



Issue 32 - September 2022

Marie Curie Alumni Association

Newsletter

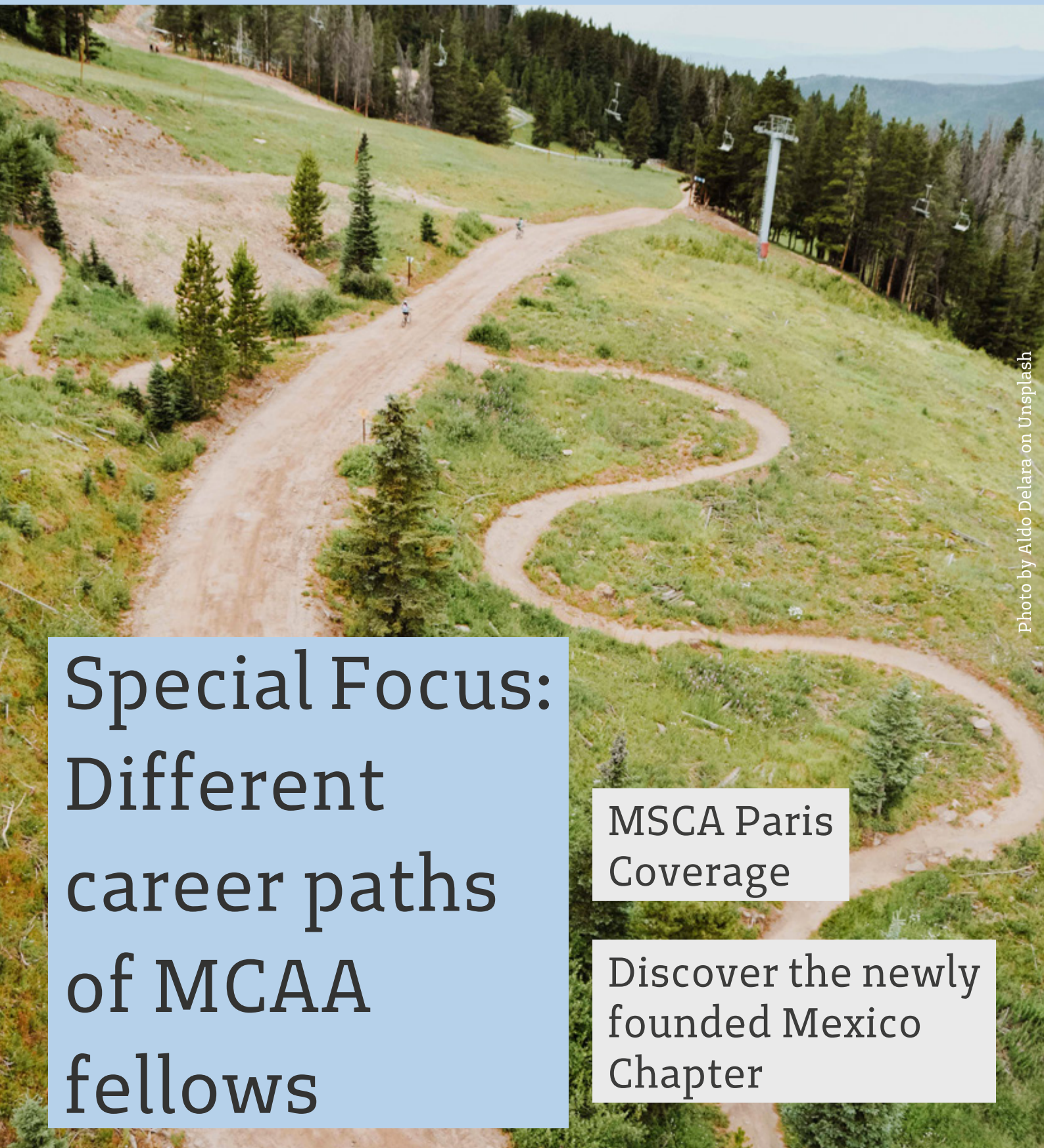


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Special Focus:
Different
career paths
of MCAA
fellows

MSCA Paris
Coverage

Discover the newly
founded Mexico
Chapter

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Message from the Board

Dear MCAA Members,

I hope you had a nice and relaxing summer.

This issue of the **MCAA Newsletter** has a **special focus on the different career paths of MCAA fellows**. The MCAA, as a global network of researchers, is committed to bringing together researchers with diverse experiences across all economic sectors and career stages. The engagement of Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) fellows in activities and events organized by our community is essential to stimulate **networking, cooperation, collaboration, new projects and debates** with the scientific and non-scientific society to promote a common growth. Therefore, we encourage Chapters and Working Groups (WGs) to organize events and activities, essential to **engage the members** and support the bottom up shaping of the MCAA.

As announced at the MCAA 2022 Annual General Assembly, an **extraordinary General Assembly** took place on 22 May 2022 to vote on the **Articles of the Association** update, necessary to comply with the new requirements of the Belgian law. The text has been approved and the legal registration process is ongoing.

In the last few months, **the MCAA has been represented in several conferences and high-level meetings**. MCAA Board member Marina Rantanen Modeer joined the **ReMO 2022 conference**, which focused on "Mental Health in the Research Workplace." MCAA Board members Fernanda Bajanca, Giulia Malaguarnera, Gian Maria Greco and Pavlo Bazilinskyy joined the **ESOF 2022 MSCA satellite event** organized by the MSCA Unit to bring together MSCA fellows, supervisors and alumni in order to debate and contribute

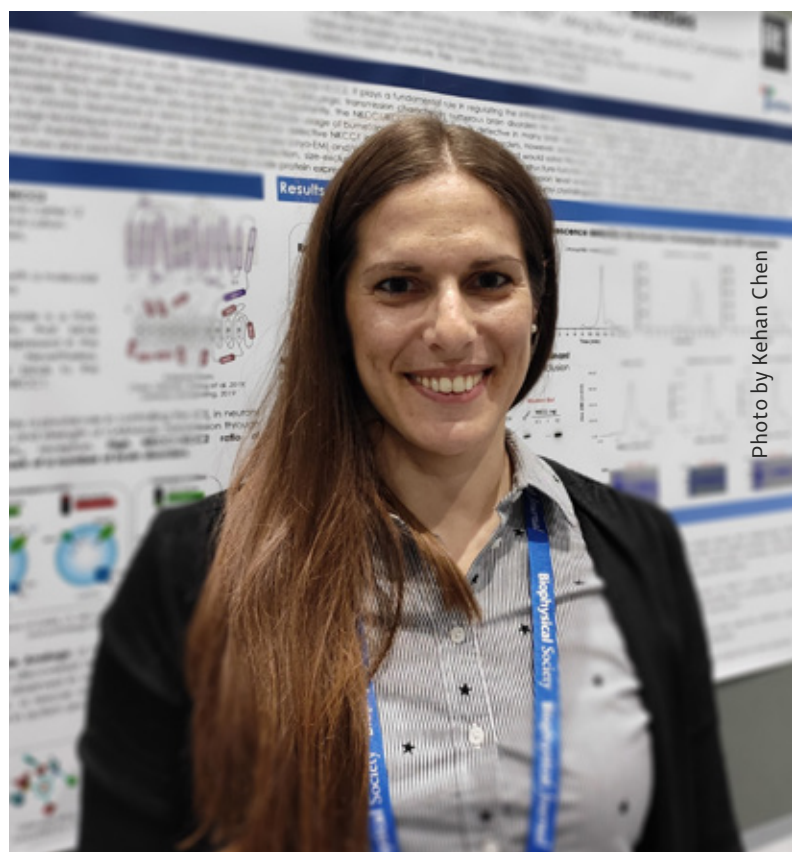


Photo by Kehan Chen

to research ecosystem topics. The MCAA was also well represented at the main ESOF event, where MCAA treasurer Pavlo Bazilinskyy was invited to speak at the opening session, while former Board member Karen Stroobants moderated a session on research assessment reform, former Chair Mostafa M. Shawrav moderated a session on mobility and brain drain, and former Career Development WG Chair Gábor Kismihók discussed mental health and wellbeing. Pavlo Bazilinskyy also spoke at the **4th Gago Conference on European Science Policy**, addressing early research careers and healthy research workplaces. MCAA Board member Gian Maria Greco delivered the keynote speech at the session on "Universal accessibility and inclusion for university studies and careers" of the **36th Rencontres Nationales** organized by the French

Federation 100% Handinamique and spoke at the session “Enhancing trust in science” at the [European Research and Innovation Days 2022](#). Gian Maria Greco also spoke at the opening session of the [2022 Coimbra Group Annual Meeting](#), where delegates from Coimbra Group Universities and the European Commission networked around the theme “Universa Universis: Academic Freedom in a Transforming World.” The MCAA played a key role at the [2022 MSCA Conference](#). Several members of the MCAA Board - Fernanda Bajanca, Alexandra Dubini, Gian Maria Greco, Giulia Malaguarnera, Corinne Portioli – and Policy WG Chair Jaishree Subrahmaniam were invited as speakers, moderators, and rapporteurs. Under the title “Next generation MSCA: Opening a new era for change”, the conference addressed gender equality, the opening of science to society, the challenges of academic freedom and the Green Charter. Furthermore, MCAA Chapter Chairs participate in many more events worldwide and we deeply thank them for their contributions.

Concerning recent MSCA news, [a study on researchers’ flow and mobility](#) in the context of the MSCA, carried out by the European Commission (EC), provides an in-depth analysis and recommendations for **a more balanced movement of researchers** and talents in the European Research Area. Interestingly, the UK, Germany, Spain, France and the Netherlands hosted almost 60% of all incoming long-term MSCA researchers under Horizon 2020. The study shows that **mobility flows within the MSCA largely mirror the overall mobility flows of researchers** and the programme is effective at attracting and retaining European talents. Looking at Individual Fellowships (now Postdoctoral Fellowships), Innovative Training Networks (now Doctoral Networks) and COFUND, the EU27 received 74.6% of all researchers, with the UK accounting for a further 17.4%. Over 90% of third-country

nationals went to the EU27 and the UK. The main individual determinants of researchers’ mobility spanned from opportunity to work with leading scientists to quality of research infrastructure and training offered social and cultural conditions, from good career opportunities to the level of remuneration. One of the objectives of the study was to explore the possibility to reintroduce return grants under the MSCA programme, however based on the above findings, the study does not recommend this. Instead, it provides recommendations to enhance the quality and attractiveness of the less advanced research and innovation systems and their capacity to attract and retain researchers. **EU Member States (and especially widening countries) should take the lead in implementing national reforms that enhance the conditions to attract excellent researchers.**

An utterly important piece of news is that a **Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) grant** to finance the MCAA activities for the next two years **has been approved by the EC**. The EC-funded services, such as the most sought microgrants, will therefore restart as soon as the new funding scheme is up and running. Anticipating the start of this new grant, the MCAA Board published a job call for an experienced Executive Director to manage the association in scope with its new CSA; a selection committee has been nominated and the evaluation process is ongoing.

Another relevant item of news is that the **MCAA Annual Conference 2023 will be held in Córdoba, Spain, on 24-25 February 2023. The theme will be “Challenges in Science Diplomacy & Sustainable Development.”** We will host a few satellite events in the preceding days, so do block the week to fully enjoy the event! The call for Session Proposals opened last month. We look forward to exciting topics and unique sessions. Note that **we are**

selecting volunteers to join the Conference Committee and help organize the event. If you are interested, drop us an email!

We are happy to announce that the election process for the renewal of Chapters and WGs' Chairs is now completed. **The MCAA Board gives a warm welcome to the 14 Chairs elected for the first time and the 6 re-elected Chairs.** Their mandate started on 1 September 2022 and will last for two years. Among the elected Chairs, a special mention goes to **Daniel Rios** who we are pleased to welcome as **the first Chair of the newly created Mexico Chapter.** Building a bridge between the Mexico Chapter and the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) community will improve the possibilities to widen the collaborations across the entire American continent and to engage more partners and members. As you know, the MCAA lives and thrives thanks to the effort that volunteers generously offer. We wish to express our gratitude to everyone for their active participation in these activities as members or candidates.

In addition to all the striking updates, unfortunately, we need also to communicate that **this September issue of the MCAA Newsletter is the last one with Gian Maria Greco as its Editor-in-Chief.** As he said to me, "a remarkably enriching experience has come to an end." During the four years of his tenure, Gian Maria's intense work has raised the MCAA Newsletter to a high professional level through several actions, including: building the Editorial Team from scratch and training its

members, setting up the workflow, launching special issues, and providing the Newsletter with an ISSN. He implemented many of those actions for IRRADIUM too, and has significantly increased the offer to our members as well as MCAA's standing. Gian Maria decided to resign – two years earlier of his current mandate's conclusion as Editor-in-Chief of both the MCAA Newsletter and IRRADIUM – in order to focus on other MCAA activities, including the recently established MCAA Book Publishing and the further development of MCAA science communication activities. Current and past members of the Board thank him for all the efforts and time he has committed.

