

BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS



Heinz Faßmann, PhD

Minister

Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research

Prof. Dr. Heinz Faßman has been serving as Austrian Federal Minister of Education, Science and Research since December 2017. He received his Ph.D. in Geography and Economic and Social History at the University of Vienna. After appointments at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Technical University of Munich, Minister Faßmann returned to Vienna to teach Human Geography and Land Use Planning. He was admitted as a member of the Austrian Academies of Sciences in 2007. He served as the Vice President of the University of Vienna from 2011 to 2017. Minister Faßmann routinely acted as a political consultant and advisor to the Austrian government. He became chairman of the Expert Commission on Integration Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs in 2010. He has been sitting on the Ministry of the Interior Migration Commission since 2014.



Ilimar Altosaar, PhD

Professor

University of Ottawa

Ilimar Altosaar is Professor of Biochemistry, Microbiology & Immunology at University of Ottawa. He has worked alongside notable scientists such as Sir Ralph Riley (Rockefeller Foundation Rice Biotech Network); Sir Hans Kornberg (Biochemistry Dept., Cambridge); Professor Brian Hartley, F.R.S., Sir Ernst Chain, Nobel Laureate for penicillin fermentation, and Sir Greg Winter, 2018 Nobel Laureate for protein chemistry (Imperial College). Professor Altosaar has gained diverse experiences in pharmaceutical and agri-food industries, he is deploying gene technology in critical areas such as Biomaterials, Protein Farming, Molecular Breeding, Milk and Mammary Immunology, Host-Pathogen Interactions, Starch-Protein Interactions, phytoremediation and greenhouse gas mitigation. He is currently appointed as Visiting Professor at Estonian University of Life Sciences in Tartu, Estonia, he continues to collaborate as a Visiting Scientist at The Scripps Research Institute in San Diego, and has worked at University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia (2006-07) on engineering anti-bacterial biofilm genes into crop plants, immune milk proteins at Nestlé in Lausanne and Tours (2000), cereal storage proteins at Tartu University (1993-95), wheat proteins at INRA France (92-3), bread-making quality at Plant Breeding Institute of University of Cambridge (84-85) and was a NATO Fellow in Biochemistry at Imperial College (75-77). A protein chemist by training, continuous NSERC funding has enabled key discoveries of protein-starch interactions in small grains and oilseeds. Professor Altosaar has earned a bachelor's degree in cell biology from McGill University and a doctorate in plant protein biochemistry from University of British Columbia, Vancouver, supported by NRCC, now NSERC.



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

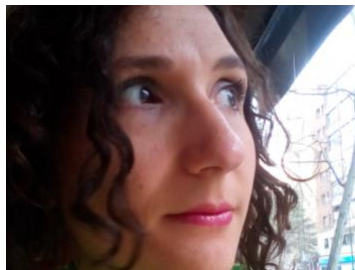
Dr. Dimah Mahmoud is a humanist, activist, and passionate change-maker. Her extensive interdisciplinary expertise in research, political analysis and project management are reflected in the diverse conferences she has organized as well as the initiatives and collaborations she spearheaded through an 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.



Mary Kavanagh, PhD

Minister-Counselor, Research & Innovation
Global Issues and Innovation Section
Delegation of the European Union to the USA

Mary Kavanagh is Minister-Counselor for Research & Innovation at the European Union's Delegation to the United States of America in Washington DC. Her role involves raising awareness of opportunities for EU-US research cooperation and exchange and facilitating that cooperation at both government agency and stakeholder levels. Prior to her current posting in the U.S., she worked in the International Cooperation Directorate of the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation at the European Union headquarters in Brussels. She was the Deputy Head and Senior Expert in the Unit, which deals with cooperation with North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. Mary has a PhD in Plant Science from University College Cork, Ireland and carried out post-doctoral research in France and Switzerland before swapping the laboratory for science policy.



Cristina Gracia Rodriguez

Project manager
Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT)

Project Manager for the International Projects Department at the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT). Cristina got her degree in biology and specialized in fundamental biology. After a year of working abroad and learning English she did an MBA in biotechnology focused on business at Aliter International Business School in Madrid. After a first employment as field technician gathering data for the research project "anthropometric measures of the female population in Spain" at the Institute of Biomechanics of Valencia she joined the staff of the Genoma España Foundation (a public foundation financing projects and different initiatives for the promotion of biotechnology, genomics and proteomics). In this foundation Ms. Rodriguez worked as R+D+I project (and calls) manager for 5 years. Later she joined the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology where she has worked as European projects manager, and in bibliometric data analysis, science diplomacy, organization of scientific events of different kind and in the promotion of science Spanish in international environments. In 2018 Cristina has been appointed MSCA National Contact Point right after starting her collaboration with the EURAXESS Spain network as portal administrator and responsible for the promotion of HRS4R in Spain.



