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Introduction

Dear MCAA members,

We are pleased to present to you the second issue of the Marie Curie Alumni Newsletter. As you may know, as of 23 November, the MCAA has its own Board, which was elected at the first MCAA General Assembly that took place in Brussels (Belgium). If you weren't present at this event and if you want to know what happened, check out the "Special Coverage – MCAA First General Assembly" in this newsletter. What's more, you'll meet other Alumni, hear their stories and learn how the Marie Curie Actions will evolve under Horizon 2020. Happy reading!

Special coverage – MCAA First General Assembly:

- **Ten things you should know about the first General Assembly of the Marie Curie Alumni Association.** Read our digest highlighting the key moments from this special event.
- **MCAA Board – Who was elected?** See a short presentation of the newly elected Members of the MCAA Board.
- **You are probably wondering what the new elected Board for the Association will do.** With this in mind, we have spoken to them to find out more about their visions and intentions for the Association:
 - Snezana Krstic – Chair
 - Francesco Grassi – Vice Chair
 - Axelle Viré – Vice Chair
 - Roy Someshwar – Treasurer
 - Wuraola Akande – Ordinary Board Member
 - Zoran Andjelic – Ordinary Board Member
 - Kiran Kumar Chereddy – Ordinary Board Member
 - Annett Kiss – Ordinary Board Member
 - Mauricio Manfrini – Ordinary Board Member
 - Francesco Sanna – Ordinary Board Member
- **What's next after the first MCAA General Assembly?** An interview with Odiseefs Panopoulos, DG EAC, European Commission unveils the European Commission's vision for the Association.

MCAA Newsletter general articles

- **Definition of the day: European Research Infrastructures (RIs).** Find an easy-to-understand overview of European Research Infrastructures (RIs).
- **Ten websites you need to know for employment in research in Europe.** Browse 10 websites that can help you if you are looking for new professional challenges in Europe.
- **During my Marie Curie project, my host country was... Germany.** See tips and advice from Marie Curie Fellows who have worked or are currently working in Germany.
- **I benefited from a Marie Curie Action: Intra-European Fellowships for Career development (IEF) in the spotlight.** Two Fellows share their experiences of this Marie Curie Action.
- **Five top tips to boost your career after a Marie Curie Action.** Learn from experienced Alumni who have boosted their career after a Marie Curie Action.
- **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions under Horizon 2020.** Find out what will change for Marie Curie Actions under the Horizon 2020 Programme.
- **Take part in the MCAA Community – Stand up for quality scientific publications!** Find out which tools could be used to promote quality scientific publications.
- **Ten minutes with...Nicolas Chamel!** Don't miss our classical face-to-face appointment with an alumnus!
- **Keep in touch...what's coming up in the next newsletter?** See what's in the pipeline for the next newsletter!

The MCAA team takes also the opportunity to wish you a Happy New Year, and a lot of success for 2014!

Yours,

The MCAA team

Newsletter Disclaimer

These articles do not legally bind the European Commission. They do not claim to be exhaustive and do not represent official interpretations of texts formulated by the European Commission. For correct information the original documents should always be consulted. The links provided can be used for such consultations.

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10 things to know about the first General Assembly of the Marie Curie Alumni Association

If you weren't present at the first General Assembly of the Marie Curie Alumni Association you are probably wondering what happened...Below you'll find everything you need to know about this very special day!



The Marie Curie Alumni Association's first General Assembly took place on 23 November at Square Brussels Meeting Center, Belgium. 85 Alumni attended this event, enjoying the opportunity to meet and to network, as well as to participate in the election of the MCAA Board.

Representatives from the European Commission – DG EAC – were present and led the discussions, as well as representatives from both contractors INOVA+ and INTRASOFT International.

1. **The Association should be able to provide attractive benefits to its Members in general, and aims to serve the particular needs of its Members.** Alumni attending the meeting were welcomed and reminded that the Association should be established as a legal entity and gradually become independent.
2. **The Association will be established as an Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif (AISBL)** under Belgian Law and provide the Alumni services and activities that can enhance their careers and foster their networking activities, namely cross-sector and cross-cultural networking activities.

3. **The MCAA web-portal provides a wide range of services.** The website's sections and the opportunities provided by the portal for communication with other Alumni were presented. Alumni may send any comment, question or suggestion to the following address: contact@mariecuriealumni.eu.
4. **Some 4 537 replies were received and more than 90% of the Fellows replied to all of the survey questions sent between early August and mid-October 2013,** which were intended to increase understanding of Alumni's expectations about the Association and the web-portal. An overview of the survey responses was shared with the audience.
5. **The 27 candidates for the MCAA Board were allocated 2 minutes to present themselves** and share their motivation to serve as Board Members.
6. **Marie Curie Actions will become Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) under Horizon 2020.** Participants learned about Horizon 2020 and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions that will evolve under this new framework programme.
7. **Some participants were interviewed in a dedicated space.** You may read some interviews in the next articles!
8. **11 MCAA Board Members were elected.** 81 Alumni participated in the voting process and elected Snezana Krstic as the Chair, Francesco Grassi and Axelle Viré as the Vice-Chairs, Roy Someshwar as the Treasurer, Maria-Antonietta Buccheri as the Secretary and 6 Ordinary Board Members: Wuraola Akande, Zoran Andjelic, Mauricio Manfrini, Kiran Kumar Chereddy, Annett Kiss and Francesco Sanna.
9. **The Articles of Association currently count eight sections.** The proposed articles were formulated under supervision of both lawyers and a Belgian notary. Based on comments of Members and collaboration with the newly elected Board an improved version will be submitted to the Belgian authorities for establishing legally the association.
10. **The 2014 MCAA Plan of activities** comprises the consolidation of legal structures, the recruitment of more Members, the development of web services and synergy with other organisations.

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MCAA Board – Who was elected?



1st row from the left to the right: Francesco Sanna, Maria-Antonietta Buccheri, Snezana Krstic, Wuraola Akande, Roy Someshwar, Annett Kiss.
2nd row from the left to the right: Axelle Vire, Francesco Grassi, Zoran Andjelic, Kiran Kumar Cheredy, Mauricio Manfrini

The Marie Curie Alumni Association Board was elected at the General Assembly, which took place on Saturday 23 November in Brussels, Belgium.

Each candidate was allocated 2 minutes for a presentation. The afternoon were announced the results of the election.

The Members of the Board are as follows:

Chair: Snezana Krstic

Vice Chairs: Francesco Grassi and Axelle Viré

Treasurer: Roy Someshwar

Secretary: Maria-Antonietta Buccheri

Ordinary Board Members:

1. Wuraola Ankande
2. Zoran Andjelic
3. Kiran Kumar Chereddy
4. Anett Kiss
5. Mauricio Manfrini
6. Francesco Sanna

We congratulate all of these new Board Members and wish them great success!

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MCAA Chair –
Snezana Krstic

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MCAA Chair – Snezana Krstic

1. May I ask you to introduce yourself briefly (name, nationality, Marie Curie Action, Project, international experience...)?

I am Snežana Krstić (Serbian nationality), a chemical engineer, with broad professional interest in issues at the intersection of science, society, innovation and policy. I worked on my Marie Curie project at the CERN School of Computing. I have been active in European research and higher education policy activities since 2004 and have had the opportunity to cooperate with many respected organisations – at European and global level. I was also very active in networks of researchers, promoting the values of the research profession and working on issues related to human resources - mobility, training, research integrity, professional development.

2. Why did you apply for the Chairperson position within the MCAA?

I still remember when I received my Marie Curie grant how honoured I felt to benefit from such a prestigious European programme. The establishment of the MCAA aroused a similar type of excitement, as we had the opportunity to become part of an excellent team composed of all the researchers who have benefited from this respected programme. I applied for the Chair position as I was truly motivated to contribute to the development, growth, visibility and reputation of the association and I believed that I had the experience and achievements to make the ambitious goals and the aims of association come true. I was particularly inspired by the character of the association - organised within European settings, but with a truly international character, fostering cooperation among Members from different countries, sectors and scientific disciplines.

3. As the MCAA Chairperson, what do you plan to do first? – or what is the first item you plan to put on the agenda?

As the MCAA is a new association, a number of activities need to be taken in parallel in order to enable it to develop fast. However, strategic planning is an item that deserves full attention at the moment. I am also going to put on the agenda for the first Board meeting the various aspects of strategic plans related to the development, growth and achievement of aims defined by our Statute.



4. What do you think the MCAA's priorities should be?

I think that our priorities should be activities contributing to the realisation of the association's aims. At the moment our priority is to develop a suitable structure for collaboration, establish Chapters organised on a geographical basis (national, regional or international) and organise thematic Working Groups. In parallel to structural development, we need to work on our growth, having in mind that the association is open to all researchers who benefited from the Maria Curie programme. Another important priority is good communication - both internal and external. I am finding it vital to establish and foster good relationships within the worldwide research and innovation community and, on the other hand, within our association, to foster a positive cooperative atmosphere, based on mutual understanding and respect, regardless of our diversity.

5. How do you plan to organise your work within the MCAA and especially your collaboration with the other Members of the Board?