The Board is also very glad to welcome the new editor-in-chief, Oleksandra Ivashchenko, and wishes her good work.

Overall, these first six months of activity of **the new MCAA Board** have been exciting and intense for all of us, especially in view of the new CSA to be implemented. We are getting ready to start a new academic year with the same passion and commitment to **support and engage researchers** in creating a global network of opportunities. We wish you a pleasant reading with the great articles prepared for you by the Newsletter team.

Corinne Portioli

On behalf of the MCAA Board

All the good things. Farewell message from the former Editor-in-Chief

There is an English idiom that reads, “**all good things must come to an end**”. The Cambridge Dictionary explains that it is said when one accepts “that even enjoyable experiences cannot last forever.” The emphasis is on the second part of the saying, on the inescapable conclusion that even the most enriching experiences must have.

This is **my last editorial** as editor-in-chief of both the MCAA Newsletter and IRRADIUM. Devoting these lines to the “must come to an end” part would be a reasonable expectation. However, I will focus on the first part of the idiom and highlight a few of the **many positive experiences** I had during my enjoyable tenure.

Let me begin with a bit of history. Bear with me. I promise there is a point, and it is not self-praise. I have been interested in **communication** for a very long time. As a teenager, I worked at the news division of a local radio station. Around the same time, my high school launched a communication campaign to be run by students, aimed at encouraging enrolment from local middle schools. I eagerly signed up, initially because it gave me a formal exemption from attending classes (oh well...). As an undergraduate,



I established a scholarly journal run by students, while flirting with communication and advertising in entry-level (mostly non-paid) positions. I also started to collaborate with the now-defunct SWIF (Sito Web Italiano per la Filosofia - Italian Website for Philosophy), a website that pioneered scholarly communication on the web (it's the late 1990s). I began as a volunteer in one of their sections and left almost a decade later as the managing editor of the whole project. Henceforth began a long list of experiences, as well as formal and informal training on different aspects of communication, albeit too long to list on this brief trip down memory lane. I also began to develop an interest in accessibility, mainly in how to make communication accessible, which grew into my major scholarly and professional focus. Again, too many experiences to list here as well. Long story short, at one point I left academia and made accessible communication my profession. That was until

2017, when I returned thanks to an MSCA fellowship. This is when **I joined the MCAA**.

Upon becoming an MCAA member, I joined the Spain-Portugal Chapter because my MSCA fellowship was based in Spain. At the time, the Spain-Portugal Chapter published a newsletter for its members. It was just my cup of tea to volunteer and take care of its publication. At the 2018 MCAA Annual Conference in Leuven, I attended a meeting of the Communication Working Group (WG) and expressed a critique about the MCAA Newsletter and IRRADIUM. A few days later, Valentina Ferro and Calum MacKichan, who were running the Leuven meeting, reached out and asked me to **coordinate the work of the two publications**. Something like "thanks for the constructive criticism. Here's your chance to do something and not just talk about it". I had been volunteered, as a friend of mine would say.

"Coordinate" may not be the right word. At the time, the two outlets were produced by an external company with little MCAA supervision. There was actually nothing to coordinate and **everything to build from scratch**. I began slowly taking steps to make the MCAA totally **autonomous** in its production of the two publications, raising their profile, and **offering more to our members**. Indeed, this very issue of the MCAA Newsletter you are reading has been entirely produced by its editorial board, as was the case for the June 2021 issue. Four years have flown by, though much was accomplished during my tenure. Just to name a few of the things I'm most proud of: establishing an **internal team** (which later became the editorial board), drafting the internal regulations for responsibility and accountability, devising a workflow, increasingly shifting control of the production process and content from the external company over to the internal team, producing the **guidelines** for authors, introducing an online submission form, launching **special**

issues and thematic sections, expanding the types of articles, introducing a regular section to host articles written by members on their research, registering the two outlets as **official publications** with ISSNs, starting to catalogue each issue in the Royal Library of Belgium, coordinating the **re-design** of the MCAA Newsletter layout to increase its readability and accessibility and of the PDF files to make them screen reader-friendly, and devoting a member of the editorial board to check for biases and discrimination in language and images.

Counting from "As a teenager I worked" to "language and images" is 613 words. It's a rather long sequence of "I did this" and "I did that". Here is the catch. That "I" is a lie. **That "I" is a "we"**. We are surrounded by people who, for better or for worse, play a decisive part in our outcomes. I am by no means denying the value that one's own will and commitment play in one's life. But it's just one part of the picture, at least in my own experience. Both in the instances mentioned above as well as in those not mentioned, I was never alone. From the time I joined the news division of the local radio station onwards, I had people who welcomed me, supported me, helped me, challenged me. I had people who made me a better scholar, a better professional, a better person. I was part of a team.

My MCAA history as the editor-in-chief of IRRADIUM and the MCAA Newsletter is first and foremost **a history of people**. The MCAA members who welcomed me, supported me, helped me and challenged me. The many MCAA members I met over my four-year tenure. There are far too many to list them all, but a few thanks are in order anyway.

I am grateful to all the MCAA members who expressed their support by authoring an article, sitting for or carrying out an interview, sharing news, and providing feedback as


readers. In doing so they made me work harder, correct the course, and allowed the publications to flourish. My thanks to the members of the past two **MCAA Boards** and those of the current one, with whom I now have the honour and responsibility to serve our association.

I am grateful to **Valentina Ferro** for challenging me to take on this journey and for her proactive assistance, especially during the first few months, as well as to **Valerie Bentivegna**, who was Communication WG Chair for most of my tenure and placed her trust in me constantly. I am profoundly indebted to **Ruben Riosa**. It would take pages to detail how much he has contributed to bringing the MCAA Newsletter and IRRADIUM to their current standing. Ruben joined the team not long after I started, and since day one he has worked passionately and skilfully. After a while, it seemed only natural to ask the MCAA Board to create the position of managing editor and to appoint him.

My deepest gratitude goes to **Christina, Pradeep, Sasha, Sugosh, and Yahaya**. Together with Ruben, they are **the team members with whom I shared this journey**. They supported me, challenged me, and did not spare any criticism. The few accomplishments I listed above and the many more gone unsaid are the results of a group effort, and I was lucky to be part of such a splendid group which, over the last few months, has grown considerably. Many MCAA members answered the recent call to join the editorial board. Far more than expected, to the point that we had to turn down quite a few. It may be vanity speaking, but I'd like to think that such an enthusiastic response is evidence of that group effort. All the successes I have experienced over the past four years are "we" successes. The failures are mine and mine alone, for people's support is only as good as one's ability to harness it.

"All the good things..." is the title of the series finale of Star Trek: The Next Generation. The plot device is what is called a "spatial anomaly" in the Star Trek narrative. Jean-Luc Picard attempts to deal with the anomaly only to find himself caught in a paradox: his very actions to stop the anomaly are what caused it in the first place. He realises the paradox and brilliantly saves the day. Towards the end, Picard and Q discuss the moral of the story: **in order to flourish and evolve, one needs to be open to options that one had never considered.**

A year ago, I started to reflect on the idea of resigning. I felt the team and the two publications had reached a certain level of maturity and were in need of opening up to new options that long-term leadership could hinder. I shared my thoughts with the team and received plenty of support. So here I am, resigning from my position two years before the mandate's end, ready to take up **new challenges** within the MCAA, and fully conscious of **all the good things I gained and all the good people that enriched me over these past few years**. I am confident in my decision because of the confidence I have in this group of people who will now have exposure to fresh ideas under the guidance of Sasha as their new editor-in-chief. I am confident that such an opening will allow the MCAA Newsletter and IRRADIUM to **flourish even further**, and with them, the whole association.

Gian Maria Greco 

MCAA Newsletter, outgoing Editor-in-Chief

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Welcome message from the new editor-in-chief



a bit informal, and that's exactly the idea. I am from a small town called Zolotonosha, just in the middle of Ukraine (just Google it, it is tiny and very central). After receiving MSc in Physics from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, I applied for an Early Stage Researcher (ESR, TRACE 'n TREAT ITN, TU Delft) position in the field I had always dreamed of working in, namely nuclear medicine. Two postdocs and a 4 year medical physics residency later, I work as a radiology and nuclear medicine physicist at the University Medical Center Groningen (the Netherlands).

Why did I originally join the MCAA Newsletter Editorial Board?

During my PhD project I didn't really realize how lucky I was, as an ESR, to have the indisputable right to perform multiple secondments abroad, to have the opportunity to work in a multidisciplinary international team, to take many courses or workshops without the need to negotiate these needs with the Primary Investigator (PI). It was only after starting the first postdoc that I realized how ITNs differ from a standard PhD project. Despite common misperceptions, benefits of MSCA fellowships do not end with the submission of the final report. Through the MCAA, former fellows can apply for micro-grants, participate in various events, network and grow as a leader. In the past, I have benefited from these support opportunities. As a form of giving back, I wanted to increase awareness about the good work the organization is doing. First, I signed up for the Communication Working Group, but a primary focus on the editorial board was nearly instantaneous.

It's a bit nerve-wracking to write a welcome letter as the new editor-in-chief of the MCAA Newsletter, a lot goes through your head. What to write? How to find the right balance? Will people even read it? What if people will actually read it? The list of considerations is long. When new MCAA chapter or working group chairs are elected, we ask them to write a few words about themselves, explain why they applied for the position, and share their views on the position. I will try to do something similar in this piece.

To many of you I am a stranger, so please let me introduce myself

My name is Oleksandra Ivashchenko, but I prefer to go with Sasha, and this is how I will be referred to in future issues. Yes, you may find it

Why did I want to become the new editor-in-chief of the MCAA Newsletter?

The short answer is "I had no intention of doing this, at least not in the foreseeable future".

Since Gian Maria Greco did such a remarkable job as editor-in-chief for multiple years, this possibility didn't even cross my mind before. When we heard that there was a vacancy for the position, I was a bit taken back by the news. Obviously, I really enjoyed my time as an editorial board member and the creative freedom the organization has to discuss not only scientific, but also social issues. I would love to be actively involved in the transformation of the MCAA Newsletter and not only grow it, but also relate it more to topics that MCAA members consider to be of the utmost importance (e.g., let members speak through the MCAA Newsletter, not the Newsletter speaks to them). On the other hand, I was struggling to imagine how I would be able to add one more task to an already overloaded plate (a problem many of us have :)). At the time, I was completing a residency, working on a part-time MBA, looking for a new job, completing my first personal grant, building-up the #ScienceForUkraine initiative that I am proud to help coordinate, and trying to come to terms with the fact that my homeland is at war.

I am a big fan of Robert Frost and he has a famous poem called "The road not taken". It starts with a poetic look at decisions one has to make in life:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both

Sometimes decisions we make aren't logical or strategic, they're just the result of our journey into a "yellow wood", and they just need to feel right. Knowing how the poem ends, I closed my eyes, said it would be okay, and, out of hope or stupidity, responded to the opening. My candidacy was soon approved,

a new job was found, the grant finalized and the #ScienceForUkraine initiative started to take root. Most importantly, we had one of the highest responses to the call for new editors and welcomed seven new members to the team.


What is my vision and hopes for the MCAA Newsletter?

Well, my vision is not to have a clear vision and try to find a way to develop the MCAA Newsletter into a bigger and highly interactive communication platform. Originally, the MCAA Newsletter was predominantly used to provide updates on the MCAA, its events and ongoing projects. I would like to expand the science communication section and normalize the discussion about the little-discussed challenges that researchers face. It is a difficult task, coupled with production timelines and deliverables of each Newsletter's issue, but we have a great team. Each member of the editorial board is so creative and unique, so dedicated, despite the fact that they are all volunteers with a full agenda. I just want to make sure they have the resources and space they need to let their creativity shine.

In a few years, when asked to reflect on my MCAA experience, I'll be using Frost's "The road not taken" ending, and I owe it to Gian Maria's amazing leadership:

A shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference

I just hope that other editors that we will have within my term will have an equally satisfying experience.

Sasha Ivashchenko 

MCAA Newsletter, incoming Editor-in-Chief

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MSCA Paris Coverage

Supporting gender equality with and within MSCA

In 2022, the annual conference of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme was held on 23-24 of May in Paris. Corinne Portioli, Board member of the MCAA, reports on workshop 1 which focused on gender equality.



