

**SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS
EUROPEAN RESEARCH DAY 2018**



Prof. Rita Colwell

Distinguished University Professor and President of CosmosID, Inc.

Dr. Rita Colwell is Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland at College Park and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and President of CosmosID, Inc. Her interests are focused on global infectious diseases, water, and health. She has authored or co-authored 17 books and more than 800 scientific publications. Dr. Colwell served as 11th Director of the National Science Foundation and Co-chair of the Committee on Science, National Science and Technology Council. Dr. Colwell served as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the American Academy of Microbiology, President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington Academy of Sciences, and American Society for Microbiology, Sigma Xi National Science Honorary Society, International Union of Microbiological Societies, and American Institute of Biological Sciences. Dr. Colwell is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm, Royal Society of Canada, and Royal Irish Academy, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and American Philosophical Society. She has been awarded 61 honorary degrees from institutions of higher education and is the recipient of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, bestowed by the Emperor of Japan, 2006 National Medal of Science awarded by the President of the United States, and 2010 Stockholm Water Prize awarded by the King of Sweden, and the 2018 Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize of Singapore.



Ted Hewitt, PhD

President

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

Ted Hewitt was appointed president of SSHRC in March 2015. From 2012-2015, he was SSHRC's executive vice-president and chief operating officer.

Ted was vice-president, research and international relations, at Western University in London, Ontario, from 2004 to 2011, where he had been a professor of sociology since 1989. He was also a public policy scholar at the Brazil Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. A leading authority on Brazil, Ted has published in monographs, edited works and a range of academic journals. In 2018, Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Relations named him Grand Officer of the Order of Rio Branco—one of the highest levels of merit—for the many years he has fostered bilateral business and research partnerships between Brazil and Canada. Ted's current research focuses on national and international innovation systems, with emphasis on the roles of universities, industry and government in promoting economic prosperity in Latin America and beyond. He is co-chair of the [Canada-Brazil Joint Committee for Cooperation on Science, Technology and Innovation](#), and a member of the board of the Brazil-Canada Chamber of Commerce. Ted holds a PhD in sociology from McMaster University.

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Viktoria Bodnarova
Regional Representative
EURAXESS North America

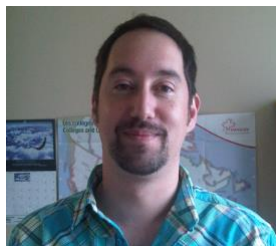
Viktoria Bodnarova is the Regional Representative for EURAXESS North America, responsible for Canada and the US, as of 2013. Her main role is to inform the community of researchers of all scientific domains and nationalities based in North America about the funding and career opportunities the European Research Area (ERA) offers (European, national or regional funding opportunities). Another important role is the management of the European Scientific Diasporas in North America initiative together with the EU Delegations and EU Member States & Associated Countries. Her latest personal passion project is the Joint European Mentoring Initiative (JEMI) of which she is a cofounding director leveraging her substantial transboundary personal network for a more comprehensive support platform for mobile researchers' career development. Prior to her position in the US, she was a Project Manager and EURAXESS Network Coordinator at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. Viktoria holds a Master of Arts degree in International Relations and European Studies from the Metropolitan University in Prague.



Dimah Mahmoud, PhD
Programme Manager
EURAXESS North America

Dr. Dimah Mahmoud is a humanist, activist, and passionate change-maker. Her extensive interdisciplinary expertise in research, political analysis and project management are reflected in the diverse conferences she has organized as well as the initiatives and collaborations she spearheaded through an independent research consultancy she established in 2014. Her work contributes to advancing sustainable socio-economic and political development in Africa and the Middle East. She consulted for the League of Arab States, UN Women Arabia, *El Karama*, Arab America Foundation, Massimedia, FUTOUR and more recently for EURAXESS North America and The Antiquities Coalition. Prior to this, Dr. Mahmoud was the Interim Executive Director of Bridges of Understanding Foundation, during which she helped launch it onto its current forward trajectory: emphasizing the necessity of youth-targeted educational programming as part of the effort to catalyze an effective, long-lasting paradigm shift. In addition to her consulting, she has co-founded The Nubia Initiative (TNI), a transboundary organization aimed at leveraging art, academia and technology to protect, preserve and promote Nubia's endangered heritage and languages. Her latest personal passion project is the Joint European Mentoring Initiative (JEMI) of which she is a cofounding director leveraging her extensive program and content management expertise to develop a more comprehensive support platform for mobile researchers' career development. Dr. Mahmoud completed her MA and PhD at the University of Exeter in the UK on *Middle East Policy Studies* and *Sudanese Foreign Policy and International Legitimacy* respectively. She obtained her BA in Political Science from Towson University in the USA.

