

## The Marie Curie Fellowship Association

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<http://www.mariecurie.org>

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Special Workshop of Marie Curie Fellows on Research and  
Training in Physics and Technology

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## MCF Association

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- alumni organization of Marie Curie Fellows
- highly interdisciplinary network of (young) scientists
- created 1996 at the initiative of the European Commission
- international non-profit organization under Belgian law
- more than 2700 members all over Europe



## Objectives

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- help to advance science in Europe
- promote scientific excellence
- encourage contacts/collaboration among its members
- create a clear and visible identity for Marie Curie fellows
- foster a sense of European identity among its members
- promote the dialogue between science and society
- establish an interface between the fellows and the research world also in industry



## Structure

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- MCFA Administrative Board: elected by annual assembly
- National Groups with national coordinators
- Regional/Local Groups

-Communication tools : WEB **Communication Forum**

-Searchable extended member database; email for all members (mariecurie.org)

-Work organized in committees: IT, Nat. Groups, Newsletter, Annals, Young Scientists Working group



## Activities

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- practical advices to fellows → mobility issue
- promotion of best practice (scientific excellence)
- social network for mobile scientists in Europe
- career development-interface academia/industry
- meetings/conferences organization
- multidisciplinary publication (“Annals”)
- feedback on the implementation of the MCF
- feedback on science policy questions (building the European research area)



## Obstacles to mobility

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- lack of awareness of funding opportunities
- administrative and legal problems
- cultural obstacles
- social difficulties



## Removing Obstacles to mobility

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- lack of awareness of funding opportunities
  - easier access to electronic sources of information
  - more role models and good examples
  - better information infrastructure within universities and research centres



## Removing Obstacles to mobility

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- administrative and legal problems
  - visa (complicated to obtain, exact duration, costs)
  - work permit (especially for spouse)
  - taxation
  - lack of transparency of social security system
  - non-eligibility for social benefits
  - recognition of diplomas and qualifications
  - problems in everyday life (bank account, insurances,...)



## Removing obstacles to mobility

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- social difficulties
  - major expenses at the start of the stay abroad
  - problems in finding suitable housing
  - child care and education for children
  - job for spouse/partner
  - social integration of family
  - upon return: acknowledgment of mobility



## Removing obstacles to mobility

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- cultural obstacles
  - insufficient language training
  - not enough preparation for the new cultural environment
  - lack of mental flexibility
  - diversity as an advantage, not a threat
  - lack of a European identity



## MCFA concrete actions

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- welcome packs
- national/local groups meetings
- help on tax/social benefits issues
- **surveys** to improve the implementation of the fellowships
- **feedback and history for the EC**
- **new suggestions to the EC** (family allowance, tenure track positions, return grants, expectations from new programs)
- **pressure** for adoption of best practice and scientific excellence in all European countries.



## Brain drain/Career opportunities

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- waste of high level human potential/gap in the science pipeline
- MCFA “career service” (job database, mailing lists, academia and industry)
- MCFA fellow network
- MCFA database (and something more?)
- intellectual property issue/ technological applications
- foster closer relation industry/academia
- increase the space for European research



## MCFA Meetings and Conferences

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- **Annual General Assembly**
- **National coordinators/Nat. Groups meetings**
- **SWAP** Science for water policy (UK,2002); Impacts of genetics on science and society (IR,2001); Competitive European Research (DE,2000); Symposium on emergent key technologies (DE,1999); Industry versus Academia (SE,1998); MCFA&Industry (FR,1998) [MCFA organized]
- Investing in Europe research potential (Crete, 2002); European Young Scientists forum (Poland, 2000) [MCFA in collaboration]
- MCF monitoring workshops [W. Kerner(EC)]
- Flexible Europe (Tallin, 2002); Embl meeting in life sciences (Heidelberg,2002); Unesco Conference (Budapest,1999); Salzburg Seminars (1999); Women in Sciences (Brussels, 1999)....[MCFA invited to participate and sent representatives]



## MCFA Publications

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- **The MCFA Newsletter (A. Sitarz)**

THE MCFA ANNALS: the interdisciplinary  
journal of mcfa

ANNALS III now in preparation!!!

New ideas: Thematic issues

e.g. "ACCELERATORS"



## MCFA Vision on Science Policy

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- MCFA invited to contribute in the debate on a new European Research Council (by ESF)
- MCFA invited to contributed on the debate on the postdocs situation in academic research (by Science next wave)
- MCFA invited to join the young scientists working group with Eurodoc and Pi-Net
- Invitations to Conferences to present our positions
- Relations to Euroscience, Earma, ESF, Eurodoc..
- MCFA as an unique sets of data and feedback for the EC



## MCFA members benefits

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- All what was told before
- Partnerships and reductions: Hertz, Amazon...
- Partnership with other associations: Euroscience? ...
- Being in an association that gives voice to your visions on European Science and may contribute to better shape society with science and technology





## Unesco Niels Bohr Medal awarded to MCFA

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1999, World  
Conference on  
Science,  
Budapest



For the work of MCFA in international co-operation



## MCFA news and future

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- **Registration fees** have now been introduced
- **Current projects**: next general assembly; Annals III; extension and usage of the MCFA database; sponsorships; young scientists working group; national groups;
- **Future projects**: impact on the construction of the European research area; new scientific projects; white book on European science by MCFA?; meetings and conferences



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**We invite YOU to consider  
your own possibilities to  
contribute building up our  
association!**