Workshop 1 - Supporting gender equality with and within MSCA: Closing the gender gap in research and supporting the career development of female researchers

As a current Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)-COFUND fellow and recently elected ordinary board member of the Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA), it has been a pleasure to introduce and moderate the workshop on supporting gender equality with and within MSCA, at the last MSCA Conference, held in Paris on 23-24 of May, 2022. The workshop aimed to address a major

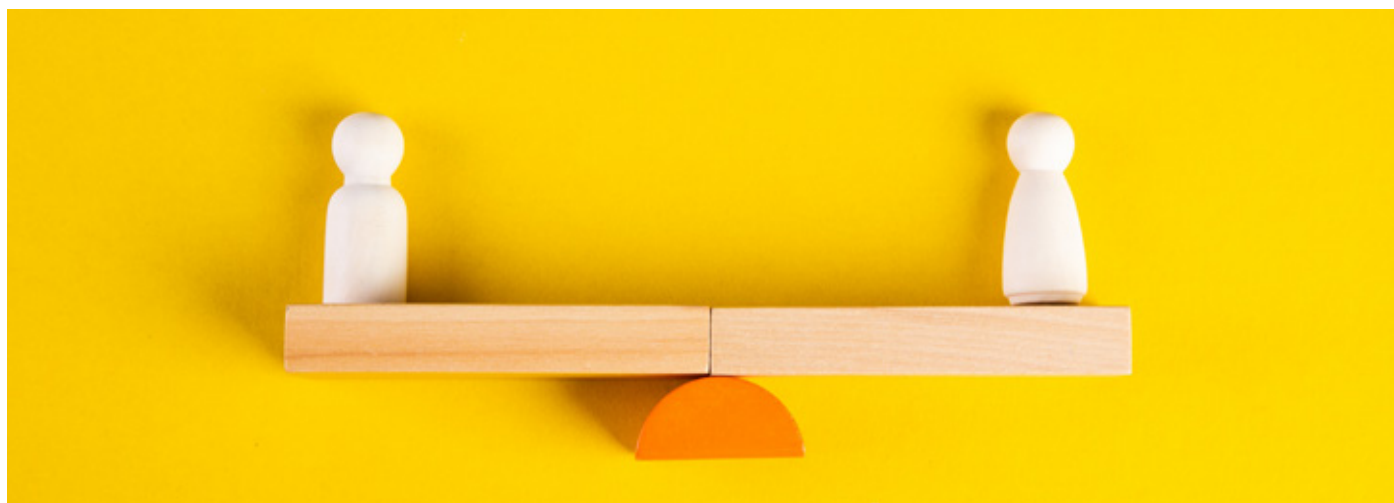
challenge: closing the gender gap in research and science, working on equal opportunities in career development for both women and men. MSCA is focused on promoting gender equality and equal opportunities for its fellows, such as in transparent recruitment, quality employment and working conditions for researchers, part-time work, parental leave, etc.

Ideas, thoughts and experiences of 6 speakers, involved in private and public institutions, were shared to encourage gender equality in research careers and to promote participation in innovation and entrepreneurship, both at an institutional level and at a private level. Some recommendations that could be implemented in further actions to foster gender equality were also a take home message from the speakers. Many topics still need a tangible answer, for e.g. which actions can be pursued to close the gender gap in research, how can MSCA inspire other programs and move the issue forward, how can we ensure inclusion within the research experiments themselves.

An overview of the European Commission (EC)'s actions to promote gender equality and diversity in research and innovation was given by Gerard Bros Perez, policy officer in the MSCA unit, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. Gender equality is a central value for the EC which aims to combine research and innovation in general, but also justice. Over the past decades the EU has made great progress in gender equality, in fact, 48% of the graduate students are women, and they are more successful. However, women occupy only 26% of top academic positions if we consider all research fields. For Horizon Europe, Gerard said, since the EC is for a gender equal culture, it is promoting changes, such as the introduction of the gender equality plan and

is working on fixing systemic problems and promoting institutional changing mindsets where all researchers are welcome and have equal opportunities for research and career progression.

The round table opened with the discussion on how to encourage gender equality in research careers and what examples of good practices could be implemented in coming actions. Thomas Breda, Junior Researcher, CNRS and associate professor at the Paris School of Economics with experience in gender segregation across fields of study, jobs and careers, opened the talk by discussing discrimination related to abilities, supply and side, underlining no changing trend in the past 30 years for females in STEM, regarding the increase of underrepresented females in these fields. Michela Bello, Socio-Economic Analyst at the EC, Joint Research Centre, Ispra, Italy, contributed to the talk by underlying some aspects around the under-representation of women in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) to be tackled by policy actions. For example, under-representation of women in fields with gender disparities and stereotypes, work conditions for researchers, career development success, gender disparity in salary, and the gender blindness in STI. Dorthe Nickel, European and international affairs director of the research center at Institut Curie, followed the discussion giving some updates of the new gender equality plan, where in the last 3 years





has been observed more females PhDs and postdocs but it's not the same in the director unit, therefore a decision panel with more women in would be crucial. Luciana Ayciriex, Senior Consultant in Innovation Management INMARK followed with the GENDER STI relevant findings, on the best practices on gender approach in the world, gender issues in bilateral and multilateral STI agreements, survey on gender equality implementation, approaches to improve gender equality in careers at all levels.

Another important point raised during the discussion was related to understanding the way to favor participation in innovation and entrepreneurship. Maria Fatima Lucas, co-founder & CEO at ZYMVO, a biotech startup specialized in enzyme design and development through computer simulations, gave feedback as an entrepreneurial woman. Based on her experience, always surrounded by men, at first she did not receive discrimination, but in 5 years in her previous companies, maybe she has seen just 10 women in a decision-making role. This is clear enough! She is the 2020 winner of the EU Prize for Women Innovators, and receiving that kind of price, Maria Fatima added, is still important, because last year in the EU only 1% of female entrepreneurs received venture capital funds. She also suggested two keys that open the right doors: education and quotas. In terms of education, it is important to have support and mentorship starting at a young age to build confidence and ability

to approach high-risk innovation projects. Quotas are the second key, and she advised that companies with diversified teams are keener to success. Following this comment, Luciana said that from the survey she got relevant findings on approaches to improve gender balance in decision-making and the integration of the gender dimension in R&I content and the figure of prototypes related to gender equality in decision-making process. She raised a question on the impact that mobility, highly promoted by MSCA, is a challenge for females that are normally struggling because of family reasons.

MCAA through the Genders, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (GEDI) Working Group (WG), the former Gender Equality and Diversity for Mobile Researchers in Science WG, has been active since 2014. The main aim of the WG, in fact, is to go from enhancing the inclusion of women in research to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in research beyond any individual characteristic. Here it is important to underline the upgrade of the equality to the equity concept, to investigate challenges and develop possible solutions in order to also boost diversity and inclusion at all research career stages – from early stages towards leadership levels. Another goal is to ensure that MCAA itself stands for and implements fair treatment of any underrepresented group in all activities that are organized. GEDI WG, to reach a broader audience and engage more people, organizes several workshops, seminars, and conference sessions in collaboration with several organizations that share the same visions, to participate in the debate for equal opportunities in career development and for a healthier work-life balance.

Corinne Portioli 

MCAA Board Member

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MSCA Paris Coverage



Photo by University PSL

Academic Freedom and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

Workshop 2 - Global solidarity in higher education and research: supporting academic freedom and researchers at risk

In 2022, the annual conference of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme was held on 23-24 of May in Paris. Fernanda Bajanca, chair of the MCAA, was the rapporteur for workshop 2 on academic freedom. Here she summarizes the main takeaways.

The session started with a welcoming address by Laura Lohéac, Executive Director of PAUSE Program, which since 2017 enables scientists and artists in exile to be hosted in higher education and/or research institutions and cultural institutions in France, and assist them in their professional integration.

The keynote speaker Laurent Bonnefoy, researcher at CERI Science Po Paris and member of Fariba's Adelkhah support committee, talked about academic freedom as a fundamental democratic value whose violations not only harm the scientific community but also ultimately affect social and economic development and the quality of public debate.

He raised several important points:

- Academics are being arrested in many parts of the world for expressing their opinions and are used as trading tools to negotiate with western countries;

- Also, some states using surveillance and control tools increasingly (examples mentioned in Iran, Emirates, Egypt, China, several Middle East countries);
- Raised the issue that European states also provide resources used to repress academics, not only weapons but materials that are used to control what is published, or police materials. This should be addressed;
- Another issue is that academics working on certain disciplines are targeted even in countries that would not be seen as problematic (Israel, US), e.g. researchers that make field work and travel regularly to certain countries experience increased screening at the border control when traveling;
- So, it's important that western countries work on improving scientific culture and trust researchers;
- Finally, he raised the issue of lack of funding to work on academic freedom.

Two beneficiaries of the PAUSE program shared their perspectives on the difficulties encountered due to their particular situation. These were Farkhad Alimukhamedov and Refet Ali Yalcin. For both, the support received through researchers at risk funding was a life saver. Both insist on the point that while emergency funding is more than welcome, researchers at risk want to integrate in the system as any other researcher and not occupy forever the targeted support that may be more urgent for others. Integration is essential also outside the academic sector. Nationality can create barriers to integration as suspicions are very often not dropped by their exiled status. Due to their situation, researchers at risk tend to work even harder, undeniably contributing to host countries. Therefore, researchers at risk call for practical solutions for long term integration.

- Inspireurope coordinator Joel Hanisek presented this project, whose main objectives are to:
- Improve career development opportunities for researchers at risk;
- Prepare the work environment to receive researchers at risk (e.g. Training and guidance for employers in non-academic sectors);
- Grow the diversity of actors supporting researchers at risk, in particular in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe, and inclusion of business/industry in outreach efforts.

Alexandros Triantafyllidis, from Greece Scholars At Risk Section, reported on local implementation difficulties to support researchers at risk and the importance of the support from the international cooperation projects. The main problem is funding. Administrative issues to integrate researchers at risk in universities. Advocacy being done to gather support, the Ukraine situation is contributing to raising awareness and lifting certain barriers for researchers at risk. He calls for each of us to pressure our rectors.

Michael Gaebal, Director of European University Association, reported on a survey by EUA and Inspireurope on the status of researchers at risk, from researchers' perspectives as well as institutions'. The main results were positive, several programs are dedicated to researchers at risk, but the demand for placements is above offer, due lack of funding. Inspireurope policy recommendations are available online, of which I will underline:

- need to acknowledge and support researchers at risk;
- what governments should do: need for funding (not only targeted programs but also access for researchers at risk to existing programs), promote integration.



A good example is the creation of MSCA4Ukraine and the effort made to adapt the European requirements to this special situation: supporting doctoral and post-doctoral candidates; Ukraine nationals or residing in Ukraine; academy or non-academic sector; supporting when it's safe to go back.

But a permanent and inclusive program is necessary, not only for Ukrainian academics at risk, This means that funding is important but also awareness, empowerment, impact in changing practices in the whole Europe.

The defense of academic freedom and the

protection of researchers at risk in Europe since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine was intensely discussed. Laura Loheac, Executive Director of PAUSE Program, talked about the defense of academic freedom and the protection of researchers at risk in Europe since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Efforts were widespread, from [ScienceForUkraine](#), a community group of volunteer students and research scientists from academic institutions in Europe and around the world, to national responses like the French program for Ukraine and European programs like MSCA4Ukraine. While the Ukrainian war raised awareness and increased interest in supporting researchers at risk, the momentum has to be profited from, efforts are also required to support researchers elsewhere.

The conclusion is that we need to implement permanent and inclusive policies to make Europe a heaven for academic freedom and all academics at risk.

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MSCA Paris Coverage



Photo by University PSL

Bridging the gap between science and society

In 2022, the annual conference of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme was held on 23-24 of May in Paris. MCAA Board members Gian Maria Greco and Giulia Malaguarnera were invited respectively as moderator and speaker, the former, and rapporteur, the latter, of workshop 3 "Closing the gap between research and citizens: Building trust in science with MSCA." They share with us the main takeaways from the workshop.

Workshop 3 - Closing the gap between research and citizens: Building trust in science with MSCA

The idea of "**science with and for society**" played a major role in the [Horizon 2020](#) programme and will continue in various forms in Horizon Europe. Indeed, strengthening the relationship between science and society is one of the main objectives for 2021-2027 of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) programme.

The title of the workshop – Closing the gap between research and citizens: Building trust in science with MSCA – can be broken down into two parts. The first one is more general and concerns **how to strengthen the relationship between research and citizens**. The second one is more specific and is

connected to how the MSCA programme has been contributing to said process and how it can contribute even further.

Two of the elements involved in this discourse are **citizen science** and **science communication**. What is citizen science? What is science communication? The two terms have multiple meanings. Depending on context and speaker, they may end up having very different or even opposite definitions. A look at definitions provided in some documents by the European Commission (EC) may help to clear the stage from a potential lack of terminological clarity.



