



EU-CELAC cooperation through Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions: opportunities for Latin America and the Caribbean

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions in a nutshell

With a total budget of **EUR 6.16 billion for the period 2014-2020**, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) support the career development and training of researchers with a focus on innovation skills through trans-national, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary mobility. Mobility of researchers is a driver of excellence in research. It is not only key to the career development of researchers but also vital to the advancement of science and the transfer of knowledge between countries and sectors.

The MSCA are **open to all domains of research and innovation** (except research on nuclear energy), from basic research up to market take-up and innovation services. Fields as well as sectors are chosen freely by the applicants in a **fully bottom-up manner**.

The MSCA are **the most international part of Horizon 2020**, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, accounting for more than 50% of all participations of third countries. The MSCA will enable around 15.000 non-EU researchers to start or pursue their careers in Europe by 2020, while secondments of European researchers to organisations outside Europe are also supported.

The MSCA are open to CELAC¹ researchers and innovation staff at any career stage, regardless of research field, nationality or age. **Academic and non-academic organisations** from CELAC countries can participate in the MSCA². In fact, the MSCA put a strong emphasis on participation of non-academic organisations such as business (including SMEs), government, hospitals, non-profit or charitable organisations (NGOs, trusts, foundations), cultural institutions, international organisations, etc.

The MSCA celebrate this year their **20th anniversary** as well as the **100.000 researchers supported** since the inception of the programme. To mark the occasion of the 100 000th MSCA fellow, 30 highly promising researchers, who have just obtained an MSCA fellowship, have been selected to showcase the EU's actions dedicated to excellence and worldwide mobility in research. The **Colombian** sound artist and researcher Dr Ximena Alarcón is one of the selected excellent researchers.



¹ The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

² Organisations established in CELAC countries are eligible for funding, except institutions from Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago, which, in line with the overall Horizon 2020 approach, become eligible for funding only when the pre-defined additional requirements are met.

Innovative Training Networks

The Innovative Training Networks (ITN) action aims to **train a new generation of creative, entrepreneurial and innovative early-stage researchers**. ITNs are competitively awarded, international research and training networks providing doctoral-level training in specific and interdisciplinary scientific fields. They bring together networks of research-performing institutions – from both the academic and non-academic sectors – around a common research and training programme to strengthen the career perspectives of early-stage researchers and to support entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation across Europe and beyond. The overall duration of the projects is limited to 48 months while individual researchers are recruited for a minimum of 3 months and up to a maximum of 36 months.

Based on a close collaboration between industry and academic partners, the MICROWINE project explores the microbial community's role in the wine production process. Partners aim to contribute to the strength and scientific progress of the wine industry through training of a cohort of leading, interdisciplinary and tightly interconnected scientists at the forefront of modern microbiological, genomic, computational and related techniques. Three Argentinian organisations – Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Ansilta S.A. and Universidad Nacional De Quilmes – are taking part in this project together with academic and non-academic institutions from Denmark, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Georgia, the United States and Australia.

Individual Fellowships

The Individual Fellowships (IF) action aims to enhance the **creative and innovative potential of experienced researchers**, wishing to diversify their individual competence in terms of skill acquisition **through advanced training, international and intersectoral mobility**. Proposals for IF should be prepared jointly by the postdoctoral researcher and the applicant organisation, which could be from the academic or the non-academic sector. Successful proposals receive support between 12 and 24 months, except for the Global Fellowships where an additional 12 months return phase is also funded.

Project MEDICINE examines concepts of health and healing from an indigenous and culturally specific context, taking a unique time-depth perspective and with a framework of interdisciplinary methods which integrates archaeological-historical, ethnographic and modern health sciences approaches. The study population of this Global Fellowships project are indigenous Quechua peoples in the northern Andean region of Ecuador. The experienced researcher is recruited by the University of York, United Kingdom and will spend her initial outgoing phase at Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador.

Research and Innovation Staff Exchange

The Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) action promotes **international and inter-sector collaboration through research and innovation staff exchanges**, and **sharing of knowledge and ideas** from research to market (and vice-versa). RISE projects involve organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors, based in Europe (EU Member States and H2020 Associated Countries) and beyond (third countries), which contribute directly to the implementation of a **joint research and innovation project** by seconding and/or hosting eligible researchers, administrative, managerial and technical staff. Individual secondments should last at least 1 month and no longer than 12 months, splitting into several periods being allowed.

