive brochure with different sponsorship packages offering mutually beneficial partnerships.

Today there is a clear demand from young and talented researchers to develop their skills and volunteer work in a professional organisation that can offer a stepping stone to

an ever-evolving cross-disciplinary career.

As the chair of the FA-WG, I would like to encourage early stage researchers to develop invaluable soft skills, like networking, business negotiation, communication and budget management – to name but a few.

If you are interested in supporting our fundraising efforts, please join the [Financial Affairs Working Group](#) to develop your personal skills and widen your professional network!



# EVENT

## EURAXESS RESEARCHERS AT MOTION EVENT ON EUROPEAN RESEARCH DAY ADVANCING YOUR RESEARCH CAREER IN EUROPE: FUNDING AND FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIAN RESEARCHERS



The event targeted students from IIT Gandhinagar, Marwari University, and other nearby academic and research institutes, but also

attracted participants from all over India. More than 180 participants were attended the event in Ahmedabad on 15 September and

Dr Praveen Kumar represented the MCAA's Indian Chapter, providing information for the young Indian researchers present. The feedback was very positive and encouraging.



DR PRAVEEN KUMAR

# EVENT

## EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE (EPO) EVENTS

A series of four study visits are being organised by the EPO for 2018.



The aim of the study visits is to raise and increase awareness of the European patent system among students in all fields at European universities and among other interested parties.

The visits provide hands-on experience of the EPO, and offer insight into the work of EPO experts, patent examiners and lawyers.

### REGISTER HERE:

[Visit on 22 February in Munich \(Germany\)](#)

[Visit on 20 March in The Hague \(Netherlands\)](#)

[Visit on 23 June in Munich](#)

[Visit on 11 October 2018 in Munich](#)

[More information about the EPO](#)