Photo by University PSL

Citizen Science

In "Citizen Science. Elevating research and innovation through societal engagement," citizen science is defined as hosted on a [page](#) on citizen science. We look at the EC page on [citizen science](#), this is defined as "the voluntary participation of non-professional scientists in research and innovation at different stages of the process and at different levels of engagement, from shaping research agendas and policies, to gathering, processing and analyzing data, and assessing the outcomes of research. **Broadly speaking, citizen science refers to the participation of people in the research endeavor.** Participation is another term oftentimes used in very different ways. It is important to be aware that there is not a single, universal method for **participatory processes**. There are different levels and modalities of participation, which vary according to contexts, people, topics, and goals. The document states also that "active engagement with citizens and society has the potential to improve research and its outcomes and reinforce societal trust in science."

Science Communication

Engaging citizens and building trust require communication. Therefore, science communication is the other side of the coin. Similarly, there are many definitions. The EC publication "[Science Communication](#)", which reports some recommendations based on Horizon 2020 experiences, states that "science communication entails presenting science related topics in a format which is designed for and understandable by the intended audience and remains faithful to the evidence. Science communication can utilize many methods, and takes various forms." Why is this important? It is relevant because "in order to have the public on board for solutions to the challenges our society faces, there is a need **to build trust** also through clear and effective communication. Scientists should consider it their responsibility to make their work understandable by explaining the underlying concepts in order to have a better informed and engaged public in the world of science."



Image by University PSL

and be successful. Early involvement also helps citizens develop a sense of belonging to the community of research producers.

Engaging society also requires and demands transparency. In participatory projects, researchers should clearly explain to the citizens involved what is their role, how they will engage and be engaged, how experts and policy-makers are involved, and what are the expected outcomes.

Trust

A common trait of the two documents is the focus they place on trust. Trust is a semantically rich concept. There are two dimensions that seem especially relevant when speaking of **"trust in/and research"**. On the one hand, the relationship that citizens have with research and how to make it evolve towards a mature cooperation. On the other hand, a biased vision that researchers may have towards citizens.

Trust is a two way street. So far, the default position in the science-and-society discourse has been about the need for society to trust research. However, **there will never be trust in research until researchers fully recognise the public as a legitimate knowledge provider.** It is not rare to see researchers dismiss the role and contribution that people can have. By refusing to give legitimacy to its audience, the research community risks decreasing people's confidence.

Trust requires sharing: whether some experience or knowledge. In the case of citizen science, all the parties involved – researchers, citizens, policy-makers, and so forth – should be integrated in each step of the process. Involvement of citizens from the beginning is key to build their confidence and willingness to participate in the other steps of the process. For instance, citizen science projects that involve citizens at later stages have more difficulties to engage them

Contesting and supporting

Researchers are required more and more to integrate science-and-society practices in their work. For instance, activities about open science, citizen science, responsible research and innovation, and science communication are becoming mandatory or preferential criteria in the evaluation of project proposals. However, **citizen science activities cannot become mandatory.** Before engaging in the effort to carry out such activities, researchers should ask themselves: Am I really interested in what other people do, in what they think? Why do I need data produced by people? Do I have (research-wise) something to learn from citizens' involvement? What will people learn? **Engaging in citizen science actions should be a choice by the researcher** based on the answers to those questions, not a mandatory activity.

The constantly increasing pressure towards adopting those practices risks placing the burden only on the researchers' shoulders. Strengthening the trust between research and society as well as involving citizens in the research endeavor require **training and specialized support.** Researchers need to be taught to think beyond their own internal activities and open up to the outside world. In order to do that, they should be provided with proper time and recognition.

Having citizens integrated into research activities as well as being able to listen to and communicate with them requires

a **substantial change in research culture as well as a whole new set of expertise.** The usual science communication tools are no longer enough. Most importantly, these activities cannot take place in a void. Researchers cannot carry everything on their shoulders. There is the need for a whole infrastructure, where other actors can be mediators that facilitate the communication between researchers and citizens. **Researchers should be surrounded by competent and supportive infrastructures.** Institutions should play a pivotal role in providing support to researchers on those activities. Yet institutions, the evolution of the link between science and society, and the demands placed upon researchers are moving at different paces.


Overall, the relationship between science and society must be recognized as a proper dimension of scientific activity. **There is the need to establish a new pact between researchers and citizens.** A pact that can bring more awareness, transparency, trust and reciprocity in their relationship, while recognizing the contribution that citizen participation in research could bring.

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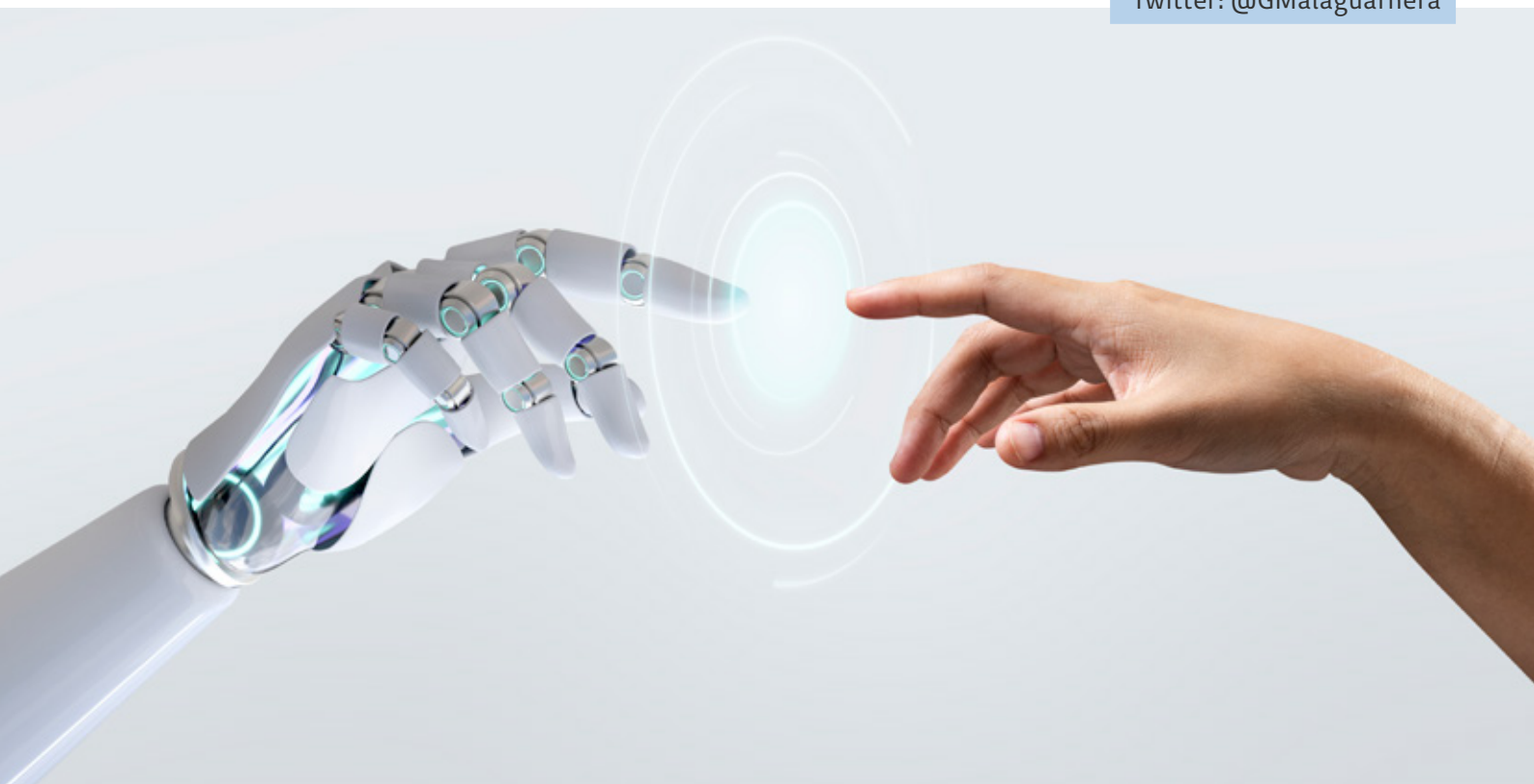
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MSCA Paris Coverage

Implementing the MSCA Green Charter: The case of the MCAA

In 2022, the annual conference of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme was held on 23-24 of May in Paris. Alexandra Dubini, vice-chair of the MCAA, summarizes the speech she delivered during workshop 4 "From intentions to actions : implementing the MSCA green Charter in research projects."

In order to recommend and implement best practices to encourage greener research, we need to understand the status quo, and for that we need a model that assesses what we are doing in academia or any research institutions in general. Then, it is important to implement the model following clear guidelines from the Green Deal. Afterwards, we need to use those data to highlight what is missing and what needs to be done/improved and to start the implementation of the actions required. Finally, it is necessary to develop a system or tools to monitor and record our actions. Close the circle and start over!

In the case of MCAA, what we want is to:

- Lead by example
- Raise awareness
- Design projects



Workshop 4 - From intentions to actions: implementing the MSCA green Charter in research projects

Photo by University PSL



Leading by example

The MCAA wants to lead by example, which means that the events that we organize should be eco-friendly and follow the green chart. That was the case for the Annual Conference held in Vienna in 2019. From the experience emerged an internal guideline for event organization in order to encourage the nine Working Groups and 33 Chapters to organize eco-friendly/sustainable events: Reduce, reuse and recycle; Promote green purchasing for project-related materials; Ensure the sustainability of project events; Use low-emission forms of transport; Promote teleconferencing whenever possible; Use sustainable and renewable forms of energy; Develop awareness on environmental sustainability; Share ideas and examples of sustainable best practice.

Raise awareness

The MCAA has been raising awareness about the need for environment-friendly and sustainable practices in many ways, such as:

- Organization of sessions. For instance, the session on "Greening research and higher education institutions" during the 2022 Annual Conference;
- Training. For instance, the workshop organized within the conference "how to go green in the lab;"
- Promotion of actions within MCAA Chapters. For instance, the Brazil chapter and the Geodiversity & UNESCO Global Geoparks organized a webinar on Innovative territories for local and sustainable development;
- Publications. In September 2021 we



devoted a special focus of our Newsletter to the EU Green Deal to communicate to our members what is going on in this area. Moreover, in the last two years we have reduced substantially the number of printed copies of our annual magazine IRRADIUM, and opted to print it on FSC paper;

- Policy Working Group. That analyses and deconvolute for us the document related to the green deal or information on sustainability and practices for ex useful for our members. Position paper on Zenodo.

Design project


While at the moment the MCAA does not have a project related to sustainability, we are currently discussing the possibility of establishing a specific working group or at least a task force. For us, it is important to build momentum and ferment this kind of initiative. And one way to do it is to create a task force or a working group so as to have our members join this project and create workshops and other activities.

We also plan to strengthen our networking activities on the topic by talking with other organizations such as Erasmus Mundus Alumni, and devise common goals on how **to contribute/provide** mentoring on those issues and **recommendations** about how to reuse and recycle, encouraging our network to build and continue the actions, and implement good practices.

The future

There are many actions we can take in the near future. For instance:

- Launch a common campaign (e.g., with MCAA, EURAXESS, NCP EMA) that starts in labs and that is communicated through social networks like a competition or a day dedicated to good practices like falling walls?
- Have a dedicated awards to good practices
- Give prizes to the best actions, rank University, equal level fellow project.
- Implement the Green Chart from the start meaning when fellows are signing their contract. That would be a binding close where both parties, institutions and fellows agree to follow the Green Chart to the best of their abilities.

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ESOF 2022 Coverage

ESOF 2022: The Marie Skłodowska- Curie Actions Satellite Event

Here we highlighted the main ideas shared in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Satellite Event about how to reach an integrated and diversified research ecosystem.

Though its history can be traced back at least to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, 1993 is usually seen as the founding year of the European Union, when twelve countries signed the [Maastricht Treaty](#). Now, with the rise of the multipolar world, representatives of academic institutions urge strengthening international collaboration in research, innovation, and education for

a solid future of European research (EUA 2021). However, the players of these changes, i.e. researchers, also call for cooperation, diversity, and integration within the scientific community. For this reason, MSCA fellows, supervisors, coordinators, alumni, and policymakers debated science diplomacy, sustainable research, academic freedom, science communication, and research supervision at the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Satellite Hybrid Event that took place on 12 and 13 July in Leiden (the Netherlands) during the 2022 edition of the EuroScience Open Forum.