Through staff exchange activities, the joint research project WASTCArD investigates enabling technologies for non-invasive recording heart rhythm during long periods of time (>36h), using a wrist or arm wearable device with novel ECG sensing techniques and embedded real-time cardiac arrhythmia detection processes. Four universities from CELAC countries – Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Colombia, Universidad de Carabobo and Universidad Simón Bolívar in Venezuela, and Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro in Brazil – have joined this international partnership alongside academic and non-academic institutions from France, the United Kingdom, Croatia and Ireland. The overall aim is to develop new technologies, suitable for integration into current e-Health and cardiac information systems, which will impact on healthcare costs reduction by improved efficiency in the diagnosis and early treatment of cardiac disease.

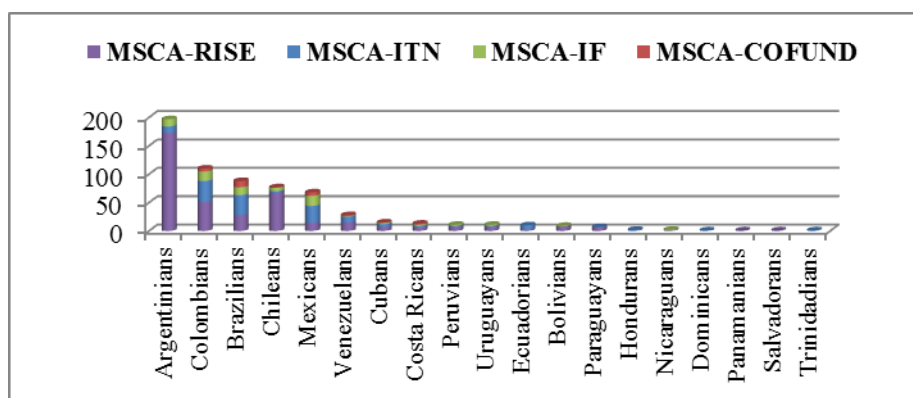
Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes

The COFUND action aims to stimulate **new or existing regional, national or international programmes** to **foster excellence in researchers' training, mobility and career development**, spreading the best practices of the MSCA. Applicants should be organisations established in an EU Member State or Horizon 2020 Associated Country that fund or manage doctoral or fellowship programmes for researchers. Selected programmes are co-funded for 36 to 60 months. The length of the individual researchers' appointments must be at least 3 months.

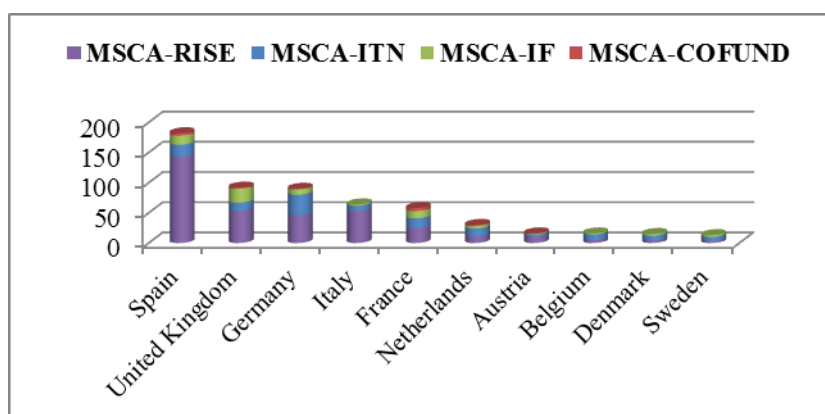
Academic and non-academic institutions from 5 CELAC countries – Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil, Mexico and Chile – are currently participating as partner organisations in 7 MSCA COFUND projects.