I see MCAA at the first place as a team and work of the Board as a team work with different responsibilities for individual Members. Aside from my duties coming from the Chair position, I am not going to neglect other activities which I practiced before I was elected for this responsible position. It is very important to have direct contact with Members and I will try to provide ample space for bottom-up ideas or initiatives. Collaboration with the Board Members has already started within our group and we are planning to have the first meeting, probably the next month.

6. How will your work within the association help build a “community spirit” among the Marie Curie Alumni?

I think that a “community spirit” has already taken shape within the MCAA - that was particularly visible at the General Assembly. However, we still need to work a lot. I think that enthusiasm and commitment to the aims of the association, where the needs of the individual Members are also respected, are the best way to build a “community spirit”. In addition, good communication, integrity and open-mindedness also play an important role.

7. Do you plan to meet Alumni? When?

As much as we are used to virtual communication, personal contacts are crucial and I will be happy to meet Alumni as often as possible. We are still in the planning phase, but I hope that aside from the General Assembly, there will be an opportunity to meet them at different events, including those that we might even organise ourselves. I will be glad to meet the local Alumni when I am travelling in different cities, as well as when they come to mine (Belgrade). Moreover, I will do my best to accept invitations for visits or events that might come from our geographical Chapters or Alumni's institutions.

8. What would you say to the Alumni, especially to those who elected you?

Those who elected me in the first place, I would like to thank for their trust, particularly as we had excellent candidates for the Chair position and I am aware that it was not easy to take a decision. Every beginning is difficult, particularly in today's economic climate. However, based on the initial enthusiasm, I believe that within a year we will already have significant results, succeed in creating a strong foundation and taking pioneering



steps toward building a highly respected association. This is an association comparable to the EC programme from which we all benefited, and worthy of the renowned name that it proudly bears.

Finally, I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to wish a very happy and fruitful New Year to all our Members, colleagues and friends, current and future, and invite them to join us (if benefited/benefiting from the Marie Curie programme) or cooperate with us.

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MCAA Vice-Chair –
Francesco Grassi

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MCAA Vice-Chair – Francesco Grassi

1. May I ask you to introduce yourself briefly (name, nationality, Marie Curie Action, Project, international experience...)?

My name is Francesco Grassi, I am Italian, and I was awarded an Outgoing International Fellowship during the Sixth Framework Programme. My Project was called OSTEODEN and the full title was: 'Bone marrow dendritic cells as determinants for bone loss induced by estrogen deficiency'. I spent part of my Ph.D training in Germany (University of Ulm) as a part of a joint doctoral programme with the University of Bologna, but the most relevant international experience for me a four-year stay in the US, at Emory University (Atlanta), where I completed my Ph.D and spent three years as a post-doctoral student.

2. Why did you apply for the Vice-Chair Person position within the MCAA?

Because I think I can have an impact on the first MCAA Board and did not want to miss this opportunity. I am old 'enough' at this stage to have gained relevant experience on some of the key issues for the MCAA, and I am hoping this will help the association as it takes its first steps.

3. As the Vice-Chair within the MCAA, what do you plan to do first? – or what is the first item you plan to put on the agenda?

Firstly, I would like to quickly establish a fruitful relationship with the other Members of the Executive Committee and with the policy officers of the European Commission. We have the responsibility to shape MCAA priorities. To achieve this objective, it will be crucial to meet several times face to face, to get to know each other and start creating a team. Also, I plan to contribute to the establishment of a limited number of working groups, which will be focused on specific issues - real needs where the MCAA can play a non-redundant role. Finally, I plan to provide the best possible support to Snezana for her work as Chair of the Association.



4. What do you think the MCAA's priorities should be?

The MCAA is still being established at this time; I think the main priority of the new Board will be to set the ground for a long-term support by the European Commission. Our work at this early stage will be crucial to ensuring adequate support from the EC and possibly from other funding bodies in the future. We do not need just 'another' networking platform; the MCAA must show and tell the outside world how valuable it is to be a Marie-Curie Fellow. To achieve this goal, we must work to build efficient, easily-accessible databases that collect professional histories and achievements of current and past Marie Curie Fellows; we must track them down and promote their experience. Transparency and effective communication among Members are key tasks for the first year of the MCAA. The website is a good tool but I see room for improvements in order to encourage individual contributions to discussions, planning and working groups. I also think that the MCAA should be proactive in strengthening relationships with non-EU countries, such as the USA, China, India, and Japan.

5. How do you plan to organise your work within the MCAA and especially your collaboration with the other Members of the Board?

I plan to meet the Board Members quite often at the beginning of our mandate; both face to face and through web-conferences. Knowing each other will be critical for effective communication and future work together.

6. How will your work within the association help build a “community spirit” among the Marie Curie Alumni?

By including in the 'shopping list' of MCAA opportunities the sharing of views and visions among Members, within meetings or working groups. I think it will be very important to build among Members a broad awareness of the unique value of the Marie Curie experience and make it 'contagious' outside of 'us'.

7. Do you plan to meet Alumni? When?

At the local level, being affiliated to the University of Bologna, one of the largest universities in Europe, gives me the opportunity to have personal contact with many Marie-Curie Alumni as well as potential candidates for future Fellowship. I have already started to spread the word about MCAA with local EU-Grant offices and I plan to meet officials from my university as well as the local Marie Curie community by the beginning of next year. More broadly, I am willing to meet as many Alumni as possible at occasional meetings involving MCAA and through our Website.

8. What would you say to the Alumni, especially to those who elected you?

I would like to emphasise that the GA exceeded my expectations. I was truly happy to meet such a diverse community of students, scientists, talented professionals; some of them travelled about times as far as I did to reach our venue in Brussels and that shows how a great an opportunity the MCAA could be for its Members. I am proud that the MCAA and even its Board are a truly multi-cultural and multi-ethnic community. Finally, I would like to thank everyone who voted for me, I am happy to start working for the future of the MCAA, and I will do the best I can for it.

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MCAA Vice-Chair –
Axelle Viré

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MCAA Vice-Chair – Axelle Viré

1. May I ask you to introduce yourself briefly (name, nationality, Marie Curie Action, Project, international experience...)?

My name is Axelle Viré. I am Belgian and graduated in Mechanical Engineering from the Université Libre de Bruxelles in 2006. I also hold a Ph.D in Physics (computational fluid mechanics) from the same university. In 2010, I moved to the United Kingdom to become a post-doctoral research associate at Imperial College London. I was also awarded an FP7 Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship from 2011 to 2013 to work on the numerical modelling of floating wind turbines at Imperial College. The experience I gained in the UK has been tremendously useful, and I would recommend every researcher to gain work experience abroad. Since October 2013, I am based in the Netherlands, where I work as an Assistant Professor at Delft University of Technology. I also received an FP7 Marie Curie Career Integration Grant (2013-2017) to grow my activities in this new position.

2. Why did you apply for the Vice-Chair Person position within the MCAA?

I applied for the Vice-Chair position in the MCAA because I wanted to be at the core of an Association that represents the voice of the Alumni and bridges the gap between researchers and the European Commission. So far, I have worked in three different European countries (Belgium, UK, the Netherlands), and benefited from two different Marie Curie Actions. Therefore, I have a good knowledge of the Marie Curie funding, and have ideas on what could be improved to make researchers' mobility and international collaborations more efficient. I also hear about recurrent issues faced by the Alumni, and feel that there is a need to make this voice heard. Finally, I am willing to develop support activities between Alumni at a national level as part of the MCAA.

3. As the Vice-Chair within the MCAA, what do you plan to do first? – or what is the first item you plan to put on the agenda?

My priority is to conduct a survey of the Alumni on their experiences of the Marie Curie Actions. This will provide statistics on what works well and what needs to be improved. The outcome of the survey will be reported to the European Commission. I believe that this is the starting point to make the voice of the Alumni heard and improve the Marie Curie Actions.

4. What do you think the MCAA's priorities should be?

The MCAA should support the Alumni in developing their scientific career in Europe. This includes:

- improving the implementation of the Marie Curie Actions,
- guiding through the funding possibilities,
- providing opportunities for further career development and training. It should make sure that Europe keeps attracting the best researchers and gives them the means to fully develop their potential.

5. How do you plan to organise your work within the MCAA and especially your collaboration with the other Members of the Board?

I plan to have regular meetings with the other Board Members, for example, through Skype, emails, and face-to-face meetings. I am glad to see that the Board Members are highly motivated and willing to make the MCAA a success. It is important to keep a good team dynamic and coordinate our activities efficiently. For this, we need to prioritise our objectives for the coming two years, setting clear deadlines and discussing progress in well-prepared meetings.

6. How will your work within the association help build a “community spirit” among the Marie Curie Alumni?

I think that communication with the Alumni is the key to building “community spirit”. I will use the MCAA web portal to disseminate my activities and report back to the community. I hope that the survey I will conduct will make the Alumni feel that they belong to a community that supports them and wants to improve their work experience and situation.

7. Do you plan to meet Alumni? When?

I would like to meet Alumni nationally, in order to present the MCAA objectives and network. This will however take a few months to organise.

8. What would you say to the Alumni, especially to those who elected you?

I would like to thank them for trusting me in this new role. I really want to bring together all the Alumni to make a successful and vibrant Association, which benefits researchers worldwide. We need to ensure that research excellence remains a priority in Europe.