Natalia Olson-Urtecho

Former Regional Administrator & Partner
Small Business Administration & ENRICH

Natalia Olson-Urtecho is an entrepreneur and recognized expert in smart cities, government, commercialization of technologies, mobility, energy, environmental planning and infrastructure development. Prior to her current position as Co-Founder of The Disruptive Factory, she was appointed by President Obama as the U.S. Small Business Administration's Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator responsible for small business programs, financial assistance, and business development initiatives throughout the mid-Atlantic region managing 34 billion dollars in government contracts. She has held senior management positions in both the public and the private sector in the U.S., Central Europe, Asia and Latin America. Natalia was appointed to Philadelphia's Planning Commission and served as the Vice Chair of the Zoning Code Commission, she was appointed to the U.S. Innovation Advisory Board to advise Congress and the White House on competitiveness. She has been honored with numerous prestigious awards, including recognition as a "Latina Powerhouse" by the Maryland Hispanic Business Conference, Most Influential Latino in Delaware Valley, Philadelphia Business Journal's Minority Business Leader Award, and Woman of Distinction for her work in sustainable infrastructure & the green economy.



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 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.



Dietrich Wolf Fenner

Program Director

German Academic International Network (GAIN)

Dietrich Wolf Fenner is the director of the German Academic International Network (GAIN) in New York City, a joint initiative of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. He designs and organizes events, workshops and trainings to aid German researchers in North America with their professional development. Until January 2017 Dietrich was head of communications of the Berlin based Government Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (Stiftung EVZ). From 2006 to 2011 he was spokesman and public relations officer for the Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in GDR. He is a journalist by training and worked for the TV production company of the Georg von Holtzbrinck Publishing Group. Dietrich holds a Master's degree for German literature studies, contemporary and modern history, economic and social history of the Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg. He also studied history, English literature and Italian at the University of Cape Town. Dietrich lives with his husband Thomas in Yorkville, Manhattan. He loves to run in Central Park, rides his bicycle through all the five boroughs and fancies a good read. He has a terrible passion for baking and contemporary European and American cinema.



Dorottya Nagy-Szkal, MD PhD

President

New York Hungarian Scientific Society (NYHSS) & Hungarian Idea Exchange

Dorottya earned her MD and PhD in clinical medicine from Semmelweis University of Medicine in Hungary. Holding postdoctoral fellowships at Baylor College of Medicine/Texas Children's Hospital and Columbia University, she has 10+ years of experience in translational medicine, pediatrics, gastroenterology, microbiology and clinical metagenomics. She gained experience in human and mammalian microbiome studies using novel next-generation sequencing-based technologies. She has over 25 publications in highly respected peer-reviewed scientific journals and two book chapters. She recently joined Biotia, a New York City based startup focusing on surveillance, rapid diagnosis and prevention of hospital acquired infections powered by AI. She is responsible for the implementation of NGS techniques in hospital settings and the clinical interpretation at Biotia. She is also the President of the New York Hungarian Scientific Society and the Hungarian Idea Exchange. It provides a vibrant network and creative environment for professionals and scholars living in the New York metropolitan area. Our members are connected by their shared cultural or professional ties to Hungary, and contribute their diverse expertise, professional experience, and creative exchange of ideas. Through monthly presentations, meet-ups, dinners, and various other networking events, our society aims to sustain a lively and hospitable platform for the mutual exploration of bold new ideas and lasting collaborations.



Dietrich Haubenberger, PhD
Clinical Neurologist, Staff Scientist
National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Dr. Dietrich Haubenberger is Director of the Clinical Trials Unit at the NINDS Intramural Research Program in Bethesda, MD. Before his recruitment to NINDS in July 2014, he received his medical degree as well as training as neurologist at the Medical University of Vienna, Austria, followed by a tenure track position to become Associate Professor of Neurology in 2014. Dr. Haubenberger's research focuses on the area of movement disorders, where he is an expert in tremor disorders. From 2008-2011, Dr. Haubenberger completed a research fellowship at NINDS under Dr. Mark Hallett, conducting IND-regulated clinical trials in patients with Essential Tremor. In addition to his responsibilities at NINDS, Dr. Haubenberger is currently serving as fellow at the Division of Neurology Products, CDER, FDA. As Austrian scientist, Haubenberger was the head of the ASCINA Greater DC chapter 2008 - 2011, and continues his affiliation with the ASCINA board to assist in projects such as the ASCINA Mentoring Program. He was elected to the board of the Alumni Club of the Medical University of Vienna in 2011, with a focus on outreach to internationally based alumni as well as international mobility.



Steve Pavletic, PhD
Professor
National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Professor Dr. Steven Živko Pavletić M.D. is a Senior Clinician, Clinical Investigator and Head of the Graft-versus-Host Disease (GVHD) and Late Effects Section in the Experimental Transplantation and Immunology Branch of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland, USA. He is also appointed Adjunct Professor of Medicine at the Georgetown University, Lombardi Cancer Center in Washington DC. Dr. Pavletić received his medical doctoral degree and internal medicine and hematology training from the Zagreb University School of Medicine in Croatia. Dr. Pavletić completed clinical and research fellowship in bone marrow transplantation in the Clinical Research Division of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the Oncology Division of the University Washington Medical School, Seattle, Washington. He is one of very few non-US medical school graduates who became the member of the prestigious American Alpha-Omega-Alpha medical society. Dr. Pavletić has undertaken training in internal medicine and oncology/hematology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, Nebraska where he was also the Director of the Allogeneic Stem Cell Transplantation until 2002. In 2006 he received NIH Director's merit award for his work and accomplishment of international consensus in chronic GVHD. He chairs and works on committees of the prestigious scientific professional organizations in the US, such American Society of Hematology and Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research. Dr. Pavletic has been active member of Croatian scientific and professional diaspora and also mentored numerous visiting scholars from Croatia. He is founder of Croatian Hour in Washington DC and also co-founder and vice president of the Association of

Croatian American Professionals (ACAP) established in 2014. In 2018 he was elected corresponding member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU).



