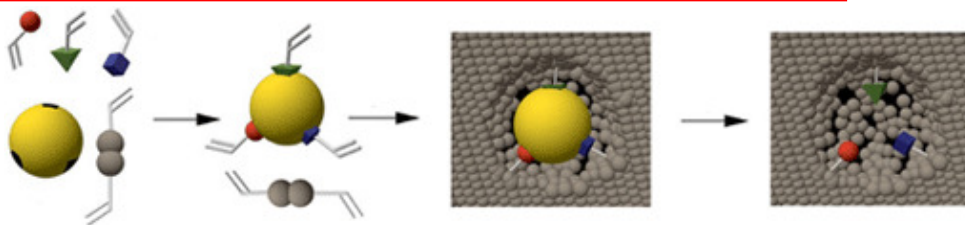


NASCENT Newsletter



Nanomaterials for **A**pplication in **S**ensors, **C**atalysis and **E**merging **T**echnologies

3rd NASCENT Winter School



IPC-PAS, Warsaw, Poland

Photo by I.Obraztsov

The 3rd NASCENT winter school that took place in Warsaw, during the first week of February, was an important milestone in the life of NASCENT. We are now in our third year of activities and most of our ESRs are in their final year of studies towards their PhD. In order to maximise the training of the ESRs and ERs employed by NASCENT, the date for this School was moved earlier, to allow a 4th Summer School to take place in Hungary in July 2009.

The IPC team did a superb job of organising the event, catering for all the participants and making sure that everyone was well looked after. The chosen accommodation was excellent and all participants agreed that the end of School dinner was a wonderful choice.

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Stephanie and I spent the day on Friday 'grilling' some of the participants during a round of mock interviews. It was a very interesting experience, especially because the different approach of academic interviewer and industrial interviewer was clearly noticeable. We both agreed that all the participants took the event seriously and put considerable effort into trying to secure the available jobs. We hope that all this training will pay off and we look forward to hearing about all the success of the NASCENT researchers in the coming year!!!

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First time in Warsaw

By Ania Servant (QMUL)



For the 3rd school of NASCENT, the network was reunited in Warsaw in Poland for a winter school about electrochemical polymerization and surface characterization. This school was held at the Institute of Physical Chemistry at the Polish Academy of Sciences and organized by Prof. Kutner.

I was very excited to discover Warsaw since it was the first time for me to go to Poland, a country very rich in history. So, the Queen Mary crew now reduced to two people (Rita and me), accompanied by Helen an undergraduate student who used to work in our group for a summer project, started this journey on Sunday February 1st from Luton Airport. After a two-hour flight, we were amazed to discover Warsaw completely covered by snow!!! The top temperature outside was -7°C!!!!



After interesting lectures and workshops during the day, we were pleased to do some shopping in the evening, especially when the hotel was located next to a huge shopping mall! We also enjoyed some sightseeing. The romantics of the network appreciated in particular the beautiful church where the heart of Frederic Chopin was buried and the statue of the astronomer Copernicus surrounded by the planets of the solar system.



So it would be an understatement to say that it was quite cold... and of course the Caribbean girl that I am and Rita my Mediterranean counterpart forgot to bring scarves, gloves and hats!!! Very smart!!! So we were absolutely freezing. After being literally ripped off by a cab driver (120 zlotys for our journey to the hotel from the airport), we met the rest of the network in our wonderful and cosy hotel in the centre of Warsaw.



Overall, I think I can speak for all of us, this winter school was very interesting and very helpful, especially the simulation of interviews and CV feedback sessions directed by Dr. Marina Resmini and Dr. Stephanie Desrousseaux. This gave us not only an insight on how hard an interview can be, but also experience for the next ones.



Ania

My Secondment at BME

By Subramanian Satish (IPC)

Of course, that may be the reason for the excellent results we got as expected. Prof. Viola Hovarth, Giorgio and Gyula helped



My long awaited secondment visit to Budapest was a memorable one in the midst of rough weather.

me in my research activities.