Claire Morel, Head of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Unit, opened the event and presented the role of the MSCA program for the career development and training of approximately 10,000 researchers each year, and then she opened space to debate and reflect priorities for a better research ecosystem. After that, Mostafa Moonir Shawrav, former chair of the MCAA, moderated the discussion on the role of science diplomacy in building the dialogue between institutions and researchers globally. For Frederik Ponjaert, Researcher at Université libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), the exchange of ideas between different research fields as well as getting scientists involved in politics can foster integration across borders.



ESOF 2022
EUROSCIENCE OPEN FORUM
LEIDEN 13-16 JULY
CROSSING BORDERS, ENGAGED SCIENCE, RESILIENT SOCIETIES



In terms of policies, several countries open the possibility of scientists being engaged in policy-making with fellowships in embassies or establishing a scientific advisor position. However, as the Coordinator of Science Diplomacy and Multilateral Relations, Jan Marco Müller, pointed out, researchers still struggle to convince politicians that evidence-based policies develop long-lasting impact. Although science diplomacy has more visibility in the scientific community, according to Jerneja Penca, Associate Professor at the Euro-Mediterranean University, it is fundamental to address how to effectively transfer knowledge from individual research to policymakers.

Turning European research into a more diverse and collaborative environment is not possible if we don't deal with the precarity of work and reduction of opportunities in

academia. According to a recent OECD report, doctorate holders experience low research integrity and R&D budget and lack of research diversity, which makes the academic career less attractive (OECD, 2021). In the second part of the event, Sybille Luhmann, former policy officer at the MSCA Unit, guided a panel discussion on "Strengthening the research ecosystem." The panel brought together entrepreneurs like Murat Gunes, also an MCAA member, and policy-makers' representatives like Slaven Misljencevic and Jean-Emmanuel Faure, Policy Officers at the European Commission. They agreed that dialogue between policy-makers and entrepreneurs can open new opportunities for researchers. For MCAA member Karen Stroobants, being outside of the research ecosystem can change perspectives and defend that the scientific career does not need to have a linear trajectory since competencies change over a lifetime.

The accumulation of functions faced by researchers is one topic associated with the “research precariat,” (OECD, 2021) where we need to learn and practice new skills without having enough time to deal with all the responsibilities. Does society understand the real value of a researcher? Freedom and values in academia were addressed in the last panel of the MCAA event. For Thabit Jacob, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Gothenburg, understanding the value of research and the impact we can do in society is the first step to claim for changes. Ewing Amadi Salumu, a Career Advisor in the Netherlands, stressed that researchers reached several achievements in terms of recognition, however there is still a long way to go for better integration of researchers at risk for example. Researchers, as highly qualified professionals regardless of ethnicity or nationality, must be integrated into society and accept positions where they can apply their full potential, declared Mariana Meyer, Policy Officer at the UN Refugee Agency. There is a large diversity of challenges in research and policymakers need to be aware of a variety of researchers with different contexts that need to be integrated in society. Finally, Monika Steinell, Deputy Secretary General of EUA, remembered that measuring, monitoring, and assessing initiatives will not

lead straightforwardly to positive changes but more to discussion and self-reflection to commit for an improvement.

The MSCA Satellite Event also included two close-door sessions where MCAA members played leading roles. The sessions aimed at providing strategic feedback to the MSCA Unit on two pressing issues for the MSCA programme, hence their close-door trait. The first session was devoted to the discussion of the role of supervisors in MSCA programmes and the recently published MSCA guidelines for supervision, and saw MCAA Chair Fernanda Bajanca as the moderator and MCAA Board member Gian Maria Greco as the rapporteur. The second session discussed challenges to implementing the EU Green Deal in the MSCA programme, and saw MCAA Austria Chapter Chair Veronica Lutalo as rapporteur.

The recordings of the public sessions can be accessed at the following URL <https://bit.ly/3Q8ujBS>.

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News from
the Chapters

The MCAA Career Development Working Group: Future perspective

Praveen Kumar, the new Chair of the Working Group, tells us about the group's future plans.



Why did you decide to run as Chair of the Career Development Working Group?

I have been an active member of MCAA for more than a decade. I was the chair of the Indian Chapter from May 2017 to August 2021. When I took charge of the Indian Chapter in May 2017, it was inactive, with only 28 members. One of my goals then was to make the chapter grow and function actively. With my administrative experience, the Indian Chapter is now one of the most active and fifth largest chapters of MCAA, with 375 members.

At the same time, I was/am also an active member of several MCAA working groups (WGs), and Career Development is one of them. Career Development WG has a lot of potential for disseminating the information and mandate of MCAA. With my administrative experience as the chair of MCAA's Indian Chapter and as an established researcher, along with a few editorial experiences, I decided to take the responsibility of Career Development WG's chair to bring new changes in the WG for the benefit of more MCAA members.

Praveen Kumar, a personal account

I am an Assistant Professor at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Sciences (IACS) in Kolkata, India. I did my PhD at the Department of Physics of the Indian Institute of Technology, followed by a postdoctoral research as Marie Curie Fellow at ISOM, UPM Madrid, Spain. I served as a Chair of the MCAA Indian Chapter (2017-2021). I am a recipient of several awards and fellowships. My research contribution covers a broad spectrum of materials science, including III-V semiconductors, 2D-materials, MXenes, carbon nanostructures, etc., for various energy harvesting (PEC water splitting, CO₂ reduction, broadband photodetectors) & storage (supercapacitors) applications.

What will be the objectives of the Career Development Working Group under your tenure?

The main objectives of the Career Development WG are as follows:

- To identify the main areas of interest for MCAA members concerning career development;
- To organize the webinars/survey among MCAA members to understand their concerns for career development and plan follow-up events;
- To organize two flagship events of Career Development WG along with academia and Industries participation;
- To organize expert talks/webinars/workshops for career guidance, project writing, CV development, professional advancement, and job opportunities for MCAA members;
- To organize a series of webinars and interactions by professional experts on mental health, communicate best practices, how to deal with work pressure and how to balance personal & professional life;
- To arrange a few networking events with established and early-stage career MCAA members.

What are your plans for the development of the Career Development Working Group? Can you tell us some?

The first and immediate plan is to popularize this WG among the MCAA members to increase active participation. Then, as per the mandate, I will build an active team for organizing the planned events mentioned in the objectives, like having at least two flagship events that attract participation from many MCAA members. Furthermore, we plan to conduct multiple talks/webinars/workshops on various career and professional development aspects.

What is the role of the Career Development Working Group within the MCAA community?


As MCAA has vast expertise, few members are already well experienced in their careers. However, many MCAA members are yet to decide on their future careers and are struggling with their settlement. This WG will utilize the expertise of our settled MCAA members and outsource several experts through our WG activities, to motivate and guide our MCAA members who are looking for proper guidance to settle down.

How will you cooperate with other Chapters and Working Groups?

All the chapter chairs and WGs chairs will have an essential role in the planning, dissemination and participation of the proposed events of the career development WG. I will have a close association with all the chapters/WGs chairs. This group will be open to all MCAA members and will always welcome suggestions for improving this WG and MCAA as a whole.

What would you say to members considering joining the Career Development Working Group?

I welcome all the MCAA members to join our Career Development WG. Together we can make a difference as far as career-related issues are concerned. The experienced members can utilize this platform as an expert, and the early stage researcher can use this opportunity to get the right direction for their future career development.

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News from the Chapters

Discover the newly founded Mexico Chapter

Daniel Rios Barrera,
a personal account

I was born and raised in Mexico City. During my undergrad studies on Biomedical Research, I discovered how something so “simple” as an egg can show us so many wonders about ourselves; not only of how we are formed but also about evolution, and of the progression of different pathologies. Ever since, I decided I would study Developmental Biology. I did my PhD 250km away from home in a city called Querétaro, studying epidermal development in the fruit fly embryo, and for my postdoc I moved to Germany, to work at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Heidelberg. My first 3 years of postdoc at EMBL were funded by an MSCA COFUND program which allowed me to be part of two research groups. I spent a total of 6 wonderful years at EMBL, after which I was lucky to find a group leader position back home, at the Biomedical Research Institute of the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

For me, the MCAA is one of those platforms that provides us with tools to do so, by giving us an international network of alumni working together towards common goals.



On 15 June 2022, the Mexico Chapter was founded. The meeting saw participation of representatives of other MCAA Chapters, including North America Chapter, Argentina Chapter, Brazil Chapter, Chile Chapter, and Spain-Portugal Chapter. Daniel Rios Barrera, the chair of the newly founded Chapter, tells us about its future plans.

How did the Mexico Chapter launch event go? Can you tell us more about the event?

For the launch of the Mexico Chapter we had a lot of support coming from both EURAXESS Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and from the North America Chapter of the MCAA. Together with them, we organized a public forum on Intersectoral alliances to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. For this, we invited experts from academia, industry, and NGOs to discuss their views on the importance of alliances to reach Sustainable Development Goals. The day after this event, we asked the chairs of other regional chapters of the MCAA to join us for an informal discussion with the now founding members of the chapter. Our goal was to find guidance on how to launch our chapter, but also identify

areas where we could work together with them. Hearing the experiences of the other chapters was really inspiring and certainly motivated us to move forward, we're very thankful for their support.

What are the Chapter's current objectives?

Our main goals are to strengthen ties; within alumni residing or incoming to Mexico, with fellows currently residing in Europe and elsewhere, and also to reach out to universities and private sectors in Mexico to increase the visibility of the MSCA by organizing different types of events.

Do you already have plans for events?


First of all, we are trying to identify new members for the chapter, as we are sure that having more colleagues on board would enrich our proposals. We are also planning to hold career seminars where our members will talk about their paths and experiences, including of course how they benefited from the MSCA. Finally, we will host industry-academia get-togethers to enhance collaborations between these two sectors for their mutual benefit. We have other ideas coming up so stay tuned!

Do you have plans for cooperating with other Chapters and Working Groups?

We were very happy with the work we did with the North America Chapter on Sustainable Development Goals so we are planning to repeat this forum yearly, to remind everybody of this agenda and how we as society are doing with its objectives. We will certainly reach out to other chapters, like the ones who helped us kick-off our chapter to plan more activities together.

What would you say to people who are considering joining the Chapter?

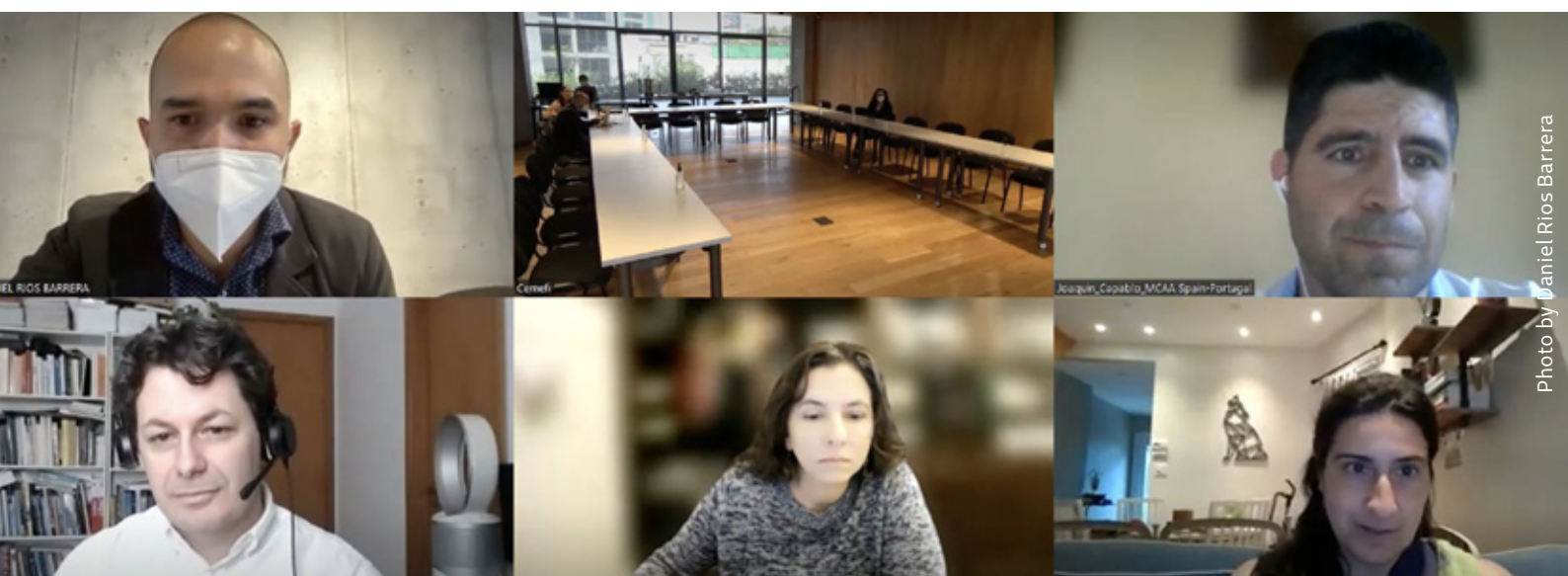
I'd say that with the short time we have been working with the now official chapter, I already found a lot of satisfaction in working with colleagues from very different disciplines to find common grounds to develop projects. The more interdisciplinary a project is, the wider its reach and impact so it's been definitely very exciting to launch the chapter. It is an experience that might take you out of your comfort zone but is definitely worth it!

