

Widening Country Inspiration Story

“Do not be afraid to ask for help. Contact your NCP for support and important information.”

Name of the fellow: Mirela Dragomir
Country of the host: Slovenia
Project Acronym: QMatCh
Project start and end date: 1.6.2021 – 28.2.2024
Type of MSCA, Horizon 2020: Individual Fellowship

What is your project about?

My MSCA project “QMatCh” has as its goal the synthesis and crystal growth of quantum materials and the investigation of their structure and magnetic properties under extreme conditions. The results of this project could lead to a deeper understanding of how chemical modifications or physical pressure can influence the ground state properties of low-dimensional magnets and what leads to the emergence of exotic quantum states of matter such as high-temperature superconductors or quantum spin liquids.

Why is your project important for society?

My project involves fundamental research that has the potential to benefit society through a better understanding of low-dimensional quantum magnets, which in turn could accelerate the development of new superconductors or quantum spin liquids. Quantum spin liquids could be used in quantum computers that promise solutions to pressing societal challenges such as climate change and global economy, among many others.



What communication and public engagement measures have you foreseen?

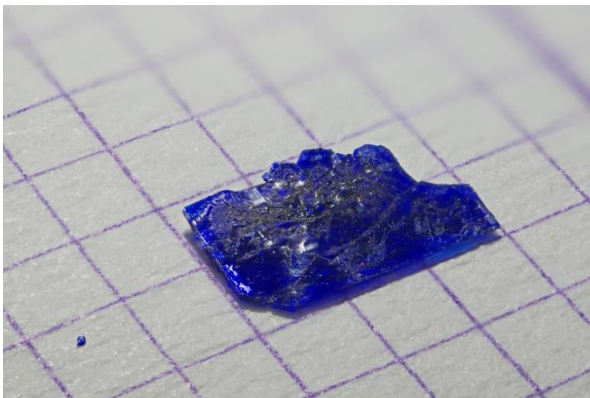
The research results of my project are shared through activities such as scientific demonstrations at “Jožef Stefan” Institut (JSI), visits to high schools and participation in major events such as the European Researchers’ Night and the Festival della Scienza in Genova, Italy.

Why did you choose a widening country as a host?

I did my Ph.D. in Slovenia and then completed my postdoc in Canada. I decided to return to Slovenia mainly for personal reasons. I also wanted to fill the existing gap in the field of quantum materials in Slovenia by contributing my expertise in crystal growth, which I have acquired through international experience, and by establishing a research group here. In addition, the small size of the country offers a close-knit community and excellent networking opportunities, which I was also aiming for.

How did you find your host organisation?

I knew about JSI, as I had already worked here for a few months in the past. Therefore, I felt that the skills I had acquired during my postdoc in Canada were a perfect fit for my host institution. I also admired the condensed matter community at JSI and was excited about the opportunity to work here as an MSCA fellow and to expand my knowledge in the field of quantum materials.



What kind of support did you get?

I received considerable support both from the National Contact Point (NCP) in our country and from another successful applicant. The discussions with the NCP in Slovenia proved to be extremely valuable as they helped me in various crucial aspects of preparing a successful application. In addition, my colleague carefully proofread my proposal and made insightful suggestions for improvement and pertinent corrections.

What tips can you give other researchers who would like to apply for MSCA?

The most important thing is to believe in yourself. Secondly, think about your long-term career goals and aspirations and identify how a MSCA fellowship would benefit you. Once you are clear about what you wish to achieve from an MSCA fellowship, start writing. Do not be afraid to ask for help. Contact your

NCP for support and important information. Finally, the writing part is not easy and can take a lot of time, so make sure you start in advance.

More information on the project:



The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) support researchers at all stage of their career across all disciplines. The MSCA also support cooperation between industry and academia and provide innovative trainings and career developments.

The MSCA Individual Fellowships (IF) provide opportunities to researchers of any nationality to acquire and transfer new knowledge and to work on research and innovation in Europe and beyond.

The MSCA-NET project is the MSCA NCP project to facilitate the transnational cooperation to achieve a consistent and harmonised level of NCP support. The scientific community can also profit from our project to support their MSCA application.