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Luigi Scarpa de Masellis

Advisor, Economic and Commercial Affairs
Delegation of the EU to Canada

Luigi Scarpa de Masellis joined the Delegation of the European Union to Canada in September 2005. As Advisor in the Economic and Commercial Affairs Section, he is responsible for contributing to the fulfilment of the Delegation's mandate as regards EU-Canada cooperation, notably in the fields of macroeconomic policy, environment, energy, science and technology, transport, enterprise policy, and health. Mr. Scarpa de Masellis previously held the position of Researcher, Development Cooperation, at The North South-Institute.



David Krása, PhD

Head of Sector for Physical Sciences and Mathematics
European Research Council Executive Agency

Dr. David Krása is Head of Sector for Physical Sciences and Mathematics within the Scientific Management Department of the European Research Council Executive Agency. He is responsible for organising the evaluation of submitted proposals, for the scientific follow-up of funded projects, and he is also Business Manager for all evaluation-related IT systems at the ERC. Before becoming Head of Sector, David was acting as panel coordinator for a variety of ERC evaluation panels such as PE2 "Fundamental Constituents of Matter", PE3 "Condensed Matter Physics", PE10 "Earth System Science" and LS9 "Applied Life Sciences and Biotechnology". In the course of this work, David gained a deep understanding of the evaluation process and the evaluation practices of panels. Before starting to work for the ERC in 2009, David was working as a researcher in geophysics at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich (Germany), the University of Hawaii (USA), and as a Royal Society of Edinburgh BP trust research fellow at the University of Edinburgh (UK).



Noel Burns

Deputy Director of Policy and International Relations
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)

Noel has been Deputy Director of Policy and International Relations at NSERC since August 2018. Prior to that, he served as Chief of Staff to the President's office starting in February 2016. Before joining NSERC, he was a Senior Advisor at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) where he provided science, knowledge translation and ethics services to the CIHR's 13 institutes. From 2013 to 2015, Noel was a Senior Innovation Policy Advisor at the Innovation, Science and Technology Division at Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada. In this role, he managed bilateral S&T relations with multiple international partners, including India and Korea. Noel has a Master's Degree in International Relations - economics, law and political

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science - from Université Laval in Quebec City and a Bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology from St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.



Brian Kalakula

International Relations Officer
Mitacs

Brian Kalakula is an International Relations Officer at Mitacs, a national not-for-profit organization that supports research and innovation projects involving academia and the private-sector. For the past three years at Mitacs, Brian has worked with the Vice-President of National Partnerships and the Vice-President of International Partnerships to support Mitacs' engagement strategy with governments and academic institutions across Canada and in partner countries. Brian has a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science from Arizona State University, and a Master of Arts (Political Economy for International Development) from the University of Toronto. Prior to joining Mitacs, Brian lived in Arizona for six years and worked in the Maricopa County Superior Court of Arizona, conducting judicial review research for Arizona Superior Court judges. He has also lived in Belgium, Italy, and Albania.



Claire Yuqi Chen

Manager
National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) Global

Claire is the Program Coordinator and Communications Strategist for Global Operations at the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA). She specializes in technology and innovation policy, project management, and cross-cultural communications. She is currently working on two Horizon 2020 funded projects- the BILAT USA 4.0 and NearUS. In the past, she has been the co-organizer of the 5th Arab American Day Forum, project coordinator and consultant for the first Cyber 9/12 Student Challenge hosted by the Atlantic Council, and other high-profile events among the Washington DC diplomatic community. She received her Master's degree in Intercultural & International Communication from American University, her Bachelor's degree in Culture Studies from Humboldt State University, and a second Bachelor's degree in English from Xi'an International Studies University in China.



Catherine Podeszinski

Acting Director of the Scholarships and Fellowships Division
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)

Catherine Podeszinski is Acting Director of the Scholarships and Fellowships Division. She joined NSERC in October 2001 as Program Officer for the Discovery Grant program working with the community of mathematics and chemistry. For the past year, she has been involved in GENDER-NET Plus European Research Area Network (ERA-NET) Cofund, a consortium of 16 committed

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organizations from 13 countries that aims to strengthen transnational collaborations between research program owners and managers provide support to the promotion of gender equality through institutional change. Prior to her time at NSERC, Catherine worked for a non-profit organization doing science promotion for kids from 6 to 12 years. Catherine holds an M. Sc. in Plant Physiology from the University of Ottawa and a Master in Environmental Management from Sherbrooke University.