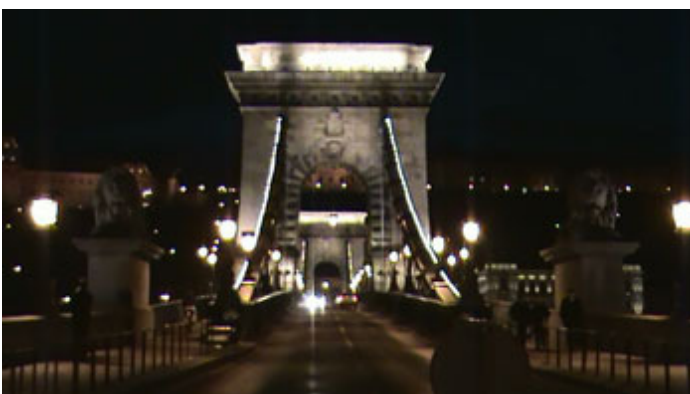
Accompanied by my wife, I reached Budapest on 19th of January. I took a taxi from the airport to the guest house. At a glance, I could see that it is one of the most beautiful cities I have visited in Europe.

But, we could still find some sunny weekends to roam around the city. The city is divided into two parts, Buda and Pest by the river Duna. Attractive scenery, gorgeous building, the city has a stunning look with architecture of old style. I was happy to see so many good Indian restaurants which were not there in Warsaw. So we had a great time with Indian spicy dishes in the cold weather. It would have been better if we had planned this visit during summer time.



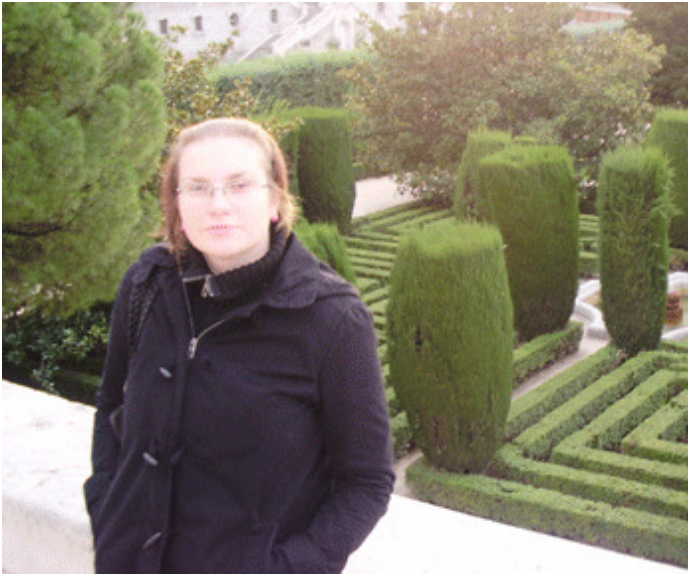
Hope to see you guys in the NASCENT international meeting.

The taxi driver spoke intelligible English "Welcome to Hungary. You have come in the wrong time". I was scared and my wife said "shall we go back to Warsaw". But he was right and I could feel that as the weather was getting worse, and worse. It was snowing, raining, windy, and most of the time I spend my time in lab.



Changing the climate!!

By Jolanta Zdunek (UCM)



The never ending sunny days, palm trees on the street, the group members always smiling and singing in the lab (to smile constantly or what's worse to sing when working?? unimaginable in Poland) and as warm as I could only imagine them to be, give me - born pessimist - the shot of optimism and belief that everything can be done, no matter what.

Madrid, one of the most beautiful European cities and a microcosm of the Spain, from the very beginning has been giving me the unforgettable time. This is the multicultural city with a history, that can be easily seen, with its customs that cannot be underestimated and moreover the city with an unique and inimitable atmosphere.

To prove that I have everything I need here in Madrid (love – meaning my fiancé, new friends, satisfying occupation, high temperatures outside and much more), it is enough to say that without any regrets I decided to stay here for Christmas and New Year celebration which is eating doce uvas in the time of the last 12 seconds of the old year that are counted by the clock at PUERTA DEL SOL and party till the morning.

The story of how a cold-blooded Polish girl found herself in a Spanish warmth starts at the end of August 2008.

My arrival in August was quite fast and pleasant compared to the one in July (I was flying to Madrid from Lyon through Paris!!, and I finally got there after 7 or 8 hours of being lost in some unidentified place, according to the Lyon airport information office, and facing huge amount of turbulences and gastric problems of the 'lost plane' passengers).