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MCAA Treasurer -
Roy Someshwar

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MCAA Treasurer – Roy Someshwar

1. May I ask you to introduce yourself briefly (name, nationality, Marie Curie Action, Project, international experience...)?

Hi,Ciao,Hola,Hallo!

I am Roy Someshwar - a scientist by training, a multi-linguist cum globe-trotter by hobby and a prominent youth activist in the field of International Development and policy using low-cost ICT Technologies.

I have had the honour and privilege to represent the youth community at some highly coveted international events, including COP15, St. Petersburg Internal Economic Forum, EU-India Summit, Erasmus Mundus Association and Asian Youth Forum.

Having lived, worked in 6 countries (Germany, Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Israel, India), travelled in over 30 countries and speaking 5 languages (English, German, Spanish, Hindi, Bengali), I consider myself as a global citizen of a world without borders. I believe all these qualities will come in very handy while working actively with an equally diverse community like MCAA.

Marie Curie Actions - ITN

project - INTRO (Interactive Robotics)

Nationality - Indian

2. Why did you apply for the Treasurer position within the MCAA?

People often hesitate to hold the position of a Treasurer because this post comes with an immense responsibility and an extra bit of hard work. After all, being answerable for the fund management of hundreds of thousands of euros of EU public money is no joke!

My 5 years of vast experience withinin EMA (Erasmus Mundus Association) in various capacities and especially as Executive Board Member has given me enough exposure and experience and the much-needed skills to take on this responsibility.

I am looking forward to delivering to the best of my ability.



3. As the Treasurer within the MCAA, what do you plan to do first? – or what is the first item you plan to put on the agenda?

I plan to act for the deployment of ICT tools for Fund Management. This will make budget management easier, efficient and would allow us an opportunity to analyse it better for insightful reporting in our annual budget reports. And of course, to facilitate absolute transparency in the system.

4. What do you think the MCAA's priorities should be?

The MCAA's priorities should be:

- To go legal.
- To establish itself as an important 'voice of researchers' in the EU Research Policy arena.

5. How do you plan to organise your work within the MCAA and especially your collaboration with the other Members of the Board?

Thanks to Snezana, our President, we have established an excellent online forum 'MCAA Board Communication' within the MCAA website through which we discuss the strategies, action plans, aims and objectives of the Association.

The MCAA Board is truly international (we have people from Asia to Africa to Latin America) and represents the true spirits of our association. The strength of this association lies in how well we collaborate.

6. How will your work within the association help build a “community spirit” among the Marie Curie Alumni?

I was a Community Development Coordinator of EMA (Erasmus Mundus Association) from 2011 to 2013. So, I can tell you with conviction that the success of an Alumni/youth association depends entirely on how well the Board is able to imbibe this feeling of oneness/belongingness towards the association. It is this community spirit which is going to be the 'soul' of the association.

The MCAA Board as a whole needs to take an inclusive approach to developing this spirit. We need to involve and touch the lives of more and more Alumni through interesting events/activities and most importantly by churning out the full potential of Web 2.0, especially social media.

7. Do you plan to meet Alumni? When?

The Annual General Assembly recently held was an excellent opportunity to meet and network with Fellows and Alumni. Our very first GA was attended by more than 80 Fellows. I was fascinated to see that Members above 60 years old took part in the GA.



8. What would you say to the Alumni, especially to those who elected you?

I am humbled with the support that I have received. Thanks for trusting me, for believing in me for this responsible position. I promise to give my very best. Still full of positive energy gained at the GA. It was great meeting you all. Let's make MCAA a great success.

Let's build the MCAA TOGETHER!

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MCAA ordinary Board
Member – Wuraola Akande

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MCAA ordinary Board Member – Wuraola Akande

1. May I ask you to introduce yourself briefly (name, nationality, Marie Curie Action, Project, international experience...)?

I am Wuraola Akande from Ila-Orangun, Osun State in Nigeria. My Marie Curie Action project was MONACO-EXTRA (project 218242).

I am currently doing a one year mandatory national youth service corps at the University College Hospital, Ibadan, Nigeria. I received a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry from University of Ibadan, Nigeria. I then studied for a Master of Pharmacy at the University of Brighton. I did my Pharmacy pre-registration programme with Tesco in-store Pharmacy at Hackney, UK, and registered as a pharmacist with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in July 2008, before I became a Marie Curie early stage researcher at the University of Brighton during my Ph.D programme funded by Marie Curie MONACO - EXTRA project 218242. This was an international project (IAPP), which involved four universities and three small companies.

During my Ph.D, I was at Lund University Department of Biotechnology, Centre for Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, Lund, Sweden on an Erasmus grant for three months; I was at Danube University, Department for Clinical Medicine and Biotechnology, Centre for Biomedical Technology, Krems, Austria for another three months and also attended the mini MBA programme at the same university.

I went on industrial secondment to Polymerics GmbH Berlin, Germany and Protista Biotechnology AB, IDEON, Lund, Sweden each for a month.

I also attended international conferences organised by the MONACO-EXTRA project, such as summer school in Antalya, Turkey and winter school in Semmering Austria.

In August 2012, I went to Nigeria for a six-week programme, known as "Foreign Pharmacy Graduate Orientation Programme" at the University of Ibadan, which enabled me to sit for the professional exam and register with the Pharmacist Council of Nigeria.

I completed my Ph.D in February 2013.



MCAA ordinary Board
Member – Wuraola Akande



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2. Why did you apply for the Ordinary Board Member position within the MCAA?

Having read the list of potential Members of MCAA and discovering that I am the only one resident in Africa, I became curious to network and interact with various researchers from more developed parts of the world; and I, therefore, decided to apply for the position of Ordinary Board Member to enable me to gain from, as well as possibly contribute to, the pioneering efforts to build the MCAA into a formidable body of researchers in the world.

3. As an Ordinary Board Member within the MCAA, what do you plan to do first? – or what is the first item you plan to put on the agenda?

First and foremost, it is my desire to identify and link up with appropriate national and regional research sectors with a view to encouraging, advancing and elevating the research activities of the Members of the MCAA. Therefore, my first item on the agenda will be to gear the Executive of this association towards constant classification of interdisciplinary research proposals and efforts for easy reach of Members through the social media, e.g a blog within the MCAA web portal.

4. What do you think the MCAA's priorities should be?

The MCAA is an association with diverse aims and activities and I believe its priorities should be to promote and exploit the full potential of its Members and other Marie Curie Fellows and create a valuable platform, where Members can exchange ideas and collaborate on projects.

5. How do you plan to organise your work within the MCAA and especially your collaboration with the other Members of the Board?

My work within the MCAA can be done through effective communication via the web-portal at least monthly, to other MCAA Members and by creating a chat forum for the Board Members to enable an effective organisational communication forum, to exchange ideas and discuss important issues.

6. How will your work within the association help build a “community spirit” among the Marie Curie Alumni?

My work within the association can help build a 'community spirit' among the Marie Curie Alumni by having an open forum chat within the web-portal, having mutual understanding with other MCAA, and carrying every Member involved along with any plan or suggestion.

7. Do you plan to meet Alumni? When?

Yes, most likely annually; the location and time will be decided by all MCAA Members through the web-portal. It is difficult to meet up apart from during the meetings because of location.

8. What would you say to the Alumni, especially to those who elected you?

“A big thank you to all, for your trust and your vote” would be my expression of appreciation.

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MCAA Ordinary Board
Member – Zoran Andjelic

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MCAA Ordinary Board Member – Zoran Andjelic

1. May I ask you to introduce yourself briefly (name, nationality, Marie Curie Action, Project, international experience...)?

I am Zoran Andjelic, with German citizenship, originally from Croatia. In the past I have coordinated several international projects with international agencies like NSF-USA, KFA-DE, including three MC projects in FP3, FP5 and FP7. I spent the first part of my professional carrier working in the academic environment (professor of electrical engineering at the University of Sarajevo) and the last 20 years as a research Fellow in industrial enterprises like ABB. I am currently CEO at POLOPT Technology (www.polopty.com).

2. Why did you apply for the Ordinary Board Member position within the MCAA?

My intention is to try to pass on some of my experience in working in Marie Curie projects.

3. As an Ordinary Board Member within the MCAA, what do you plan to do first? – or what is the first item you plan to put on the agenda?

I intend to focus on networking between MCAA Members with the aim of following in particular – and extensively – future activities related to Horizon 2020.

4. What do you think the MCAA's priorities should be?

The MCAA's priorities should be linked mainly to networking activities and to Horizon 2020.



MCAA Ordinary Board
Member – Zoran Andjelic



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5. How do you plan to organise your work within the MCAA and especially your collaboration with the other Members of the Board?

I plan to:

- Establish closer relations with interested Members.
- Check if there is a potential for synergy between the MCAA Members (common research area, common ideas for the future projects, etc.)
- Contribute with the ideas related to the new calls.
- Distribute information on the actual initiatives launched by MC and other programmes.

6. How will your work within the association help build a “community spirit” among the Marie Curie Alumni?

I hope that the points mentioned above will help build this spirit.