Prof. Karin Björklund

Associate Professor

Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg, Sweden

Karin Björklund currently works at Chalmers University of Technology (Chalmers) in Gothenburg, Sweden, as Associate Professor in Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. After earning her PhD in Water Engineering from Chalmers in 2011, Karin was determined to continue her research on urban drainage abroad. She was rewarded a scholarship from the Sweden-America Foundation, followed by a Mobility Grant from the Swedish research council Formas, for postdoctoral research at University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, Canada. At UBC, Karin worked together with Professor Loretta Li on developing treatment techniques for contaminated urban drainage. Since returning to Sweden in 2015, the successful collaboration between Karin Björklund and Professor Li has continued; they are currently co-supervising students who are researching sorption techniques of pollutants in urban runoff.



Prof. Nancy Edwards

Professor Emeritus

School of Nursing, University of Ottawa

Nancy Edwards is a Professor Emeritus and Distinguished University Professor in the School of Nursing, University of Ottawa. She completed an eight-year term as Scientific Director, Institute of Population and Public Health, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) in July, 2016. Dr. Edwards obtained her undergraduate nursing degree from the University of Windsor and completed graduate studies in epidemiology at McMaster University and McGill University. Dr. Edwards' clinical and research interests are in the fields of public and population health. Her research has informed the design and evaluation of complex multi-level and multi-strategy community health programs. As a Scientific Director at CIHR, she led a number of implementation science funding initiatives; some of these were undertaken in partnerships with the EU Commission. Nancy collaborated on a five-year EU, Horizon 2020 research study examining physical activity policies between 2012 and 2017. She has been involved in several EU Commission initiatives as a peer reviewer, external evaluator and working group member.

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Prof. Stan Matwin

Professor and Canada Chair
Faculty of Computer Science, Dalhousie University

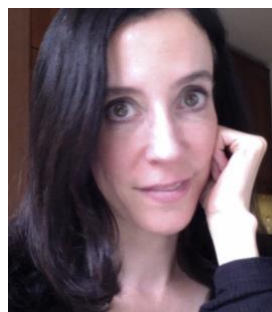
Stan Matwin is the Professor and Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) at the Faculty of Computer Science, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, and the Director of the Institute for Big Data Analytics at Dalhousie. He is also a Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of Ottawa, and a State Professor at the Institute for Computer Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences.). Internationally recognized for his work in Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence, author and co- author of more than 250 refereed papers, and a supervisor of more than 50 graduate students. Stan has worked at universities in Canada, the U.S, Europe, and Latin America. He is a Canadian Fellow in the MSCA MASTER (Multiple ASpects of Trajectories Management and Analysis) project.



Gemima Philippe

Communication Associate
American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

Gemima Philippe is a communication associate for the American Association for the Advancement of Science [Center for Public Engagement with Science and Technology](#). She coordinates marketing and social media for Center programs, facilitates [Communicating Science workshops](#), and supports other Center programs. Prior to joining AAAS in 2016, Gemima worked with both federal and private sector clients to promote occupational health and health communication services and with volunteer organizations to promote adolescent health. She holds a Master's in Public Health Marketing and Communication (George Washington University) and a Bachelor's in Communication (University of Maryland). In her spare time, Gemima engages with adolescent girls in the Washington, D.C., metro area fielding awkward questions about sexual health, nutrition and body image.



Deborah Watt

Research Development Officer
University of British Columbia

Deborah Watt is Research Development Officer at the University of British Columbia's [SPARC](#) Office, and current lead of the CARA International Research special interest group. Previous to joining SPARC, she also worked at the UBC Vice President Research Office supporting the development of large proposals and strategic projects including the Canada First Research Excellence Fund, Genome Canada, Canada Foundation for Innovation and UBC Advanced Research Computing initiative. Before joining SPARC, Deborah worked with Elsevier as a consultant on their Research Intelligence team where she led large, data-intensive analytical

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projects for Canadian and US Universities and Government agencies. At SPARC, Deborah's mandate is to increase UBC's competitiveness with international funding bodies.



Gerry Alons, PhD

Assistant Professor of International Relations at the Department of Political Science
Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands

Gerry Alons is Marie Curie Fellow at the Pardee School of Global Studies at Boston University, and Assistant Professor of International Relations at the Department of Political Science at Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Her research focuses on European and American agricultural and food policy and how developments in these policies interact with transatlantic and multilateral trade relations. She particularly engages with questions on whether and how ideational variables such as norms, policy frames and policy paradigms influence state preferences and policies. Her research is published in a range of international journals among which the *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, and *Sociologia Ruralis*. In 2017 she co-founded and currently chairs the North America Chapter of the Marie Curie Alumni Association.