Already on day one, I have become the daughter of my always helpful bosses – Maria Cruz and Guillermo – who even today, after 6 months of living in Madrid, are my guardian angels and best advisors. What surprised me, a girl coming from the country where everyone is so formal in the everyday contacts with each other and where weather can become a cause of depression, that here everything is so different in a crazy, though positive way.





And February came together with the NASCENT Winter School in Warszawa, where I finally had the opportunity to meet everybody.

It was great pleasure to meet you all. Before going to Poland, although undoubtedly happy about visiting my home country, I was a little bit nervous and unsure. I thought that I would be the only one knowing so few NASCENT fellows (in my case only one Nascent fellow – Rita) and I didn't know what to expect. And I found myself pleasantly surprised again.

You guys have been wonderful for me in any case, although I was a lousy guide (hopefully I was a little bit of help as far as language barriers were concerned) as it also was my first times in Warsaw—to be accurate second time and during my first stay there I only visited the airport.

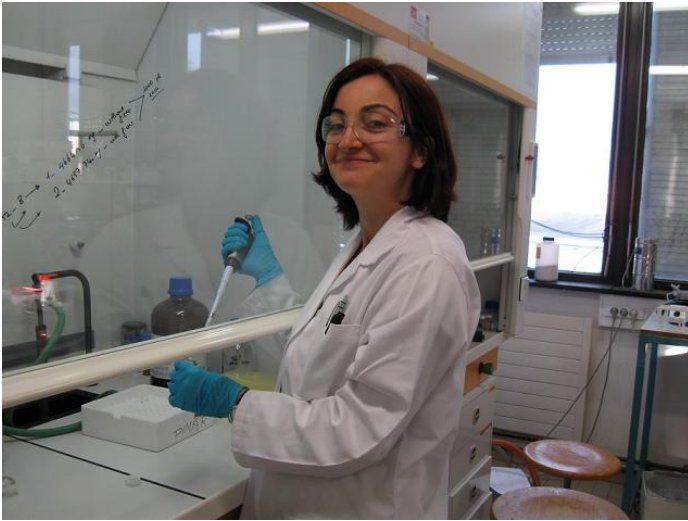
To summarize the 3rd Winter School of NASCENT I have to admit that it was great time of learning new things and seeing the same MIP idea from totally different point of view, knowing new people and, I believe, finding new friends for the lifetime.



Jolanta

Living Abroad

By Pinar Çakır (CNRS)



Even though I was far from my family during my undergraduate education, me and my family were both in Istanbul. I had no difficulties to find friends, to visit my family, to have a social life because I was in my city, in my home country and especially I used to speak my native language. When I arrived in France, I realized that it would be more difficult than I expected. First day, first week even first month was so difficult for me, because the only French words I knew were “oui, non and sortie” (sortie: the most important word in French to be able to go outside from the metro 😊).

More and more I got used to my new life, new job and new friends. I could see the advantages of living abroad and turn the drawbacks into benefits. To be honest I still feel sometimes like a person who always needs help from other people but now I know that these feelings are diminishing day by day. At least I am more optimistic than at the beginning.

I think that one of the most important things of a new job is the working environment rather than the position. If you do not feel peaceful in your environment you cannot work efficiently and you will lose your motivation. I can say clearly that I am lucky about my environment because my adviser and all my friends in Compiègne and make me feel comfortable.

During my undergraduate education I lived in the residence of my university. I was thinking that it was a valuable experience for my personality and responsibility. However, when I arrived in France I found out what “living alone” means.



Besides the benefits of living in a foreign country and learning a new language I realized that this PhD will give me valuable experiences about other countries and cultures. Besides French friends I have also a lot of foreign friends and because of Nascent organizations I have many opportunities to see other countries, cultures, capitals during my PhD. For instance on February we were in Warsaw. Meeting several people and being in another country improve my perspective and maybe it is the biggest advantage ever. As a result now I see the beauties of living in France end learning French and I benefit from it.

Pinar

New ER at POLYIntell



NASCENT welcome Dr Paolo Lucci, from Italy, who started his employment at POLYIntell on 23rd February 2009.

