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B.Sc., M.Sc., and PhD from University of Belgrade where she has started her academic career. She has been actively involved in activities related to the European research and higher education policies for many years, particularly in activities related to the mobility and professional development of human resources in research. Several years of experience in media, communicating issues related to environment, science, society, policy and innovation. Invited speaker at numerous European and international conferences and workshops, cooperating with European Commission, UNESCO, EU Presidency Events, World Science Forum, EU Committee of Region, EUA, NISTEP (Japan), Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Germany), and many other distinguished organisations and teams. She holds several international and national awards for scientific achievements and excellence. Her Marie Curie grant experience was undertaken in the CERN School of Computing.

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Focus on Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

Feature - Interview with Snezana Krstic, Chair of the Marie Curie Alumni Association

Snezana, tell us about your research background and interests

I am a chemical engineer, but my research background is quite multidisciplinary with a broad interest in issues at the intersection of science, policy, society and innovation. I was involved in research activities as an undergraduate, when I worked on an “intelligent” system for separation of multicomponent liquids, which was of particular importance for the oil, pharmaceutical and petrochemical industry. I continued with issues related to solid waste management and environmental management. My PhD was related to electro-deposited metal powders and particle modelling. Generally, alongside my research career several cross-cutting issues were always present, such as applied informatics and (mathematical) modelling which were also part of my teaching activities at the University of Belgrade, policy analysis and environmental subjects. Engagement in European research and higher education policies has also resulted in scientific and policy analysis contributions related to the internationalisation of higher education and the mobility of researchers. My recent research activities are related to responsible research and innovation and, more precisely, to research integrity, as well as to the multidisciplinary and policy aspects of societal challenges.

Marie Curie – now Marie Skłodowska-Curie under Horizon 2020 - is a prestigious European funding scheme. How did you learn about it?

Indeed, the Marie Curie Actions are well-known as one of the most prestigious schemes supporting mobility of researchers across and outside of Europe. These opportunities are widely promoted through conferences, the Internet and brochures. However, the strongest impression about the programme, its importance and real value I received was when I had the *opportunity to meet Marie Curie fellows and alumni personally*. I remember them as very successful scientists, engaged in many activities important for researchers, European policies and society. Therefore, I had the opportunity to learn many practical details about Marie Curie Actions and the benefits that it brings to researchers' careers.

What are the most significant benefits you derive as a Marie Curie Fellow in terms of work and networking?

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions have different types of programmes and provide mobility opportunities suitable for researchers with different career paths and professional experiences. One important benefit is that they (the Actions) provide excellent working conditions, with paid social security and



Useful links

Marie Curie Alumni Association – MCAA

<https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu>

MCAA [Facebook](#) page

MCAA sign-up page for MSC fellows to join the association

<https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu/user/register>

Membership of the MCAA is free of charge, and open to any past or present Marie Curie researcher;

Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) – European Commission's website providing all relevant information regarding the Marie Skłodowska-Curie programmes, fellowships, calls and applications

http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/about-msca/actions/index_en.htm

pension contributions, and various opportunities for training and professional development.

My Marie Curie grant experience was undertaken in the CERN School of Computing, where I had the opportunity to learn from an outstanding team of professionals and to meet and cooperate with excellent researchers from different parts of the world. Particularly important for me was that I had the opportunity to gain knowledge beyond my scientific field which was particularly useful for my interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary orientation and engagements.

In my view, establishment of the Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA) has provided additional possibilities to amplify benefits that MSCA bring in terms of networking and career development.

Are there any tips that you would like to give to prospective Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) candidates?

My tip is to trust in their achievements and talents and apply for the grant, even if they are at the very beginning of their research careers or coming from afar and small countries which might not be recognised as having strong support for science. Another tip is for scientists to consult the MSCA website, identify programmes suitable for their career stage or career path and find relevant host institutions. It is important to understand that the MSCA grants offers excellent opportunities to cooperate with and gain research experience also in non-academic sectors (industry, business sector). Finally, a tip which may be particularly useful for early stage researchers is to regularly follow MSCA open positions announced on the EURAXESS website and directly apply. This option may be easier for prospective candidates who find it difficult to identify suitable host institutions before their application.

You also hold the MCAA chair position. Could you tell our readers more about the association and its objectives?

The Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA) is an international non-profit organisation based in Brussels gathering together researchers who have benefited or are still benefiting from the European Commission's prestigious **Marie Skłodowska-Curie** research programmes. The association was established in November 2013, when we held the first General Assembly. Although we are supported by EU funding, we have a truly international character with members in all parts of the world. We also have established many **regional chapters around the world**. Membership is free of charge and open to all fellows and alumni, regardless of the type of MSCA grant received, length of mobility periods, nationality, scientific discipline or current occupation.

Our objectives are oriented toward developing, promoting and harnessing the outstanding potential of our community. We encourage networking, cooperation and mutual understanding amongst our members from different countries, sectors of the economy and scientific disciplines, providing additional possibilities for career development and professional growth. Our objective is also to foster global relationships within the global research and innovation community, with particular attention paid to our Marie Curie experience. We aim



to highlight accomplishments and excellence of our members by supporting existing and creating new opportunities for dissemination of their outputs. Besides, we have more operational goals and some of them are related to promoting the values of the Association.

Why did you decide to promote your experience as MSCA fellow?

MSCA programmes bring many benefits to their fellows and we believe that our experience can be very valuable for young or experienced researchers who look for funding instruments with attractive employment conditions to support their careers and mobility, both internationally as well as between different sectors. This experience can be also useful for prospective host institutions, in academic or industrial settings, for the policy sector, national authorities or international community beyond Europe which may have limited knowledge about European programmes. Finally, it represents the contribution to the society from science.