Cristina Florea, PhD

Marie Curie fellow at the Department of Applied Physics at University of Eastern Finland, Finland & at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA

Cristina Florea is a biomedical engineer with expertise in biomechanics research, medical devices industry and project management. She is currently a Global Marie Curie fellow at the Department of Applied Physics at University of Eastern Finland, Finland with first 2-year secondment period at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA. She is also part of the management board of the Marie Curie Association-North America Chapter and serves as External Relations and Funding Coordinator. Her research work is centered on the investigation of the early mechanisms of cartilage damage after injury that eventually leads to post-traumatic osteoarthritis. The novelty of this research lies in the highly interdisciplinary approach combining sophisticated techniques and conceptual approaches from mechanics, engineering, physics and molecular biology. Understanding the mechanisms of progression of cartilage damage after injury, may lead to future novel strategies for prevention and repair of the joint cartilage. Prior to this, she worked as part of the project drafting and implementation of EU Horizon 2020 co-funded doctoral program for 15 PhDs students. She completed her double PhD degree in Mechanical Engineering and Medical Physics in 2014 as a result of three years' joint degree collaboration between Politehnica University of Timisoara, Romania and University of Eastern Finland. Before transitioning to academia, she worked in the ultrasound imaging business sector as area sales executive and product manager, managing the sales team and collaborating with hospital managers, clinicians and medical physicists.

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Martijn Wokke, PhD

Marie Curie fellow

The City University in New York (USA) & The University of Cambridge (UK)

Martijn Wokke started his civilian and academic life in Amsterdam where during his PhD he explored how visual percepts are created in our brains, and how we are able to consciously see (parts of) the world around us. After his PhD, he developed ways to investigate how information from our surroundings are used for decision-making. He now aims to seek how information from the outside world interacts with our internal models of the world, and how external information transitions into becoming internalized. For this project, he is currently working together with The City University in New York (USA) and The University of Cambridge (UK).



Roy van der Meel, PhD

Marie Curie fellow

University Medical Center Utrecht, the Netherlands & University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

Roy obtained his PhD at Utrecht University in The Netherlands, focusing on drug delivery and nanomedicine development. After joining the University Medical Center Utrecht, he was awarded an MSCA Global Fellowship which allowed him to conduct a research project on RNA therapeutics at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. He recently obtained a faculty position at the Eindhoven University of Technology in The Netherlands where his research is aimed at developing nanoimmunotherapeutics. Roy is supported by funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 660426 and a Veni Fellowship (No 14385) from The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO).



Mouhamed Abdulla, PhD

Faculty of Applied Science and Technology of Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning in Toronto, Canada

Mouhamed Abdulla is a Professor of Electrical Engineering with the Faculty of Applied Science and Technology of Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning in Toronto, Canada. He respectively received in 2003, 2006, and 2012, a B.Eng. degree (with Distinction) in Electrical Engineering, an M.Eng. degree in Aerospace Engineering, and a Ph.D. degree in Electrical Engineering all at Concordia University in Montréal, Québec, Canada. Since the fall-2015 he was an EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellow (MSCA-IF) affiliated with the Electrical Engineering Dept. of Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg, Sweden. While in Europe, he was involved with other funded projects, including EU-H2020-HIGHTS and EU-H2020-is3DMIMO, and his research was also supported by Ericsson Research Foundation. In 2017, he was a Visiting

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Research Fellow at the Dept. of Electronic Engineering of Tsinghua University in Beijing, China, followed by short visits to: BUPT, Harbin Institute of Technology, Huawei Hong Kong and Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. Until 2015, he was an NSERC Postdoctoral Research Fellow with the Dept. of Electrical Engineering of the University of Québec in Montréal. For nearly 7 years since 2003, he worked at IBM Canada Ltd. as a Senior Technical Specialist. He holds several awards from international organizations, government, academia, and industry. He is on the Editorial Board of various journal publications, and constantly serves as a Technical Program Committee (TPC) member of flagship international conferences. He is also a referee for several Canadian and European Granting Agencies. Moreover, he is a member of “IEEE P2040 Standard” the IEEE Connected, Automated and Intelligent Vehicles Working Group, and “IEEE P2048 Standard” for virtual reality and augmented reality (VRAR). He was an IEEE Executive Committee member of the Montréal Section, where he was the Secretary in 2013 and Treasurer in 2014-2015. Since 2011, his biography is listed in Marquis Who's Who in the World publication.