7. Do you plan to meet Alumni? When?

I don't know yet! I intend to meet some of them, probably at the beginning of the next year.

8. What would you say to the Alumni, especially to those who elected you?

Thank you!

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MCAA Ordinary Board
Member – Kiran Kumar
Chereddy

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MCAA Ordinary Board Member – Kiran Kumar Chereddy

1. May I ask you to introduce yourself briefly (name, nationality, Marie Curie Action, Project, international experience...)?

I was born in Guntur, in the southern part of India. Being interested in life sciences, I chose biology as major in my secondary school. I studied at Vishwa Bharathi College of Pharmaceutical Sciences, affiliated to Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU) to pursue Bachelor of Pharmacy. In 2009, I obtained the 'Licentiate in Pharmacy'. I got a wonderful opportunity to join Erasmus Mundus Master Course Advanced Spectroscopy in Chemistry. As a part of ASC master course, I studied at the University of Lille-1, France and University of Leipzig, Germany and graduated in June 2012. Immediately, I started my Ph.D studies in the group of Prof. V. Pr  at at the Louvain Drug Research Institute, UCL in Belgium where I am employed as an Early Stage Researcher within the Marie Curie Actions ITN NANODRUG (<http://www.nanodrug.qmul.ac.uk/>). During my research, I formed many research collaborations in/outside of the network. I love travelling, meeting new people, writing stories and cooking!

2. Why did you apply for the Ordinary Board Member position within the MCAA?

Being an active volunteer for different associations, I am glad to offer my knowledge in volunteer management and strengths in team building to MCAA. The MCAA needs a strategy for building the awareness and importance of the MC Fellowship within and outside of Europe and we are lagging behind a bit compared to other associations in marketing and promoting. Moreover, since the very beginning of my Erasmus Mundus studies, I have been concerned about the branding of EU programmes. This was also one of the reasons why I applied for the Board Member position within the MCAA.

3. As an Ordinary Board Member within the MCAA, what do you plan to do first? – or what is the first item you plan to put on the agenda?

I am very inspired to be a part of MCAA Board. In the action plan, first, we need to find our direction and establish better networks among our researchers. My foremost priorities are PROMPT responses from the MCAA and BRANDING of MC. Also, I am strongly motivated to put myself to serve MCAA as a Board Member in combating the financial challenges of our Fellows and I am confident that I can contribute to my best level both in sense of time and quality of work for the association.



MCAA Ordinary Board
Member – Kiran Kumar
Cherreddy



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4. What do you think the MCAA's priorities should be?

I strongly insist on:

- PROMPT responses with specific deadlines,
- MARKETING and promotion of MC Fellows,
- NETWORK: Intense links with industry and private partners and formation of working groups,
- TRANSPARENT budget and open opportunities for all Members,
- HELP: database with all details as welcome kits for incoming researchers.

5. How do you plan to organise your work within the MCAA and especially your collaboration with the other Members of the Board?

I am very happy that the newly elected Board is committed to fulfilling the aims and objectives of the MCAA. On a pre-agreed time line we will discuss the progress of the issues, plan the constructive development of MCAA, prioritise the requests from Members, etc. I feel with the best utilisation of current technology, the MCAA Board will be able to set the milestones and achieve them with the support of Members.

6. How will your work within the association help build a “community spirit” among the Marie Curie Alumni?

"Open opportunities and transparency" is what the Members are demanding, which can lay paths taking our association forward. A small idea can bring a bigger change. Any activity that would increase understanding of other cultures, team building and community spirit is highly encouraged from my side, like forming national bodies, working groups, innovative groups, joint social service activities, group trips, Marie Curie Hangouts, etc. We are one of the best products of the EC. So, I don't want to restrict the voice of Members to science. One can raise his/her voice on finding solutions for social problems, inspirations, etc. I will gladly support the debates among Members.

7. Do you plan to meet Alumni? When?

I live in Brussels, which is the heart of Europe and the headquarters for the EU. I am happy to meet and spend my time with anyone who passes by, if I am free.

8. What would you say to the Alumni, especially to those who elected you?

I am very thankful to everyone who supported and voted for me and it is my pleasure and a great responsibility to work on our common plans as one Board; as any MC Fellow, I feel we are open minded and will continue working actively for MCAA despite the election results. I especially hope that in the next 2 years, the MCAA will network more with other organisations, promote Alumni to employers and create a strong Marie Curie Fellows community.

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Member – Anett Kiss

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MCAA Ordinary Board Member – Anett Kiss

1. May I ask you to introduce yourself briefly (name, nationality, Marie Curie Action, Project, international experience...)?

My name is Anett Kiss, I am originally from Hungary but now working in the United Kingdom. I graduated in biology in 2003 from the University of Szeged in Hungary and studied for my Ph.D at the University of Sheffield, UK, as a Marie Curie early-stage researcher within the INTRO2 Research Training Network. This was followed by a Marie Curie European Re-Integration grant (LHC-REL) at the Umea Plant Science Centre in Sweden. During this post-doctoral period I developed a keen interest in supporting other researchers in grant applications and parallel to my research job I became a part-time Marie Curie Grant Advisor at the Grants Office of Umea University. Having found the role very rewarding I diverted my career towards a professional support role and now work full time as a Research Development Officer at the University of Sussex, helping academics at different career stages with grant applications and securing funding for their research.

2. Why did you apply for the Ordinary Board Member position within the MCAA?

The Marie Curie Actions mean a lot to me; they have paved the way for my professional career from an early stage. I find them to be an excellent and unique mechanism supporting scientific excellence and personal development and having great impact on researchers' careers. I feel strongly about supporting other Fellows and about extending the impact of the Marie Curie Actions beyond the project lifetimes and have already been involved in the work of the Marie Curie Fellows Association over the past few years.

I hope that my diverse experiences in research, professional advice, and research administration and management will be of benefit to the MCAA. I have a keen interest in supporting people finding their career path and passion; and hope to be able to provide support and mentoring to those who are thinking of making a career change but are unsure or hesitant.

3. As an Ordinary Board Member within the MCAA, what do you plan to do first? – or what is the first item you plan to put on the agenda?

One of the first tasks of the Board will be to define the role of its Members, which was not discussed in detail at the General Assembly. The Board will need to form a strong, functional group and outline the major goals that the association will be working towards.

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4. What do you think the MCAA's priorities should be?

I believe that the main priority of MCAA should be the benefit of the Fellows and to listen to and work around the needs of the Fellows, which may differ between Fellows currently undertaking Marie Curie funding and people who benefited from the actions in the past.

5. How do you plan to organise your work within the MCAA and especially your collaboration with the other Members of the Board?

The elected Board Members are from various different countries and from diverse professional roles, which will surely present its own challenges. However; where there is a will there is a way and I believe that despite the geographic distance, the Board will be able to manage its work through modern communication technologies. All the Board candidates who presented themselves at the General Assembly displayed great enthusiasm and determination to support the work of the Association and this will be a key to the successful collaboration of the Board.

6. How will your work within the association help build a “community spirit” among the Marie Curie Alumni?

Within the MCAA I am hoping to represent Fellows who building on their research experiences choose a different career path from academic research; be it in commercial settings, in academic institutes or other career options they may encounter. With the opportunities for Ph.D education increasing, it is inevitable that more and more people will chose alternative career paths and I believe that this could be a very interesting and resourceful group within the association.

7. Do you plan to meet Alumni? When?

Plans for larger scale Alumni meetings will of course need to be planned by the association but I will be more than happy to meet Alumni, as personal interactions are often the most valuable. With the large geographical span of Alumni there may be the need for regional groups which would make the meeting of Fellows from similar locations easier.

8. What would you say to the Alumni, especially to those who elected you?

I would like to say a huge thank you for the support during the election; this is a fantastic opportunity to work with the association. I hope that the values and experiences I am bringing to the Board will be to the benefit of the Members.

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Member – Mauricio Manfrini

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MCAA Ordinary Board Member – Mauricio Manfrini

1. May I ask you to introduce yourself briefly (name, nationality, Marie Curie Action, Project, international experience...)?

Hi all, my name is Mauricio Manfrini (33) and I come from Brazil. I was privileged to receive an ESR scholarship from the RTN SPIN SWITCH (MRTN-CT-2006-035327) from 2008 to 2010. This RTN aimed to study the fundamental physics of spin current-induced ultrafast switching. The idea was to probe whether this new mechanism was more efficient in creating new types of memories. It turns out that it is more efficient! Currently the major memory players in the world are in the development phase for this new technology and soon we will have magnetic memories controlled by a simple electric current in your computer and mobile gadgets. Stay tuned!

The Ph.D research was carried out at IMEC in Leuven, Belgium. It is located 25 km away from Brussels. This centre is the largest European microelectronics center and focuses on investigate technologies that could be applied in the short-term (3-5 years). During my ESR time, I had the opportunity to spend several secondments at other partners in France, Spain, the United Kingdom and Germany. The mobility allowed by the Marie Curie Action is a major plus compared to other grants, and was definitely explored extensively in my case. These scientific collaborations were extremely fruitful and they culminated in more than 20 publications in prestigious journals.