Paolo attained his PhD in 2008 under the supervision of Prof. N.G. Frega at SAIFET department of the Polytechnic University of Marche.

During his PhD he worked to the development of analytical method for the characterization of the functional foods and evaluation of their health-promoting and/or disease-preventing property through the study of the existing interaction among biologically active molecules and the onset of pathologies. He has experience in comprehensive multidimensional gaschromatography-based separations and quantitative analyses with flame ionization detector (GCxGC/FID) and mass spectrometry system (GCxGC/MS), high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC-MS/MS), conventional one-dimension gaschromatography (GC), solid phase extraction (SPE) and solid phase microextraction (SPME).

Paolo's PhD research resulted in several publications in journals including *Journal of Chromatography A*, *European Journal of Lipid Science and Technology*, *Progress in Nutrition*.

NASCENT Got Talent

A celebration of the superb talents within our network will be held during the last summer school in Budapest on 27th July 2009 where the following teams will present their production.

Team A - Captain: Giorgio Ceolin
Members: Pinar Cakir, Gita Dvorakova, Agnieszka Pietrzyk, Paolo Lucci and Fernando Navarro, Julia Bogнар.

Team B - Captain: Jolanta Zdunek
Members: Nataliya Marchyk, Ana Linares, Ania Servant, Stefano Sterchele, Gegerly Lautner.

Team C - Captain: Alejandro Lapresta
Members: Rita Jorge, Judith Ray, Artur Moro, Ievgen Obraztsov, Blanka Toth.

Photos and videos will be published soon after on the NASCENT website.

Racemic human mixture with a boy-ee of about 6%

By Tristan Doussineau (FSU)

On the 9th of March a few minutes before 9:00 pm, our two enantiomers came into the world, Antonin and Marjane, the day when their Spanish great-grand-father would have been one hundred years old. Indeed, they will exert different kind of attraction on the other human being and on the other hand, they could be attracted by the same human being. Antonin came first, head first, to open the way to his sister (genetic French gallantry) who came successfully backside first. This kind of little exploit earned them, as well as their mother, notoriety in an article in the local press (see NASCENT website for article, only for German understanding people). The German social laws allow me to stay at home up to two months to take care of the children whenever I want to during their first year of their life. During this parent-vacation, I earn 60% of my salary and my contract is extended for two months. It is much better than to earn 100% of my salary and sleep on my desk, to make myself or a colleague blind, or even to blow up the lab, isn't it?

Kind greetings to everybody.

Tristan

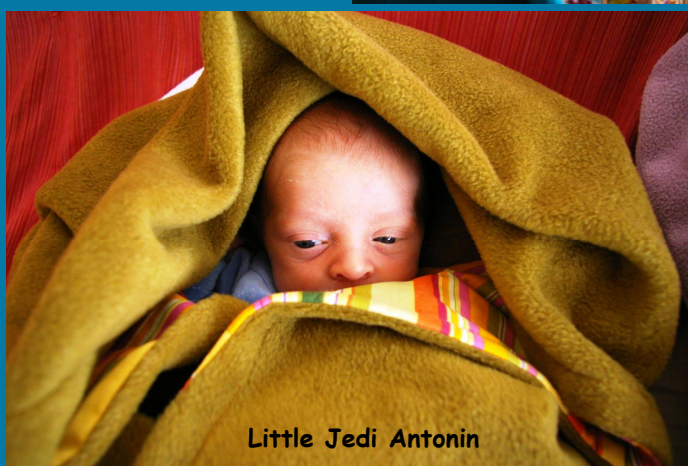


Princess Marjane



Marjane

Antonin



Little Jedi Antonin

NASCENT

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Please send all your news and photos
to the NASCENT Administrator:
s.fritche@qmul.ac.uk

Forthcoming NASCENT Events



Széchenyi Chain Bridge, Budapest

4th NASCENT Summer Training School

19-24 July 2009, Budapest, Hungary

3rd NASCENT International Meeting

26-29 July 2009, Budapest, Hungary

2nd NASCENT photo contest winner



Ievgen receiving his prize during the Winter School in Warsaw