

# Marie Curie Actions

## Web Article

The Marie Curie Programme is the mobility and young researchers programme of the European Union. This mobility action of the EU's 7th Research Framework Programme (2007-2013) addresses researchers at different stages of their careers, in the public and private sector, from initial research training for PhD-students to life-long learning and career development for 'experienced researchers' (= postdocs). Marie Curie also gives research organisations the opportunity to host young researchers.

For researchers there is no age limit for the application for a Marie Curie Fellowship. The eligibility depends on the research experience of a researcher. As an example, those researchers who have at least for years of full-time research experience after their graduation from university or are in possession of a doctoral degree are categorized as 'experienced researchers' (e.g. postdocs). The category 'very experienced researcher' refers to scientists with at least 10 years of active researcher experience. Only '(very) experienced researchers' are eligible for an 'Individual Fellowship' in the Marie Curie Programme.

Main goal of the Marie Curie Actions is to support the mobility of researchers. Therefore the applying researcher must not be a citizen of the country in which she/he plans to move and carry out his/her project. Researchers may also not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of their respective host institute for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the time of application. These mobility rules do not apply for researchers who were active in a Third Country for at least 3 years out of the last 4 years. There is however a special rule for International Organisations like EMBL, e.g. if a researcher has done his/her PhD at EMBL in Heidelberg, he/she would be eligible for a Marie Curie Fellowship in Germany (but however she/he must not be a German national).

As an important feature of the programme, Marie Curie follows a 'bottom up'-approach. That means that the programme is open for proposals from all research areas and all disciplines. However, projects have to contribute to the aims of the European Union, meaning they have to be in one way or another supportive for the European Union's policy aims.

At the heart of the Marie Curie Programme, there are the renowned Marie Curie Individual Fellowships for 'experienced researchers'. The European Commission distinguishes in FP7 between three types of Individual Fellowships:

- **Intra-European Career Development Fellowships (IEF)** for European researchers to do research in another European country;
- **International Outgoing Fellowships (IOF)** for European researchers to do research in a Third Country (e.g. USA, Canada, Japan, etc.);
- **International Incoming Fellowships (IIF)** for Third Country nationals to do research in Europe.

In more detail:

For the **IEF** 'experienced researchers' from EU-Member States or Associated States<sup>1</sup> are eligible who want to carry out a research project at a host organisation in another EU-Member State or Associated Country. Individual researchers can apply for an IEF together with their

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<sup>1</sup> From January 2007 the European Union will have 27 Member States, including Romania and Bulgaria. Associated Countries are those countries, which either have EU-candidate status (Croatia, Turkey, FYROM) or have signed a special agreement with the European Commission (in FP6: Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland).

host institution at the European Commission to certain deadlines - normally once a year. Basis for the proposal is an innovative idea for an excellent research project the applicant would like to execute for the 12-24 months of the Marie Curie Fellowship. The research topic should be chosen with respect to a diversification of competences and career development. Therefore, in addition to geographic mobility the researcher also has to show scientific mobility.

**IOF** aims to reinforce the international dimension in the career of European researchers by giving them the opportunity to carry out research in high-level Third Country research institutions. The fellowship consists of an “outgoing phase“ in a Third Country of 12-24 months duration and directly afterwards a mandatory “reintegration phase” in an EU-Member States or Associated Country (1 year). The research topic can be freely chosen by the researcher and the project proposal is written in collaboration with the outgoing and return host organisations.

For Marie Curie Fellows there is a special reintegration scheme, called the “European Reintegration Grants” (ERG). Up to six months after the initial fellowship, Marie Curie Fellows can submit a project proposal for this scheme to the European Commission. The grant consists of a flat-rate contribution to the salary costs of the researcher and costs related to the research project (consumables, travel costs, technical assistants, etc.) and can cover 2 up to 3 years. Condition for an application for the ERG is a Marie Curie Fellowship of at least 18 months duration and an employment contract at the reintegration-host organisation.

The Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways (IAPP) action seeks to open and foster dynamic pathways between public research organisations and private commercial enterprises, in particular SMEs. The action will be implemented through co-operation programmes between at least two organisations, one from each sector and from at least two different EU-Member States or Associated Countries. The European Commission gives funding for the exchange of know-how and experience through inter-sector two-way secondments of research staff of the partners, the recruitment of ‘experienced researchers’ from outside the partnership and networking activities, like workshops and conferences. In this scheme institution consortia apply for funding at the European Commission and - after successful evaluation - provide fellowships for young researchers for up to 2 years.

Free positions in such networks can be viewed on the following website:  
<http://cordis.europa.eu/mc-opportunities> .

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