After I finished my Ph.D I was offered the opportunity to continue working on these magnetic memories at IMEC. We are now implementing a pilot line of such technology and industrial partners from all over the world are joining our programme to learn from our findings!

2. Why did you apply for the Ordinary Board Member position within the MCAA?

During the RTN, I noticed that not all industrial partners are very well integrated into the network and as I was placed in an “industrial” research centre, I am convinced I can bring my expertise to help not only guide newcomers to use this opportunity more effectively, but also to encourage new companies to join and profit from the network.



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3. As an Ordinary Board Member within the MCAA, what do you plan to do first? – or what is the first item you plan to put on the agenda?

The first item on my agenda would be to take a look at how the EU classifies these industrial partners and how we can start – and keep – an updated list of contacts within them.

4. What do you think the MCAA's priorities should be?

I think the MCAA is a great initiative to help and support all Fellows; this could include bureaucratic and legal assistance to those in most need as well as keeping track of their career development during and after the network. The MCAA should also promote training on soft skills such as speaking in public, how to write a resume, etc. Finally, the MCAA should be represented in major educational events that take place yearly around the globe.

5. How do you plan to organise your work within the MCAA and especially your collaboration with the other Members of the Board?

As I mentioned before, I'm located very close to Brussels and commuting to any MCAA meeting would be a breeze. I intend to dedicate evenings and weekends to fulfill the needs of the MCAA.

6. How will your work within the association help build a “community spirit” among the Marie Curie Alumni?

The most important thing is to listen to Alumni's preoccupations and to establish groups involving other Board Members. There is a large amount of expertise there that can be exchanged and should be used to its maximum.

7. Do you plan to meet Alumni? When?

Of course! Currently, we are organising the first Board meeting, which will take place in Brussels before the end of January 2014. There we will decide when we will meet other Alumni. Moreover, they can always contact me directly if needed.

8. What would you say to the Alumni, especially to those who elected you?

First of all, I am delighted and happily surprised I was elected to be part of the very first Board. I will always remain available to give Alumni support and to guide them if possible. I have a positive feeling regarding the Board Members and I am sure they are all here to give their best and to create the Association. So see you around!

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Member – Francesco Sanna

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MCAA Ordinary Board Member – Francesco Sanna

1. May I ask you to introduce yourself briefly (name, nationality, Marie Curie Action, Project, international experience...)?

I was born in Sassari, Italy, in 1987. In 2006 I finished high school (classical studies) and I started my bachelor degree at the faculty of Aerospace Engineering in Pisa. I was awarded my bachelor degree in December 2009 and I decided to continue my studies, taking a Master Degree in Aerospace Engineering with specialisation in Fluid Dynamics. During my Master years, I went to the San Diego State University in California for an exchange and my Master thesis involved an internship of 6 months at the Institut Jean le Rond d'Alembert at the University Pierre et Marie Curie (Paris VI). I was then awarded my Master Degree in April 2012. I always wanted to have an international career. For this reason, I decided to move to the Netherlands. Here, I work for the Department of Fluid dynamics of the Dutch Organisation for Applied Scientific Research – TNO, located in Delft. For this position, I received a Marie Curie Grant, which enables me to be not only an employee of TNO, but also a Ph.D student of the Université du MaineEurope. My European Project is called FlowAirS (www.flowairs.eu, grant no. 289352), a project based on collaboration between 14 Ph.D students and 4 PostDocs from universities and other organisations.

2. Why did you apply for the Ordinary Board Member position within the MCAA?

First of all, I did not feel ready for being a Member of the executive Board, being just 26. Since I am in the second year of my Ph.D, I thought it could be important to provide the point of view of a Fellow currently involved in a Marie Curie Project. That is why I decided to apply.

During my speech, I explained which my priorities are. These relate to the concept of information – before, during and after the Marie Curie experience. Concerning the “past”, usually Marie Curie Fellows do not know anything about Marie Curie grants before being hired. This was my case and is what I’ve also heard from other Fellows. For the “present”, during my first year I discovered that there are similar projects, often on exactly the same topic. The problem is that these projects don’t interact with each other. Students are not aware of courses which they would probably be interested in and, more importantly, they don’t build a proper network, losing out on the opportunity to exchange knowledge and start collaborations.

For the future, Marie Curie Fellows (especially those at university) are alone and completely lost after the end of their Ph.D. Because of the prestige of these grants, it is important to organise events to give them the opportunity to find a good (the best) position before the end of their Marie Curie experience.

3. As an Ordinary Board Member within the MCAA, what do you plan to do first? – or what is the first item you plan to put on the agenda?

Honestly, my plan is to meet the other Members of the Board and try to explain my ideas:

Capillary information on the opportunities provided by Marie Curie grants, at university, during job meetings, at events related to the research. This should be done in each country. Competition between students needs to be higher so that the best are selected for these grants;

Network of students per field and area, informing people in the same field about courses, either technical or not;

Link between companies/universities/research centres and students, creating job meeting events so that people are not lost after the experience.

4. What do you think the MCAA's priorities should be?

MCAA's priorities should be:

- Create objectives,
- Make a plan for each idea (past, present and future),
- Realisation of these points.

5. How do you plan to organise your work within the MCAA and especially your collaboration with the other Members of the Board?

Soon we will have a meeting to discuss different objectives. The collaboration already started with a forum "intra nos". The first step should be to know each other better and to create subgroups. By the way, I had a really nice impression during the assembly. They seem to be extremely (pro)active and full of energy for the association.

6. How will your work within the association help build a "community spirit" among the Marie Curie Alumni?

As I already said, my objective focuses on the student. I want to involve people and amplify the voice of other Marie Curie students. About the Board, I am sure that each Member has different points to develop. We will find links between points and, collaborating, we will give the proper power to this association.

7. Do you plan to meet Alumni? When?

Yes, of course. First we will have a meeting and later I can start creating events, first in the Netherlands, because I live here, and later around Europe. In order to do that, we need subgroups in different countries.

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Member – Francesco Sanna

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MCAA Ordinary Board
Member – Francesco Sanna



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8. What would you say to the Alumni, especially to those who elected you?

First, thank you for the trust. It is an honour to be elected as a Member of the Board. The assembly gave me a lot of energy and I will do my best to build this organisation together with you all.



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What's next after the first
MCAA General Assembly?
An interview with Odissefs
Panopoulos, DG EAC –
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What's next after the first MCAA General Assembly? An interview with Odissefs Panopoulos, DG EAC – European Commission

1. Mr Panopoulos, you participated in the MCAA General Assembly in Brussels on 23 November. What were you hoping for on this special day?

We had several important expectations and things we needed to achieve at this first General Assembly. First and foremost we wanted good attendance so that we could actually meet Members in person, present the preparatory work that had already been done – and the potential for the future, and above all, we wanted to have the elections necessary for the governance of the organisation. We also wanted to present to Members the first Articles of Association, which we intend to use to establish the MCAA as a non-profit organisation under Belgian law – expert work has been carried out by lawyers specialised in this domain.

2. Did the number and the enthusiasm of participants fulfil all your expectations?

We were pleasantly surprised by the level of attendance (we reached the permitted capacity of the room), by the intensity of interest in information and becoming actively involved in the work of the MCAA. What is more, an unexpectedly large number of Members put themselves forward as candidates for election and to serve on the Board. The discussion on the day was so lively that at some point I was even worried that we may not have enough time to address all the ideas that were presented, and to answer all the questions.

3. Did you talk to Marie Curie Alumni during the day? Did they communicate their expectations and hopes concerning the Association?

We had a couple of coffee or lunch breaks set up in a way that allowed people to meet and talk. We wanted to meet Alumni, but more than that we wanted them to meet each other and to talk in person to the election candidates so that they could make informed decisions about who to vote for. Having said that, I nevertheless had opportunities throughout the whole day to speak to Members and I got the impression that they have high hopes and some very challenging expectations from the MCAA – something that inspires me to work even harder on this project.

4. What do you want to say to the newly elected Board?

The same as I said a couple of times during the General Assembly: it is your association and it will be run by you for you (and the Membership as a whole), as our (the Commission's) role is to simply help you steer it towards growth, success and practical independence in the long run.



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An interview with Odissefs
Panopoulos, DG EAC –
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5. What would you like the next steps to be for the Association, now that the Board has been elected?

The first and most important step is the speedy legal establishment of the Association. Other than that, we have several things in mind and implementation is ongoing, such as, expansion of existing services, creation of new services, creation of content, and to put it generally, actions that aim to expand the MCAA and especially its capacity to be beneficial to its Members' careers. We are confident that the Board Members elected have the drive and capacity to make all this happen (and probably much more).

6. How will the European Commission support the Association in 2014?

The EC has a running service contract which is currently used to support the MCAA. This contract will run until May 2014 and can be renewed for an additional 12 months twice. In the current contract we have foreseen several ways to support and grow the MCAA, in terms of both web-based and non-web-based services. We have foreseen, for example, assistance for travelling, for setting up and supporting working groups and national chapters, networking facilities, job-search assistance, mobility assistance, publications, a multi-media library and much more. However, one of the goals of having a self governed body is to allow Members to steer it towards a direction that allows them to influence its development.