Participation of CELAC researchers and innovation staff members

Since 2014, more than **650 researchers and innovation staff from CELAC countries** have been supported by the MSCA. In terms of nationalities, the most numerous are Argentinians (197), followed by Colombians (110), Brazilians (88), Chileans (77) and Mexicans (68):



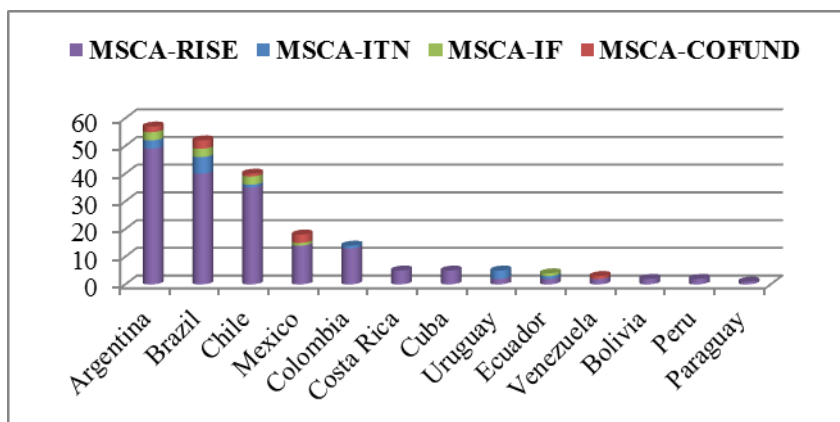
In total, 166 **early-stage researchers** from CELAC countries have come to Europe for doctoral-level training funded by the MSCA, 92 CELAC **postdoctoral researchers** have obtained an MSCA fellowship to work in Europe, and 394 CELAC **research and innovation staff members** have taken part in short-term exchanges under the RISE action. The graph below shows the top ten European destinations per action:



Participation of CELAC organisations

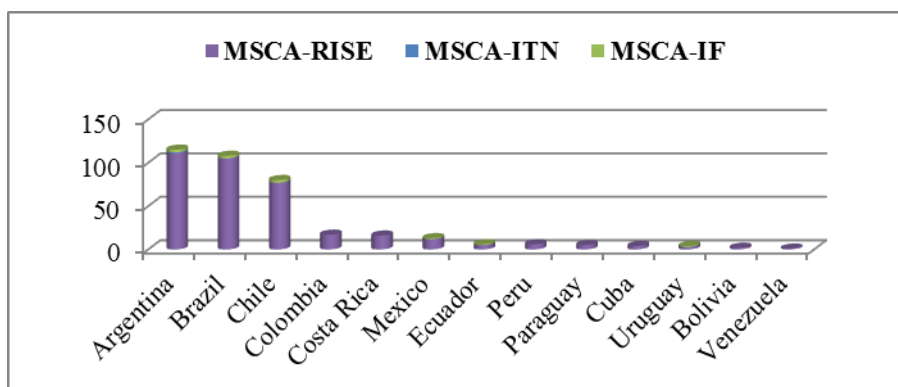
Since 2014, a total of **120 different organisations from CELAC countries** have participated in **105 MSCA-funded projects** hosting research and training activities on **208 occasions**. This compares well to the 2007-2013 period of the FP7-PEOPLE Marie Curie Actions when organisations from CELAC countries participated 406 times in a total of 299 funded projects during the 7 years of calls.

The **vast majority of the MSCA participations** (172 in total) relate to **short-term RISE exchanges**, 15 to doctoral-level ITN, 11 to IF Global Fellowships, and 10 to doctoral and fellowship programmes under COFUND. The distribution of participations per country is as follows:



Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET), Argentina is the best performing CELAC organisation with 11 participations, followed by Universidad de Chile and Universidade de São Paulo (with 9 participations each) and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (8 participations).

CELAC organisations have hosted **1 early-stage researcher, 11 postdoctoral researchers**, and a total of **341 seconded research and innovation staff members**. Most of them are Spanish, Italian, French and German nationals. Among the CELAC countries, Argentina has hosted the largest number of MSCA researchers and innovation staff members (115 individuals), followed by Brazil (108 individuals) and Chile (80 individuals):



MSCA National Contact Points

Currently, National Contact Points (NCPs) dedicated to the MSCA exist **in 16 CELAC countries**: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay. The main role of NCPs is to **raise awareness** of the programme and **guide potential applicants** on choosing relevant types of action, **advise** on administrative procedures and contractual issues, provide **training and assistance** on proposal writing, distribute documentation (e.g. forms, guidelines, manuals) and assist in **partner search**. Their contact details can be found on the Horizon 2020 Participant Portal.

Useful links

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions website: <http://ec.europa.eu/msca>

National Contact Points:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/national_contact_points.html