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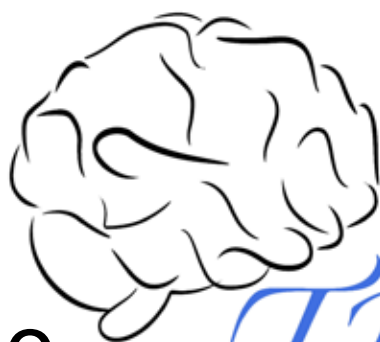
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Screenshot of the inaugural meeting of the Mexico Chapter.

Special Focus: Different career paths of the MCAA fellows

TRABIT or what happened to our brains



TRABIT

Image by TRABIT ITN

Time to check some of the aftermath of the project focused on brains and see what happened to the brains working on the project.

Introduction

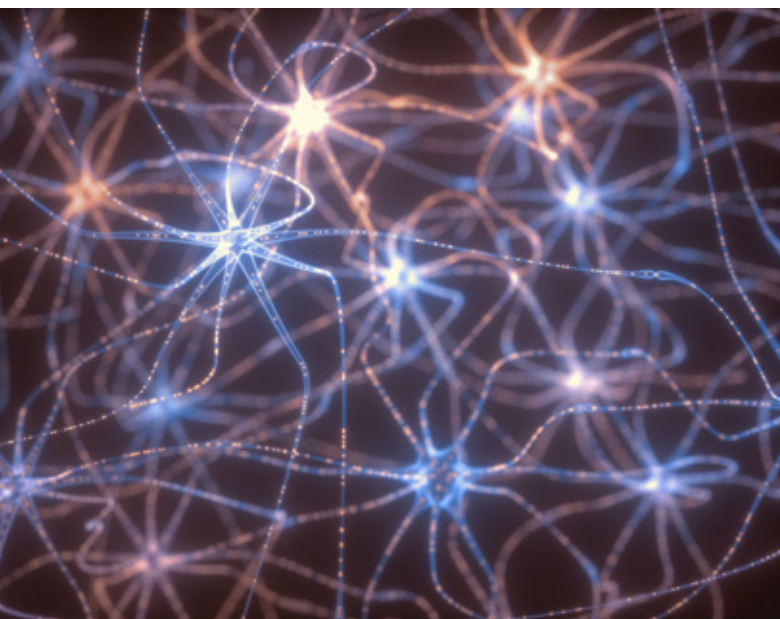
By the end of every stage in one's life, it is often tempting and sometimes necessary to reflect on what has happened, what was achieved and what should be anticipated. If you have ever been a part of a Marie Skłodowska-Curie consortium, you are probably no stranger to writing long (often very long) term plans and progress reports. Supposedly, they force you to look around your scientific timeline with an intention to help you see the path ahead more clearly (or, at least, I am trying to convince myself that is the intention).

What is TRABIT?

But let's put reflection aside for a moment and start with what TRABIT actually is. The "Translational Brain Imaging Training Network" (TRABIT, trabit.eu) is an interdisciplinary and intersectoral joint effort of computational scientists, clinicians, and

the industry in the field of neuroimaging. This is exactly the description you will find on our web-site. With the overall focus on the brain, the research was then performed in four directions: multiple sclerosis, brain tumors, fetal brain disorders, and stroke/neurovascular disease.

We were very lucky to have four training schools throughout the project, with the last one taking place just a couple of weeks before COVID entered the stage. The schools featured not only lectures from prominent researchers, but also such important topics as academic writing, time management in academia, entrepreneurship, etc. They have also allowed our PhD candidates (ESRs) to make new connections, start collaborations and plan their research secondments. Furthermore, during pandemic, TRABIT was able to organize an additional training school and a highly successful online conference (<https://trabit-network.github.io/conference/>). The conference featured progress presentations of the ESRs, and the state of each of the target fields was discussed at round tables between students and well experienced researchers.



At the time of writing this piece, six PhD students have already completed their work, were granted their doctoral degree and continued their path either in industry or academia, and are now continuing doing research in their new position.

[Only some] Success stories

Stefano Cerri, the first graduated TRABITer, says the following: "TRABIT courses and secondments have broadened my soft and hard skills; from improving my presentation and research collaboration skills to learning disparate topics not directly related to my PhD project that have deepened my knowledge in medical image analysis." Stefano developed a contrast and scanner agnostic method for simultaneous brain structure and lesion segmentation, which was implemented in the widely used open-source FreeSurfer toolkit. Currently, Stefano is a postdoc fellow at the [Athinoula A. Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging in Boston](#).


Another graduate, Francesco La Rosa, also worked on multiple sclerosis and developed a deep learning approach for cortical lesion segmentation. Francesco is now a postdoctoral fellow at [the Beck Laboratory](#) at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. He started working with Erin Beck during his

secondment at NIH and therefore it is thanks to TRABIT that he found this opportunity. Moreover, throughout the PhD, TRABIT courses and workshops helped him improve his scientific skills and networking with researchers from multiple institutions, which often led to fruitful collaborations.

The aforementioned researchers chose to pursue the academic path, but there are also examples of those who turned to industry. Thomas Yu defended his PhD after working on many topics related to solving inverse problems; particularly, he focussed on solving inverse problems related to magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). After graduation, Thomas has started a position as a research scientist in Siemens Healthineers in Switzerland, where he will work on deep learning reconstruction for MR images. In his own words: "Being part of TRABIT was valuable because it exposed me to the industry and the many different kinds of research within the consortium and allowed me to build a network/friendship with the fellow PhD students of the consortium".

To sum up, TRABIT gave us skills, network, new opportunities, career prospects, nice peers as well as great time and nice memories.

This article would not be possible without the input from fellow TRABITers. Unfortunately, it was not possible to mention everyone, but the credits go to: Maria Ines Meyer, Francesco La Rosa, Stefano Cerri, Ivan Ezhov, Sveinn Pálsson, Daniel Krahulec, Luca Canalini, Lucas Fidon, Thomas Yu, Athena Taymourtash, Suprosanna Shit, Carmen Moreno Genis, Amnah Mahroo, Ezequiel de la Rosa.

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Special Focus: Different career paths of the MSCA fellows

From an MSCA Global Fellowship to a COFUND Fellowship

MCAA Board member Corinne Portioli investigates drug discovery, structural biology, and nanomedicine applied to neurodisorders. She tells us how holding first an MSCA Global Fellowship and now an MSCA COFUND Fellowship has been shaping her career.

Being one of the few researchers that have had multiple MSCA fellowships is an honor and a privilege. I first held an MSCA Global Fellowship at the Brain Development and Disease Lab of the Italian Institute of Technology (IIT) and the Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Lab of the Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) in Houston, US (Grant agreement No 843239). Currently, I am an MSCA COFUND Fellow at the Nanotechnology for Precision Medicine Lab of IIT (Grant agreement No 754490). I consider this as a pivotal and prestigious mid-term career achievement, which will pave the road to becoming an independent researcher.

After receiving an MSc in Biotechnology, my career has always been focused on the study of the brain. During my BSc thesis at the University of Modena and Reggio

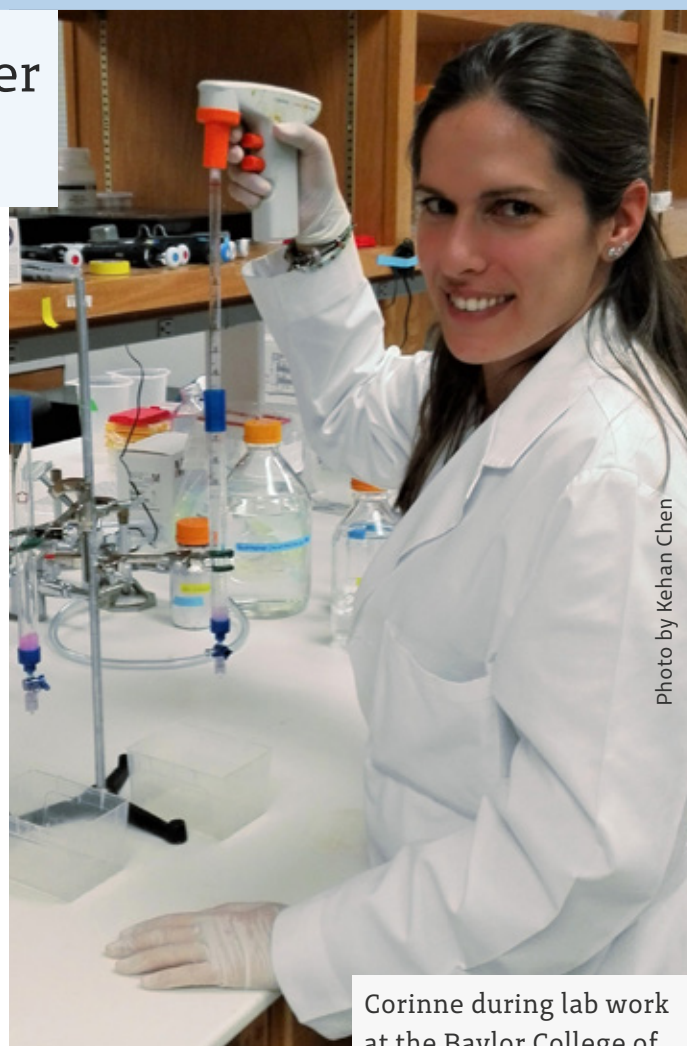


Photo by Kehan Chen

Corinne during lab work at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston (US).

Emilia, I worked on a neuropharmacology project. Since I have always been attracted by new challenges, for my MSc thesis I decided to explore the molecular modeling and drug design field of research. Although I ascertained the importance of the two areas, my preference was wet-lab research. I collaborated for a short time with a biotech company to find novel inhibitors for neurodegenerative disorders, before enrolling in a PhD in Neuroscience at the University of Verona (Italy), where I investigated the use of nanoparticles as innovative systems for the brain drug delivery. During that time, I also spent six months in a leading nanomedicine lab in Manchester (UK). It was very exciting (apart from the rainy weather!), and it gave me the opportunity to interact with a multicultural environment, and to approach different ways of lab work and research.

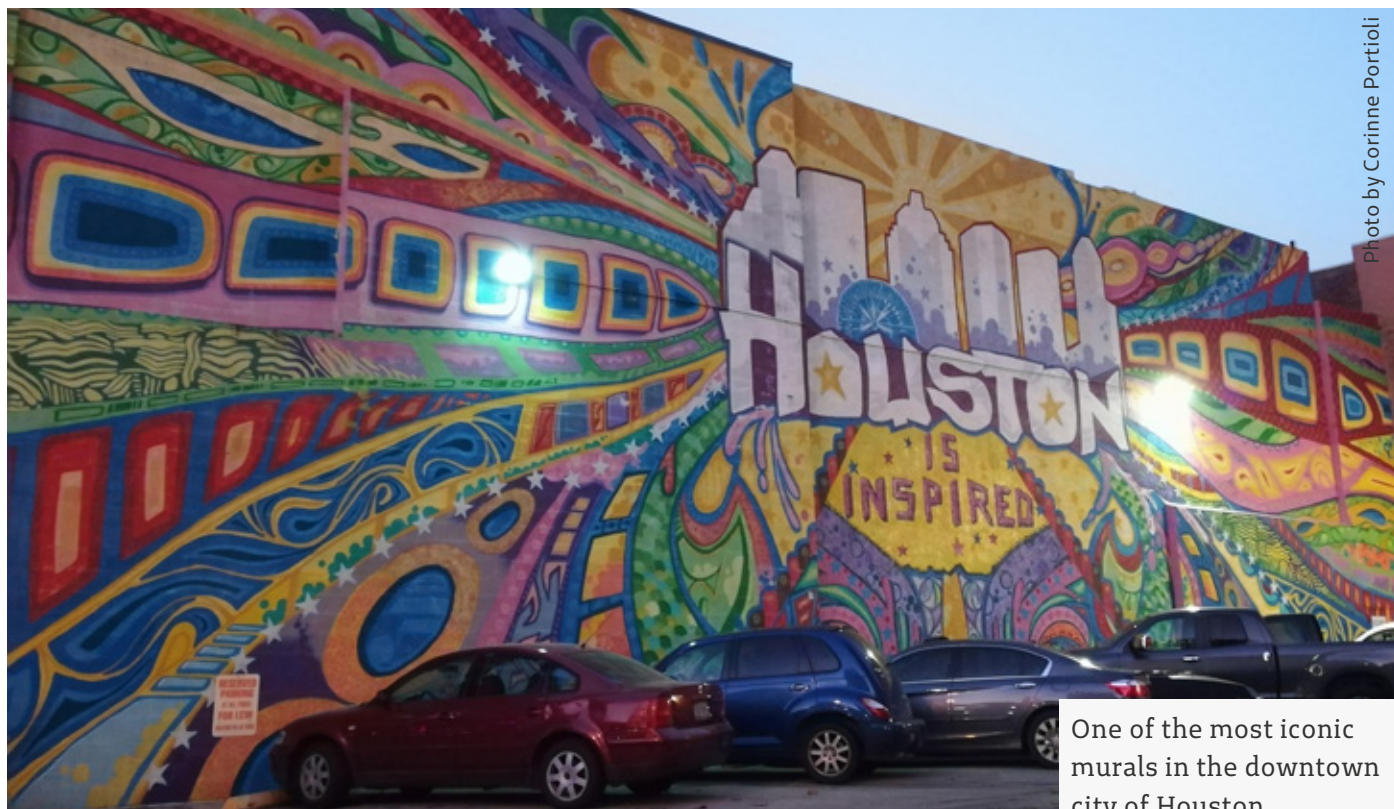


Photo by Corinne Portioli

One of the most iconic murals in the downtown city of Houston.