7. Will the European Commission promote the Association through actions linked to Horizon 2020? How?

We shall for sure promote Membership, which is the most essential substance of such an organisation. As you may know, Membership is free and every person benefiting from a past or future Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action qualifies for Membership. We will inform everyone, as they enter the programme, of the existence of the MCAA and the benefits of Membership for their careers. Furthermore, given that the Members of the MCAA have had the 'mobility experience' offered by the Marie Curie Actions, they are best suited to active involvement in the programme's future development (as long as there is no conflict of interest). So yes, we intend to invite them to participate and possibly contribute to events, advisory bodies, etc.



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Definition of the day:
European Research
Infrastructures (RIs)



Definition of the day: European Research Infrastructures (RIs)

Research infrastructures (RIs) will play an important role in the advancement of knowledge and technology and their exploitation in the context of Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. Here is a quick recap of what they are.

What are the Research Infrastructures (RIs) used for? RIs are facilities, resources and related services used by the scientific community. They are used to conduct top-level research. RIs cover a large range of research fields, from social sciences to astronomy, and genomics to nanotechnologies. They also may be used within the framework of education or public services.

Examples of RIs. RIs can be, for example, singular large-scale research installations, collections, special habitats, libraries, databases, biological archives, clean rooms, integrated arrays of small research installations, high-capacity/high speed communication networks, highly distributed capacity and capability computing facilities, data infrastructure, research vessels, satellite and aircraft observation facilities, coastal observatories, telescopes, synchrotrons and accelerators, networks of computing facilities, as well as infrastructural centres of competence.

Some of the most well-known RIs include the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) (the world's largest particle physics laboratory), the Infrafrontier Research Infrastructure (a world-class research infrastructure that provides the biomedical research community with the tools needed to unravel the role of gene function in human disease) and the GÉANT high speed network.

Sites. RIs may be:

- Single-sited (a single resource at a single location),
- Distributed (a network of distributed resources),
- Virtual (the service is provided electronically).

European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI). This strategic forum supports policy-making on RIs in Europe. Under Horizon 2020, the objective is to ensure the implementation and operation of the ESFRI and other worldclass research infrastructures, including the development of regional partner facilities, integration of and access to national research infrastructures, and the development, deployment and operation of e-infrastructures.

RIs and Horizon 2020. In the paper “*Draft Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2014-2015 in the area of ‘European research infrastructures’ (including e-Infrastructures)*” (not yet endorsed by the Commission) several future calls for proposals are outlined for European Research Infrastructures:

- Developing new world-class research infrastructures,
- Integrating and opening research infrastructures of European interest,
- e-Infrastructures,
- Support to Innovation, Human resources, Policy and International cooperation.

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Ten websites you need to
know for employment in
research in Europe



Ten websites you need to know for employment in research in Europe

If you are currently looking for a new challenge as a researcher in Europe, take a look at these 10 websites dedicated to employment in research that we have listed just for you!

1. EURAXESS – Researchers in motion – Jobs

EURAXESS is a European initiative providing access to a range of information and support services for researchers wishing to pursue a research career in Europe or stay connected to Europe.

<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/jobs/latestJobs>

2. Marie Curie Actions – Jobs for you

The Marie Curie Actions website lists job offers.

http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/apply-now/jobs-for-you/index_en.htm

3. EU Career – CAST Research

This webpage is maintained by EPSO – the European Personnel Selection Office.

<http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/eu-careers.info/cast/cast-researchers/>

4. European Research Council – Job opportunities

The European Research Council is dedicated to research excellence, and seeks to attract excellent and highly-motivated people and expertise. This is achieved through robust and fair selection procedures.

<http://erc.europa.eu/job-opportunities>

5. Joint Research Centre – Job opportunities

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) is a Directorate-General of the European Commission and comprises seven institutes. The JRC offers permanent and temporary positions.

<http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm?id=2030>

6. Research and Innovation – Participants portal – Experts

The European Commission appoints independent experts to assist with research and innovation assignments, including the evaluation of proposals, monitoring of projects, evaluation of programmes and development of policy.

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/experts/index.html>

7. Fusion for Energy – Career opportunities

Fusion for Energy (F4E) is the European Union's Joint Undertaking and is responsible for Europe's contribution to ITER (an international project to build a thermonuclear reactor). F4E also supports the development of fusion energy.

<http://fusionforenergy.europa.eu/careers/vacancies/Default.aspx>

8. Research Executive Agency (ERA) – Jobs – Current vacancies

The Research Executive Agency (REA) is a funding body created by the European Commission to maximise the efficiency and impact of EU research and innovation programmes.

http://ec.europa.eu/rea/vacancies/index_en.htm

9. EUREKA – Vacancies

EUREKA is an intergovernmental organisation for market-driven industrial R&D. It is a decentralised network facilitating the coordination of national funding on innovation aiming to boost the productivity & competitiveness of European industries.

<http://www.eurekanetwork.org/jobs>

10. The European Patent Organisation – Current vacancies

The European Patent Organisation is an intergovernmental organisation, set up on 7 October 1977 on the basis of the European Patent Convention (EPC). It has two bodies, the European Patent Office and the Administrative Council, which supervises the Office's activities.

<http://www.epo.org/about-us/organisation.html>

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During my Marie Curie project, my host country was.... Germany

Ian Ken Dimzon (from the Philippines), Vladimir Osipov (from Belarus), Rogério Salloum (from Brazil) and Mihaela Georgeta Ungureanu (from Romania) have something in common: they all worked or are currently working on their project in Germany. They shared with us their views and tips on making a Marie Curie experience in Germany as easy and as enriching as possible.

During my Marie Curie
project, my host country
was....Germany



Georgeta Mihaela Ungureanu



Ian Ken Dimzon



Vladimir Osipov



Rogério Salloum

Germany, well-known for its engineering, chemical industry and advanced technology

Although our Fellows chose this country for different reasons, Germany is considered a **“target country”** for many, according to Ungureanu, an engineer specialised in dynamic interactions between brain areas. Salloum’s project is bringing together researchers across Europe covering with expertise in three areas: noise, vibration and harshness, lightweight design and hybridisation/electrification. He chose Germany *“mainly because of its outstanding reputation for engineering”*. Dimzon, in charge of a project aiming to minimise the use of animals in chemical testing by developing new in-vitro and in-silico tests, says that, *“For a chemistry student who wants to have an industry background, Germany is the place to go”*. Osipov also stresses the technical advantages of being in Germany, saying *“Germany was chosen, because the Nanotechnology Department in Laser Zentrum Hannover (LZH) is one of the leading research groups in precise laser micromachining”*.

During my Marie Curie
project, my host country
was....Germany

Applying for a Marie Curie Action in Germany is relatively simple...

Preparing for his contract, Osipov had to provide translations of his University Diploma, Ph.D Diploma and Family Status documents. Nevertheless, all his other documents filled in English were accepted by the German Embassy. For Dimzon, *“German translations weren’t required. When I was shortlisted, I was contacted for an interview conducted in English via Skype”*. For Salloum, *“Official translations were not mandatory for the Institute, but were later requested by the University in order to enroll for the Ph.D”*. Ungureanu and Salloum both agreed that applying in Germany was straightforward.

...as is moving to the country

German hosts appear to provide plenty of support all round! When Osipov arrived in Hannover, the university’s administration department helped him to find accommodation. Ungureanu received help from her university to open a bank account in Jena. Salloum and Dimzon were asked to provide a visa and a residence permit, but agreed that this was dealt with very efficiently. According to Salloum, who settled in Darmstadt, *“The visa was issued in only 2 weeks. In Germany, all documents were also efficiently issued: residence permit, health insurance, social security number and tax card”*. Dimzon was pleased that translations were paid for by the university through his project during his move to Idstein.

Work is planned and well-organised

Our four Fellows all stress how **work is organised efficiently in Germany**. For Salloum, *“the main characteristic of German research is the separation between fundamental research and research applied to industry”*, whereas Ungureanu and Dimzon stressed the links between universities and hospitals, and between academies and industry. Salloum particularly enjoyed the fact that *“When an idea exists, a thorough strategy is created and the plan executed. All steps are done efficiently and bureaucracy doesn’t slow down engineering. The freedom of inventing and the unlimited use of state-of-the-art laboratory resources are for me the greatest advantages”*.

Sprechen Sie Deutsch (Do you speak German)?

All four Fellows agree on the importance of speaking or at least having **basic knowledge of German** to improve the experience. Coming from the Philippines and being abroad for the first time, Dimzon found *“the major difficulties that I encountered during the adjustment period were: weather, understanding the German culture and language”*. Salloum has been struck by the hard-working atmosphere: *“Here there is less amusement and fewer social exchanges during work time or even during a short coffee break”*.

Interesting places to work in Germany

If you are applying for a Fellowship in Germany, our Fellows recommend several interesting places to work. According to Osipov, *“Working in **Jena University**, **Laser Zentrum Hannover** and **Bayreuth University** was fruitful for research work, a creative team atmosphere and comfortable living”*, whereas Dimzon describes **Frankfurt** and the surrounding area as *“a good balance between work, living and leisure. The industrial areas along the rivers Main and Rhine provide good job opportunities for research chemists”*.