Tell us more about the local chapters in EURAXESS Links regions (ASEAN - encompassing Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, Brazil, China, India, Japan and North America)?

The MCAA allows its members to establish chapters on their own initiative and according to their own motivation to cooperate with other members from the region and contribute to the aims of the association. For this purpose, we open official calls and depending on the quality of the proposed working programmes, we also financially support their activities within the limits of our budget. Currently we have chapters in India, the USA (California), and ASEAN (it should be noted that our ASEAN does not correspond exactly to the EURAXESS Links ASEAN). Besides, we have an informal group of China fellows which in the future may decide to establish an official China chapter. I believe that members from other mentioned countries could be also motivated to establish their chapters in the near future.

What would you say to local Marie Skłodowska Curie fellows, past and present, to encourage them to join the MCAA association?

MCAA offers many benefits to its members – opportunities for professional development, networking and cooperation, information on employment opportunities, financial support - which we call Micro-grants - for career development purposes of individual members. We also provide our members possibilities to promote their work and achievements, among fellows and also to large and respected audiences at events organised by ourselves or other organisations, including the European Commission. We work to establish partnerships with various organisations, businesses and other bodies for the benefit of our members. Finally, belonging to a vibrant community of researchers recognised for their outstanding accomplishments and openness for new ideas and cooperation is, in my view, a great reason to join the community.

If a Marie Curie (Marie Skłodowska-Curie) fellow in any of these countries would like to join MCAA, where should she or he start from?



They should visit our website (www.mariecuréalumni.eu), find Sign-up button at the right upper corner and complete the registration form.

What are your plans to the future?

Growth and development in all directions – creating more opportunities for MCAA members, establishing partnerships and fostering fruitful connections with various organisations and the business sector, and actively contributing to important activities in European, international and local settings.

Thank you for your time!

You are welcome! It was a great pleasure to cooperate with the EURAXESS Links team and I am particularly glad that had opportunity to visit recently Brazil and meet the Brazilian research community.

About the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA)

2014-2020 budget: 6.162 billion euro.



Watch the MSCA video [here](#).

The *Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions* are **European grants** offered to **researchers at all career stages** and encourage **transnational, intersectoral and interdisciplinary mobility**.

The expected impact of the MSCA in Horizon 2020 includes the support of ca. 65,000 researchers, including 25,000 PhD candidates, ca. 200,000 scientific publications in high impact peer-reviewed journals, and ca. 1,500 patent applications.



Figure 1: The global reach of the MSCA programme.



The different funding schemes within the MSCA are shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Overview of the different funding schemes under the Marie Skłodowska Curie actions

Innovative Training Networks	ITN	Support for doctoral and early-stage training Training Networks, Industrial Doctorates, Joint Doctorates
Individual Fellowships	IF	Support for experienced researchers undertaking international and inter-sector mobility: European Fellowships and Global Fellowships Dedicated support for career restart and reintegration
Research and Innovation Staff Exchange	RISE	International and inter-sector cooperation through the exchange of staff
Co-funding of programmes	COFUND	Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes: - doctoral programmes - fellowship programmes

Organisations from any sector and country can participate in MSCA projects. However, Brazilian organisations are not eligible for direct funding.

MSCA - What’s in it for Brazilian researchers?

1. Innovative Training Networks (ITN) is the main European doctoral training programme, putting a special emphasis on non-academic sector participation and the innovation dimension.

Brazilian research institutions: This action is meant primarily for organisations such as universities, research centres or companies, that propose a research training network. Brazilian organizations can join the consortia to submit a proposal (annual calls).

Brazilian researchers: can apply to the PhD positions created by these networks, including Industrial Doctorate and Joint Doctorate. They are advertised on the [Euraxess Job portal](#).

2. Individual Fellowships (IF) are for experienced researchers to undertake their own research project at a host organisation in another country, thus gaining new skills through advanced training and possibly, intersectoral mobility.

Researchers based in Brazil can apply for a European fellowship, choosing to apply either for a re-integration grant or a scientific grant.

Researchers based in Europe can apply for a global fellowship to carry out research in a third country such as Brazil and return to Europe. They can also apply to a European fellowship for mobility within the [EU or associated countries](#).

Calls are annual and advertised on the [Horizon 2020 Participant Portal](#).

A MSCA IF [call is currently open](#) and will close on **10 September 2015**.



3. Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) enables international and intersectoral collaboration, based on short-term staff exchanges between organisations worldwide. The RISE programme is the successor programme of the previous IRSES programme.

Brazilian research institutions can join a consortia as partner, but can't receive direct funding from the European Commission for the secondment of their researchers.

4. Co-Funding of regional, national and international programmes (COFUND) calls are open to European research institutions and is thus not relevant for Brazilian research organisations. It results in many high-quality fellowship or doctoral programme positions, which include transnational mobility and are advertised on the Euraxess portal.

Brazilian researchers can apply directly to COFUND positions advertised on the [EURAXESS job portal](#).

Sources: EURAXESS Links Network newsletter, [Issue 5](#), April 2014; [Come to Europe brochure](#); [Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions \(MSCA\) – European Commission's website](#).

EURAXESS Links Brazil is seeking Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows

You are a former Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow? You live in Brazil? You want to share your experience and earn a travel grant to take part in EURAXESS events?

Contact us by email brazil@euraxess.net to discuss collaboration opportunities and help us promote the European Research Area.