In 2017, I realized that it was time to move forward and embrace new challenges, so I moved to IIT for a postdoc. The excellent institution and the job description was reflecting, to me, the perfect match with all my experiences and the skills I had acquired. Moreover, a collaboration with an institution in the US was required, and this was another aspect that thrilled me. I joined Laura Cancedda's lab supported by a Telethon grant, to work at finding new therapies for Down syndrome. Then, I successfully applied for an MSCA-GF, which started in July 2019. The project led me to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the mechanism of a membrane transporter, in collaboration with Marco De Vivo at IIT and Ming Zhou Lab at the BCM. Thanks to the leading experience of my supervisors and lab members, I learnt cutting-edge methodologies that could be applied to a wide variety of projects in the future. The possibility to be trained on techniques at the forefront of structural biology has been an invaluable opportunity to expand the network and improve the knowledge.

Experiencing multicultural, diverse and interdisciplinary work environments, widening the global network and developing strong adaptation and collaborative skills in managing new projects, are all invaluable aspects of this overseas experience. Moving into one of the biggest cities in the US was tough at the beginning: leaving the routine life, the work environment and the hobbies to tread alone in an unknown life chapter was probably my main concern at the time. After the first months of acclimation (and hurricane Harvey), I started to meet new people becoming part of the local Italian community, I enrolled in a Spanish course (the second main spoken language in Texas), and I started to attend the main events in town, such as the Rodeo, or the NBA. Mexico's cultural influence is pervasive in Texas: there was never a shortage of tacos, fajitas and tequila, although Italian cuisine was always much appreciated. The weather was hot, humid during summer and mild in winter. I loved it. I come from a town close to the river Po, so I am more used to humidity. The unpredicted COVID-19 pandemic hit during the last months of my stay in

the US. Besides the very hard time and the unforeseen circumstances, the lockdown was an opportunity to improve remote working, connect with our network, and slow down a bit our life speed, thinking more.

In July 2020, I moved back to Italy, knowing that Houston would have always been my second "home". After spending one year at the IIT for the mandatory incoming phase in the EU hosting institution, I moved to the next (and still current) step of my journey. I read about an open position for an MSCA COFUND programme, called MINDED in the IIT newsletter. I was curious about the topic of advancing the diagnosis, imaging and treatment of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs). After verifying that I was eligible, I applied and joined the Nanotechnology for Precision Medicine Lab led by Paolo Decuzzi. The goal of the study is to develop drug delivery systems in NDDs, which are characterized by brain function deficits that usually show up early in children, and can affect memory, learning ability, socialization and self-control, with social and economic impacts. MINDED uses a multiscale and novel approach: neuroscience investigates the causes of NDDs, identifying biological targets for new and more effective therapies, nanomedicine develops devices for the precise and patient-specific delivery of novel therapeutic and diagnostic drugs and contrast agents, and robotics improves the

early detection. As a MINDED fellow, I also benefit from a specific training for business development and clinical translation of new biomedical technologies.

I thought on my career journey as a pharmaceutical biotechnologist and a neuroscientist, and I realized that my driven theme has always been about finding new and innovative cures for brain disorders, because the brain has such a crucial and complicated role that makes each aspect of the research a fascinating puzzle piece. The MSCA programme has been playing a crucial role in advancing and shaping my scientific career. Besides the differences between the two MSCA fellowships, one key parameter is the mobility (international and intersectoral). Living in different countries and environments enriched me as a researcher both in terms of work opportunities and network and in terms of personal experiences in being embedded in different routines, cultures and habits. I bet that friends and colleagues one day perhaps will leave for new places too, but no borders will limit networks and challenges.

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Special Focus: Different career paths of the MSCA fellows

SOCIETY riPENSACi

SOCIETY, the consortium of several scientific institutions in the Italian Region Emilia-Romagna organizes during the European Researcher's Night a series of activities, helping the audience to understand how the connection between different disciplines, and people are fundamental to solving global challenges. The upcoming edition, **riPENSACi**, emphasizes the need to rethink our understanding of reality and progress.



SOCIETY is a consolidated partnership that, since 2016, organizes the European Researcher's Night (ERN), in the Italian Region Emilia-Romagna. The partnership includes the local branches of the main National Italian Research Institutes (the National Research Council - CNR, the Italian National Institute for Nuclear Physics - INFN, The Italian National Institute for Astrophysics - INAF and the Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology - INGV), together with the University of Bologna, the oldest university in the Western World, CINECA, the largest Italian center for scientific computing, the communication and management agencies ComunicaMente and Naxta, and the University of Ferrara acting as an associated partner. Every year, **SOCIETY**, together with numerous stakeholders, animates activities before and during the ERN in Bologna, and in all the cities hosting University of Bologna's campuses (Cesena and Cesenatico, Forlì and Predappio, Ravenna, Rimini) and since 2021 also in Ferrara.

The proposed activities are based on the assumption that ERN is a good opportunity

for citizens to meet researchers and understand how Europe can support research. Through the years, the public interest has been constantly growing. The most important feedback the public gave us is that participating in the ERN means being able to discover, in an engaging and fun way, how European researchers, active in all sectors of knowledge, work to face and solve the challenges for a sustainable future.

The theme proposed for the forthcoming edition of ERN (2022 - 2023) is **riPENSACi**, which literally means think twice i.e., think carefully, but also think again: look at things from a different perspective. The emphasis here is on thinking, a sorely needed attitude at this time in history, but also on the need to re-think our understanding of reality and progress.

The message that the project intends to convey regards the importance of Research and researchers as a powerful resource we can rely on in the challenge for a more sustainable future at the center of which are

new relationships between humankind, other species and the environment. Moreover, it is important to demonstrate to the youngest, and in particular to the girls, that participating in the ERN represents an opportunity to find positive stimuli to pursue a career in the world of research, thus making an active contribution to solving the problems that make us perceive the future uncertain and threatening.

In this edition, SOCIETY riPENSACi will offer a series of activities/events helping the audience to understand how the connection between different disciplines, and people are fundamental for solving global challenges. Coming from our previous experience, and perfectly in line with the proposed topic for the 2022-2023, the multidisciplinary approach is highly appreciated.

The main activities, that will be animated by researchers working in a wide range of disciplines from science, technology and humanities are: guided tours, games like treasure hunts and quizzes, science cafés and scientific aperitifs, philosophical conversations open to the public, lectures and demonstrations held by international experts and by young researchers and many more. Furthermore, virtual contents will be uploaded on SOCIETY social media channels, such as videos, tutorials, demonstrations, short presentations. The partnership will create opportunities to let the public interact with the researchers, such as speed dates, speed pitches or TED talk-style presentations. For the schools, the researchers will propose a list of disciplines and topics on which they are willing to give lectures or interact with students within classes or online. Moreover,

students and teachers will be directly involved in the organization of the activities proposed to the general public, making them protagonists of the Night. The engagement of the younger generation - not only within schools' context - will be favored also thanks to activities such as quizzes, team games like treasure hunts, online gaming.

During the two dedicated Nights, all main venues will feature marked stands where staff will be available to distribute information about the European Union, its functioning and the opportunities it offers to European citizens, students and workers. We plan to involve foreign researchers and students, such as MSCA fellows or Erasmus participants, to actively participate in the two editions of ERN, to provide their specific perspective on European Commission funded research and activities. The aim is also to let visitors interact with these very young researchers that should share the meaning and value that EU programs had in their lives and in their professional career. The University of Bologna plans to address a specific call to MSCA researchers, through an approach based on the direct involvement of the researchers who benefit from these funding.

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Research



Photo by Laila Makkoul

When mobility becomes fieldwork: Global Fellowship in the Middle East

In the fields of cultural and social studies, mobility can also become a time for valuable fieldwork if you choose your partnering university wisely.

As a young scholar in Middle Eastern studies at the university of Oslo, I am interested in understanding people's lives from their own historical and present contexts. I try to avoid reducing my research to a specific discipline or a presumed reality by approaching my work from different angles. While universities provide tools and theories for understanding a particular subject, cultural and social anthropology in the field of area studies also relies on observational knowledge. This form of knowledge requires being present in places and among groups one seeks to understand.

When I learned about the MSCA Global Fellowship, I knew that this grant was just the

right one for me. An MSCA Global Fellowship lasts three years. It includes an outgoing phase at a partner institution outside Europe and an incoming phase in a host institution in Europe. The extra-European mobility trait of the fellowship is usually valued for institutional collaboration, interdisciplinary research, networking, research innovation and for the researcher's career development. But for me, it has also become my fieldwork. By partnering with a local university in the Middle East, the American university in Cairo, my outgoing phase has become an invaluable chance of immersing myself in the field I seek to understand.

Understanding local subjectivities

My project is called "Globalizing Anti-Feminism: A Phenomenology of Transnational Networks of Islamic Women Organizations" ([GIAntiFem](#)). It tries to understand the recent rise of transnational networks of Islamic women organizations in the Muslim world. These organizations resist what they perceive to be western imperialism in the name of

globalization and feminism. At the same time, they are actively involved in global politics where they seek to present ways of knowing and being that are grounded in their own contexts. How does politics of gender, as well as religious, political, social, and economic factors shape the realities of these women? What can that teach us about local opposition to global politics? And how can this knowledge help us move forward towards a less polarized world and greater understanding and respect of different realities? These are questions that cannot be answered by simply reading theories and textual material. They need to be observed and acknowledged from within their contexts.

More appreciation of fieldwork-mobility

When I got the exciting news that I had received a Global Fellowship, I was thrilled but also overwhelmed by the amount of technical, ethical, and practical issues I had to deal with. Due to limited experience that both my host university and partnering university had with this form of mobility, many practical issues were new and therefore had to be tested out. And of course, undertaking all of this in the

midst of a pandemic did not make the matter any easier. Looking back as I am writing these reflections from the vibrant city of Cairo, I think that these road bumps were worth it. I have expanded my perceptions by having had this valuable chance of living for a longer time in one of the most strategic cities in the Middle East. The observational knowledge I have obtained would only have been possible in an institution outside of the region.

I hope my personal experience with fieldwork-mobility will make academic institutions more aware of the added value that partnering with local universities brings to their disciplines. And as a newly elected board member of the MSCA Middle East Chapter, I want to promote more mobility to the region and help to make it an attractive place for future global fellows in the fields of humanities and social sciences.