During my Marie Curie
project, my host country
was....Germany

Ungureanu advises working in big cities like **Munich** or **Berlin**. According to Salloum it is interesting to work in a **public research institute**, as there is less pressure about commercialisation and sales than in a private company.

Nice memories

Our four Fellows all have nice memories linked to their stay in Germany. For Ungureanu and Dimzon, Christmas was a great moment. Ungureanu said that she felt as if she and her colleagues “*were a family*”, while Dimzon enjoyed discovering Germany’s festive specialties “*Going to the Weihnachtsmarkt (Christmas market) is fun. Drinking Glühwein (warm, spiced wine) and eating Lebkuchen (spiced bread) while chatting with friends or colleagues in a cold snowy night is great experience*”. Salloum added that he visited amazing places in Germany during his summer vacations.

Advice for Fellows who would like to work on a research project in Germany

Osipov advises **studying German** – even a little knowledge can help a lot. Salloum and Dimzon both encourage Fellows to “**Go for it!**”, with Salloum adding, “*Germany has high-level research in many areas and the government really encourages scientists to come, in order to keep the industry strong for the coming years. The quality of life here is really good, costs are lower than some European countries and everything works according to the rules. If you are looking for excellence for your career, here is the right place*”. Dimzon advises Fellows to keep in mind their objectives “**Do not lose hope if there are many applicants. Do not be misled by people who say that Germans are intimidating. Do not be discouraged if the work description sounds very difficult to achieve**”. What’s more, Ungureanu advises **open-mindedness**, trying to learn as much as possible and establishing connections during your stay in German

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I benefited from a Marie Curie Action – Intra- European Fellowship for Career Development (IEF) in the spotlight

At the first Marie Curie Alumni Association General Assembly, we met Maria Bostenaru Dan and Lidia Galabova. They are two of the many Fellows having benefitted from an Intra-European Fellowship for Career Development (IEF), and for very different projects. Bostenaru Dan worked on the project “Preservation of historic reinforced concrete structures across Europe” in Italy, whereas Galabova dedicated her Marie Curie Project in Scotland to the relationship between intellectual capital, work and well-being and how this impacts on the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). They shared their experience and advice with us.



Maria Bostenaru Dan



Lidia Galabova

What is an Intra-European Fellowship for career development? The Marie Curie Actions Intra-European Fellowships (IEFs) are open to experienced researchers of any nationality, who have at least four years of full-time post graduate research experience or a Ph.D. The aim is to support researchers in attaining and/or establishing themselves in a leading independent position, for example principal investigator, professor or other in education or business. The action may also assist researchers wishing to resume a career in research after a break.

The project must be submitted by an experienced researcher in liaison with a host organisation, represented by the scientist in charge. Usually, the project must be carried out on the premises of this host organisation, in an EU or Associated country other than the researcher's country of origin.

Projects are classified into the following areas: Chemistry, Economic Sciences, Information Science and Engineering, Environment and Geosciences, Life Sciences, Mathematics, Physics, Social Sciences and Humanities, plus a Career Restart Panel.

An IEF should be based on training activities (aiming at a career advancement objective) and outreach activities (dissemination initiatives).

A Grant for mid-career researchers and young researchers alike. Originally from Bulgaria, Lidia Galabova was a few years into her career when she decided to apply for an IEF *“I was a mid-career researcher and worked at that time as an assistant professor. It was two years after my Ph.D.”* Maria Bostenaru Dan, a researcher from Romania, decided to apply for the grant at an early stage of her career *“I had my four years research experience in October 2003. And I applied in February 2004, so I was just eligible, as I had been 30 years old for one month!”*.

Keep contact with the EURAXESS Network of your country! Before applying, Galabova attended numerous activities promoting Marie Curie Actions in Bulgaria, organised by the Bulgarian EURAXESS network and National Contact Points. Participating helped her to familiarise herself with the opportunities offered by a Marie Curie Grant *“In my country, there have been a lot of activities promoting Marie Curie Actions, so I was aware of this Fellowship”*.

Dedicate a great part of your time to identifying your host organisation! Finding the right host organisation is one of the most important aspects of an IEF. Galabova and Bostenaru Dan both stressed the fact that having an international network is crucial and it is therefore important to travel and to establish as many contacts as possible during international events and conferences. Both met the right person at the right time: *“I was recommended by one of my Italian contacts working in the United Kingdom for my IEF in Italy!”* says Bostenaru Dan. Galabova, on the other hand *“was doing a post-doc in Finland through a scholarship established within the framework of a bilateral agreement between the Finnish and the Bulgarian governments. I had been doing my post-doc for 3 months and I met a professor from UK holding a background in sociology and after discussing mutual research interests she agreed to become my scientist in charge.”*

Anticipate and prepare your application carefully online! Bostenaru Dan highlighted the efficiency of preparing the application on the Internet *“Applying for this grant was very easy on the Internet”*. Nevertheless, time remains an important factor. Galabova explained that the application and the preparation of all the required documents were a real challenge. *“We decided to apply for this Action in June and the deadline was on 18 August. My host institution and my scientist in charge told me that I didn’t have a high chance of receiving the grant, but I tried. I had a lot of support from the host institute and from colleagues as well. This helps a lot. And I had a lot of enthusiasm too, but I’ll remember this summer for the rest of my life!”*

Organise your work according to the duration of your project! During her Marie Curie project, Bostenaru Dan had the opportunity to travel a lot and to present her research results during several conferences. She stressed nevertheless the importance, for a researcher, of keeping an appropriate balance between conference papers and publications *“What is better? Attending conferences and travelling, or writing papers for journals and sitting at home, it is something to reflected on.”* Galabova divided her two year project according to different activities. She dedicated her first year to learning and training *“I needed to develop more skills in academic writing in English and to improve my knowledge in policy analysis. I was assigned the tasks of managing the project and coordinating it, so I arranged all the meetings. This helped me to develop my leadership skills.”*

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Shape your project according to your area of research and EU priorities! Bostenaru Dan said that she was lucky to be funded as she was quite young when she applied. She advises researchers who would be interested to apply for this type of grant to stress the high quality of their project “*Nowadays, as the level of competition is higher, so is the quality of funded projects*”. Galabova stresses the importance of finding a project that might be supported by a host supervisor and by the European Commission “*A researcher should try to find the crossing point between his or her own research interest, the host institution and the host supervisor in charge, and the EU’s scientific research priorities*”.

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Five top tips to boost your career after a Marie Curie Action

Wuraola Akande, Giovanna Avellis and Natalia Balcazar Navarro have all completed their Marie Curie projects. They shared with us their “five tips” on making a Marie Curie Action a turning point in your career!



Giovanna Avellis



Wuraola Akande



Natalia Balcazar Navarro

Akande comes from Nigeria and worked on her Marie Curie project from October 2008 to September 2011 in Brighton, United Kingdom. Avellis also worked in the UK, this time in London, from June 1992 to December 1994. Balcazar Navarro benefited from an ‘Individual Fellowship among European Countries’ under FP5 in Duisburg, Germany. All three describe their time abroad as enriching for their career

Tip 1: Work on an innovative Marie Curie project!

Avellis’ project tackled the problems faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and large organisations in evaluating their products. She developed a methodology and a representation scheme for Non-Functional Requirements (NFRs) thanks to a Marie Curie Action Human Capital and Mobility (HCM) under FP3. According to Avellis, this project was crucial for the European Union – “Quality Engineering was a new paradigm playing a crucial role in the European market of Services and Applications” – and the project therefore helped her to build a basis for future research. Balcazar Navarro investigated the leaching behaviour of several industrial by-products, mainly from steel and from waste incineration plants. She stresses the importance of the project results “The obtained results were interesting not only for Germany, but also for other European countries.”

Tip 2: Take this opportunity to grow your network and to find your mentor!

Akande worked on an international project through an Industry-Academia Partnership and Pathways (IAPP) grant under FP7. Her focus was on Macroporous monolithic cryogels for extra corporeal medical devices and the project involved four universities and three small companies. The experience therefore exposed her to a high level of networking *“It gave me plenty of opportunities to participate in conferences and seminars and to work with different professionals.”* She also met several professors and learned from them, as well as from representatives from American and European societies specialised in artificial organs. Avellis also had an opportunity to grow her network, and says, *“Networking was one of the main achievements of my Fellowship.”* Balcazar Navarro emphasises the quality of the relationships that she had with her colleagues: *“People who at the beginning were my colleagues are now my best friends.”* She adds that looking for a mentor may also be crucial, providing a source of more experience and advice from him/her.

Tip 3: Improve your technical and personal skills!

According to Akande, her Marie Curie Action helped her to boost and build up her career to the extent that she improved her technical skills. *“I learned a lot in terms of medical devices. For example, I learned how to prepare cryogels and different new techniques in my field of research.”* Currently doing a one year mandatory national youth service corps at the University College Hospital in Ibadan (Nigeria), Akande feels comfortable with the career perspectives that such an experience can offer for the future *“Once I finish my service, I should have a secure and good academic position”*. For Balcazar Navarro, the Marie Curie Project was a good opportunity to *“learn to be independent, to be proactive and self-confident”*.

Tip 4: Keep in touch with your peers and show off your project results!