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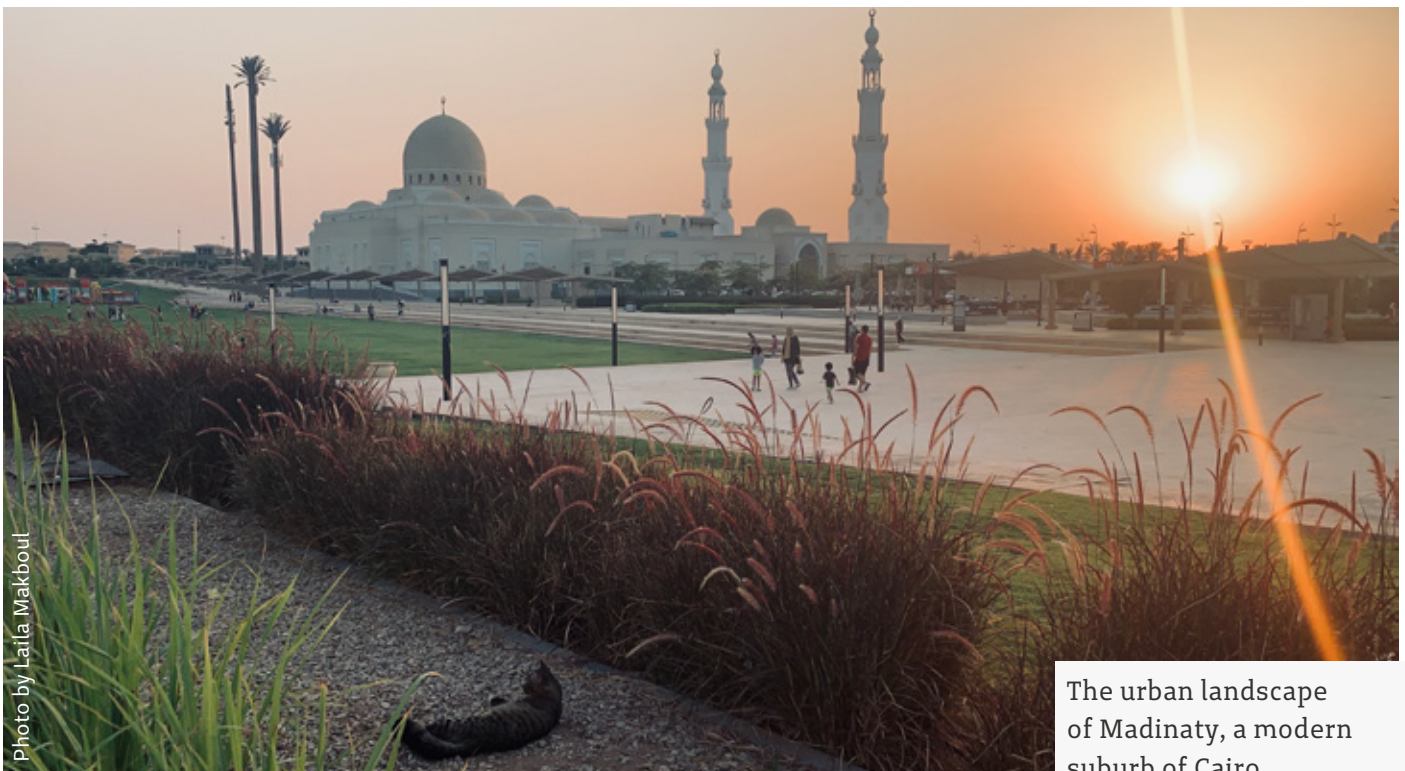
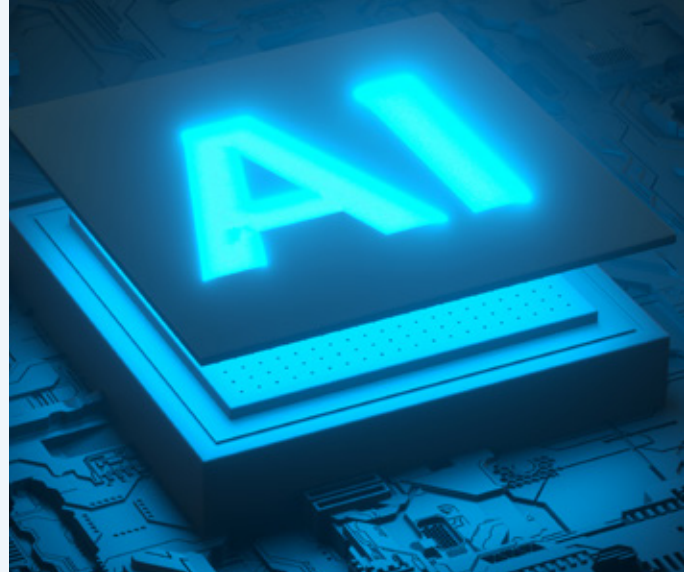


Photo by Laila Makboul

The urban landscape of Madinaty, a modern suburb of Cairo.

Research

Learning to Design Robust Natural Language Generation Models for Explainable AI



According to EU legislation, humans have a right to be given an explanation when a decision that affects them is made by an artificial intelligence (AI) based system (e.g., why an application for a loan was rejected). However, AI-based systems, which mainly learn automatically from data, often lack the required transparency. Scientists and industry, therefore, have organized a Spring School as a part of the NL4XAI (Natural Language Technologies for Explainable Artificial Intelligence) research project, an initiative funded by the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme in the framework of the European Union's investment in Explainable Artificial Intelligence.

Emerging as [the first European Training Network \(ETN\) on Natural Language \(NL\) and Explainable AI \(XAI\)](#), the project is a joint academic-industry research collaboration that brings together 19 beneficiaries and partners from 6 different European countries, including France, Malta, Poland, Spain, The Netherlands, and United Kingdom. The main goal of this 4-year initiative is to train

In April, industry practitioners (Google and Orange), senior researchers, and the members of the European research project NL4XAI (Natural Language for Explainable AI) got together for a spring school in Nancy (France). For three days, they shared their knowledge on using natural language to generate explanations for decisions by an AI system which can be understood by non-expert users.

early-stage researchers (ESRs) who face the challenge of designing and implementing a new generation of self-explaining AI systems. The NL4XAI network also facilitates sharing state-of-the-art knowledge on the subject of Explainable AI.

Tackling inconsistencies

Natural Language Generation (NLG) is an artificial intelligence technique capable of generating text from various types of input, such as numerical data, text, or knowledge bases, and therefore providing a potentially powerful tool to explain the reasoning of AI models. However, the models used in these techniques are not error-free: before they can be used to explain the reasoning of AI

models, they need to be further improved. In particular, it must be ensured that the text they generate is faithful to the input, that it covers all the information present in the input, and conversely, that it does not contain content that is irrelevant or even contradictory to the input.

Along with this Spring School, the NL4XAI members have focused on explainable methods for NLG, which aim to detect errors in the output of NLG models in order to explain their sources. Specifically, they have delved into a series of lectures and a hands-on workshop, being exposed to an in-depth analysis of the types of errors that can be produced by these models. The lectures were given by both industry practitioners (Orange Lannion, France; and Google, London, UK), and senior NL4XAI researchers, and provided the ESRs with the background necessary to understand neural NLG models. In addition, the workshop has allowed the ESRs to study the errors made by existing NLG models and reflect on both the implications of such errors and ways of remedying them.

Fifth pooling of the network

The NL4XAI has already hosted four training events, including events focused on Ethics/Law in Natural Language Processing, more

broad natural language technology, and Interaction/Interfaces. In addition to these official training events, the ESRs have been learning from fellow scientists at different universities and companies. In 2021, we saw fruitful exchanges with the University of Malta, Maastricht University, Warsaw University of Technology (WUT), IIIA-CSIC, and CITIUS-USC. With fewer COVID-19 related travel restrictions in 2022, the ESRs will also be able to visit Utrecht University, the University of Twente, TU Delft, ARG-tech, as well as the companies Orange, Wizenoze, and Info Support.

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Photo by Marie Baron

Spring school participants, speakers, and organizers at LORIA (Lorraine Research Laboratory in Computer Science and its Applications) in Nancy.

Research

First COFUND programme at Universitat Rovira i Virgili has successfully come to an end

The fellows' PhD thesis have helped to address emerging topics and challenges such as the fight against COVID-19, the digitalization of education and agricultural sustainability.

In January 2017, the Martí i Franquès COFUND doctoral programme (MFP-COFUND) was launched, an eight-million-euro project co-financed by European Commission and the Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV), with the support of other institutions such as Institute of Agrifood Research and Technology (IRTA), Banco Santander, the Catalunya-La Pedrera Foundation and the Tarragona Provincial Council.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the programme, which will officially end in September. In these five years, through the MFP-COFUND programme the URV has hired 45 new doctoral candidates from all over the world. Selected after a highly competitive

process from more than 1,400 applicants, the researchers have had a three-year employment contract during which they have worked on their doctoral dissertations, been given cross-disciplinary training, been part of established research groups and been on international secondments.

Internationalization and training

This international component is precisely one of the aspects that is most valued by both doctoral candidates and their supervisors. "Having the resources to stay abroad has opened doors for me not only in academia, but also in industrial research," said Jananee Muralidharan, one of the programme's researchers. Hailing from India, she holds a degree in Industrial Biotechnology and a Master's degree in Food and Nutrition Technology. She completed her thesis at the URV in 2021 and is currently pursuing a career in industry in France, as head of clinical research projects.

The PhD candidates stress the importance of establishing networks and contacts. Giuseppe d'Amico, from the Department of Economics says "my stay in Canada has allowed me to exchange ideas and ways of doing research with other researchers from all over the world. In addition, being part of such a well-known network such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions enables you to create new synergies for the future." Supervisors also value the rich previous research experience that the candidates have. Michelle Murphy, lecturer in the Department of Basic Medical Sciences, emphasizes this aspect when she talks about her doctoral candidate: "having Alejandra Rojas, a biologist of Colombian origin, in our group has been a great plus. She came well prepared, in addition to a master's degree, she had undertaken supplementary training courses, worked in other research groups, and published articles." During their stay at the URV, the doctoral researchers were given training aligned with the three principles of the MSCA:

international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral. The MFP-COFUND programme has created more than 20 new courses in areas such as leadership, entrepreneurship, communication skills, creative and strategic thinking, and academic and non-academic career planning.

Scientific and social impact of research

In total, doctoral researchers and their supervisors have published 108 open-access articles, following the European Commission's open science policy. Two of the most cited publications are a study of solar district heating networks published in *Applied Energy*; and the mathematical model for predicting the risk of new cases of COVID-19, published in *Physical Review X*.

Of the 45 researchers, 17 have already defended their PhD thesis and the others will do so in the coming months. After completing their doctorates, many of them have already moved on to new stages in the field of research, both inside and outside academia. Examples include the case of Valeria Ferreira, a Uruguayan graduate in Accounting Studies and holder of an MBA, who has obtained a postdoctoral contract as an expert in circular economics at one of the Joint Research Centers that the European Commission has in Spain. And in the field of industrial research, Mohamed Hany Abokersh, an

engineer from Egypt, is researching solutions for manufacturing and identifying emerging technologies in an Irish company.

Future of the MFP-COFUND project

Although the MFP-COFUND programme ends this year, since 2020 the URV has been running a second edition of the programme, which received the co-funding needed to hire 50 more doctoral researchers. This programme will run until 2025 and the 50 researchers have already been selected. With this new programme, the URV will improve some key aspects that will become the backbone of doctoral education: diversity to encourage innovation, better opportunities for candidates in difficult situations, integration with the research and innovation strategy for the smart specialization of Catalonia and improved training in transversal skills and support for doctoral students.

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Photo by Paloma Pontón

Fellows from the Martí i Franquès COFUND Doctoral Programme at the URV.

Accessibility Statement

The MCAA believes in a society based on diversity. A society where diversity is the norm, not a deviation. A society where diversity is a strength, not a weakness. Access barriers are created by a society that does not acknowledge the value of diversity. Diversity and access are foundational elements of the flourishing of the research endeavour.

As a community of researchers, the MCAA is committed to increase the accessibility of its products, services, and events. Under the leadership of the Editorial Team of the Communication Working Group, with the support of other Working Groups and the MCAA Board, the MCAA has been promoting a series of actions aimed at increasing the inclusivity of its community and reducing access barriers.

Since the June 2021 issue, the MCAA Newsletter has a new layout. The new design should make the reading experience more accessible by reducing a number of barriers our readers may face.

The new layout complies with many requirements of major print and digital accessibility standards and guidelines. For example, background and foreground colours were selected and paired so as to fulfil the AAA level requirements for colour contrast devised by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1). Colour selection and pairing also complies with requirements for colour blindness. The text is not justified in order to keep the spacing between words consistent and regular in the entire text. Line spacing and font size were revised and increased too. Each macro-section is identified by a different colour so as to provide the reader with a map of content organisation. The layout adopts TestMe, a font inspired by the Design for All principles. Last but not least, the PDF file now complies with PDF accessibility requirements and can be used by screen readers.



Editorial information



About

The MCAA Newsletter is the main communication channel for and about the MCAA community. It is a publication venue for science communication and public outreach. Its main aim is the dissemination of information about past and current MSCA projects, as well as activities of MCAA Chapters and Working Groups, events, and members' achievements.

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Authors interested in submitting an article should read the Editorial Guidelines and the Editorial Rules available on the [MCAA Newsletter website](#). Articles should be submitted **exclusively** through the form available on the MCAA Newsletter website.

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