According to Avellis, it is important to travel a lot during the final part of the Fellowship, so as *“to network and to present the research results to other teams to build strong links for the future”*. For Balcazar Navarro, her biggest accomplishment linked to her Marie Curie Action was *“Being invited as guest speaker and specialist to the Conference Managing Steel Mill Wastes and By-Products: Crisis and Opportunity in Antwerp, Belgium”*. So don't lose contact with your peers and do not hesitate to show what you learnt during your Marie Curie Project to improve your visibility!

Tip 5: Reach scientific excellence!

According to Avellis, her Marie Curie project was a turning point in attaining scientific excellence. Indeed, she published 60 conference and journals papers, as well as three book chapters, which boosted her career *“Thanks to this experience, I worked for the European Commission as an expert independent evaluator in Software and Services and Information Technology. Furthermore, I am currently evaluating SME research projects in InnovaPuglia, in collaboration with universities and research centres funded by European Regional Development Funds.”*

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Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions under Horizon 2020

In the article “All you need to know on Horizon 2020” in the MCAA Newsletter 1, we gave you an idea of what to expect under Horizon 2020. Below, we have summed up the changes to the Marie Curie Actions under this new Programme.

The Marie Curie Actions will be renamed. From January 2014, the Marie Curie Actions will become the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) under the “Excellent Science” pillar of Horizon 2020. Based on a bottom-up approach, these Actions will be allocated €6,162 million for 2014-2020.

What will change? Under Horizon 2020, the old Marie Curie Actions will be simplified as follows:

- 1. Initial Training Networks (ITN) become Innovative Training Networks (ITN).** These Actions will be dedicated to early-stage researchers and involve wide partnerships between institutions from academic and non-academic organisations. They aim to enhance the employability of researchers by combining scientific excellence with an innovation-oriented approach, and to develop entrepreneurship and skills matching research labour market needs.
- 2. Intra-European Fellowship for Career Development (IEF), International Outgoing Fellowships (IOF), International Incoming Fellowship (IIF) and Career Integration Grants (CIG) become Individual Fellowships (IFs).** These will be granted to experienced researchers. They will provide them opportunities in the framework of international and inter-sector mobility. The grant will normally cover two years' salary, a mobility allowance, research costs and overheads for the host institution.
- 3. Industry Academia Partnerships and Pathways (IAPP) and International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES) become Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE).** This will support short-term mobility of research and innovation staff at all career levels, from the most junior (post-graduate) to the most senior (management). They are based on flexible inter-sector (within Europe) and international (with third countries) exchanges of highly skilled research and innovation staff.
- 4. Co-funding of Regional, National, and International Programmes (COFUND) remain COFUND.** These Actions will stimulate regional, national and international programmes so as to foster excellence, and will spread best practices in terms of international mobility, research training and career development. They will be extended to doctoral training, and may receive contributions from EU regional funds.

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Take part in the MCAA
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Take part in the MCAA Community – Stand for quality scientific publications!

In a post on the Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA) website “what a shame”, Riccardo Biondi raised the issue of peer reviews for scientific papers. There is a tendency for scientific papers to be published unchecked. This has the result that huge numbers of papers are published, but quality is not guaranteed. And the internet means that these papers are seen far and wide. Addressing this lack of control needs practical solutions to safeguard quality.



Riccardo Biondi



Barry Guihen

Intrigued as to whether Riccardo Biondi and Barry Guihen may have some of the answers, we met up to discuss their views on the tools needed to tackle the problem.

Potential tools to tackle the problems

What, for you, are the main problems with today’s scientific publishing process?

Riccardo Biondi. Publishing today is becoming just a business and a matter of money. Peer-review is not taken into account by some journals. The problem nowadays is that some journals publish papers without taking care of the quality and they are getting paid for this! I have reviewed many papers in the last two years for some open access journals and they were extremely bad. Of course, I didn’t accept them, and I couldn’t believe that other reviewers would accept them. A few weeks later, these papers were published. And this happens when you pay a few hundred euros - your paper is published. The main problem is that now we are all evaluated in terms of figures. When one of your publications is published, you increase your impact. That is probably the main problem.

Barry Guihen. Money is always an issue, be it in having to pay to be published or the cost of subscriptions.

Tool 1: Identification of journals which don't respect quality

Do you think that it would be helpful for Marie Curie Alumni to have access to a list of journals which don't pay attention to the quality of papers?

Riccardo Biondi. Absolutely, yes. Marie Curie Fellows are working on high quality research projects all over the world and we should therefore publish only high quality papers.

Barry Guihen. Yes, this would help to know where best to focus attention.

A list of open access journals, provided by Devrim Kilinc is already available here.

A MCAA list of open and non open access journals could be created.

Tool 2: A peer review service

The UK's Research Information Network has published "Peer review – A guide for researchers". Do you think that the creation of an MCAA peer review service could be useful for the Community?

Riccardo Biondi. Absolutely yes, for the reasons already mentioned, I think that we could improve the review service. We should focus on high quality journals and not on the low quality list that has been created. This would be very useful. Even reviewing for free can always be interesting to the extent that the reviewer can get new ideas by doing this work. This is the real meaning of peer review. It would also be helpful for all the Marie Curie Alumni.

Barry Guihen. RIN's document is a useful general guide to the peer review process. However, were the MCAA to produce such a guide, it would be best to focus on issues that MC researchers are likely to face, such as publishing work based across disciplines, or publishing in a field that is outside the researcher's usual area of focus.

A blog or a group "peer-review" service could be created where Alumni could exchange and propose services.

Tool 3: Some guidelines for the attention of journals

A code of conduct and best practice guidelines for journal editors has been created and is available here. Is this code well-known among MCF and journals which publish MCFs' papers? Do you consider that it would be useful to MCF to promote their own ethics Charter?

Riccardo Biondi. I didn't know this ethics paper (it's the first time I've seen it) and don't know if MCFs are aware of it. I am not sure whether another ethics Charter would be useful. This topic might be raised and discussed among MCAs so as to decide if we should promote it. If not, we could suggest our modifications to the existing guidelines.

Barry Guihen. Perhaps a more efficient use of resources is to promote an existing code that is in line with the values of MCF, working with other agencies to agree on a de facto standard.

An interactive page of the website could be created and put at the disposal of the MCF to shape a participatory Charter if the MCAA decides not to promote the existing code of conduct.

Tool 4: the creation of a MCAA Ethics Working Group

The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) was created in 1997 and is open to editors and publishers of academic journals and others. Is this Committee well-known among MCFs? Do you think that journals should subscribe to a MCAA Ethics Committee based on the participatory guidelines evoked above?

Riccardo Biondi. If a Committee already exists, the MCAA could contribute to that one without creating something new. There is no interest in duplicating entities. We are all researchers and we should collaborate. The MCAs might collaborate with this Committee if it is efficient. We should create a working group so as to open debates among MCAs, this is a big issue and solutions might be found thanks to dialogue.

Barry Guihen. MCAA is a new organisation, and it should be encouraging journals to consider it. Like the Charter, perhaps it is best for the MCAA to work with preexisting groups, adding their voice to others to create consistent and unified guidelines, for the benefit of all researchers and journals.

The MCAA Board could decide to create a MCAA Ethics working group.

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Ten minutes with...
Nicolas Chamel

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Ten minutes with...Nicolas Chamel



1. When you started your Project through the Marie Curie initiative, what were your expectations?

I was eager to exchange ideas and develop new expertise.

2. When you started your placement, did you imagine that you'd be where you are today 5 years later?

Not really! I wasn't even sure that I would still have the opportunity to pursue my scientific research activities.

3. If you had to choose the most memorable moment during your Marie Curie project, what would it be?

Probably, this would be the day when I first heard that my project proposal had been accepted!

4. Three words that sum up your Marie Curie Actions experience?

Mobility, training, independence.

5. How do you see yourself in 10 years?

It is difficult to say. I will be where research drives me.

6. Is there a famous researcher who inspires you?

Many different famous (and less famous!) researchers inspired me. I can hardly mention just one, but if I really should I would say Brandon Carter, who was my Ph.D supervisor.



7. What is your favorite quote by a scientist?

"The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible", from Albert Einstein.

8. Your advice to a researcher who would like to apply for a Marie Curie Action?

Be imaginative and look beyond the borders of your own research field!

9. Imagine your ideal Marie Curie Alumni Association event. What would it be? Where?

I imagine a conference where scientists coming from very different horizons could have the unique opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas. And what better place to organise such a meeting than the cosmopolitan city of Brussels?

10. If you could introduce to us another Marie Curie Alumni, who would it be?

Dr Loïc Villain, who works at the Laboratory of Mathematics and Theoretical Physics, University of Tours, France.



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Keep in touch...what's
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Keep in touch...what's coming up in the next newsletter?

Dear MCAA Members,

We hope that you enjoyed reading the second MCAA Newsletter and that you're happy that you helped to elect an MCAA Board with such motivated and talented Members!

Watch this space for the next edition, which will bring news of the elected Board, and much more. And don't forget that all Alumni, and only Alumni, will be needed to build and contribute to the success of your Association! So we wish you a very active 2014!

The MCAA team