Alberto Riva, PhD

Scientist & Distinguished Member of the Miami Scientific Italian Community
University of Florida

Alberto Riva, PhD, is a bioinformatics scientist with the Interdisciplinary Center for Biotechnology Research (ICBR) at the University of Florida. After completing his graduate studies in Bioengineering at the University of Pavia, Italy, with a dissertation on a pioneering application to the Internet to telemedicine, he was a postdoctoral researcher for two years in one of leading Italian teaching hospitals. In 1999 Dr. Riva took a position as a Research Fellow at Children’s Hospital Boston, with a joint appointment as an Instructor at Harvard Medical School. In 2006 he was hired as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Molecular Biology and Microbiology at the University of Florida, and since 2014 he has been a Bioinformatics Scientist in the ICBR Bioinformatics Core. Dr Riva’s work combines strong technical skills with a highly multidisciplinary approach. He is an expert in the application of computational methods to the analysis of biomedical data, in fields ranging from genomics to personalized medicine, for which he has developed a large number of software packages and tools.



Simone Poetscher, PMP

Deputy Director, Office of Science and Technology Austria and Senior Program Manager, Research and Innovation Network Austria

As an expert in building powerful communities, Simone has been leading the expansion and day-to-day-management of the Research and Innovation Network Austria (RINA), a network of over 3,000 Austrian researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs in North America, for the past twelve years. In her role as Deputy Director, Simone is responsible for day-to-day oversight of OSTA Washington’s operations, overseeing personnel management, procurement, information technology, as well as finance and HR. Simone provides substantial direction and leadership for the offices’ strategic vision and program lines. She spearheads the development, communication, and implementation of effective growth strategies and processes, required for successfully executing OSTA-program goals and objectives. Prior to joining OSTA in 2006, Simone has supported the Austrian Press and Information Service during Austria’s EU Presidency, and has held project management positions in private industry, university institutions, and in public service. Simone is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP), holds a master’s degree in communications and English from the University of Vienna, Austria, a certificate in project management from Georgetown University, and a certificate in financial management from Cornell University.



Marco Masia, PhD
Board Member
Marie Curie Alumni Association

Marco Masia is Innovation consultant for SMEs, not-for-profit organizations, and start-ups. Before moving to the private sector, he was Professor of Theoretical Chemistry for 10 years at the University of Sassari. He holds a MSc in Chemistry, PhD in Physics, and Master of Business Administration. He has been active member of the Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA) since 2013; in particular, he has been vice chair of the Association from 2016 to 2018, and Board Member from 2018. Mentor of the New York Academy of Sciences, Marco has contributed to the launch of the MCAA Academy mentoring program, and is part of the Joint European Mentoring Initiative Management Team.



Ellen Gute
PhD Candidate
University of Toronto

Ellen Gute currently conducts her PhD research at the University of Toronto (UofT), where she investigates ice building processes in clouds towards improved climate & weather models. Before she moved to Canada for her PhD research, Ellen studied chemistry & meteorology and obtained her Diplom in Meteorology (equivalent to Master Degree) from the University of Mainz (Germany) in May 2014. During her studies in Mainz, Ellen joined the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry as a research assistant where she participated in ground-based and airborne research projects, investigating trace gases in the atmosphere. In 2010, Ellen spent one research semester at the Centre for Atmospheric Chemistry at York University in Toronto (Canada) and gained further research experience within the ETH Zurich Domain (Switzerland) in 2014 after graduation from the University of Mainz. During a four-month internship with the Swiss Federal Office of Meteorology & Climatology (Zurich, Switzerland) Ellen gained valuable experience and insight in weather modelling. Most recently, Ellen co-founded the Toronto Science Policy Network (TSPN), a recognized student group at the University of Toronto which aims to provide a platform for the UofT community to learn about and engage in the Science & Policy Interface. Beyond her activity with TSPN, Ellen seeks to expand her knowledge and experience in the science policy interface and science diplomacy through workshops and conferences and was a participant in the Science Outside the Lab North 2018 workshop in Ottawa & Montréal (Canada).



Angela Bellia, PhD
Marie Curie Fellow
Italian National Research Council

Angela Bellia is a Marie Curie Researcher at the Italian National Research Council. Her work concerns a particular area of social sciences and humanities, and involves the fields of archaeoacoustics and digital heritage. Thanks to the first Marie Curie Individual Fellowship, she carried out her research at the Institute of Fine Arts at the New York University, devoting her attentions towards the reconstruction of the musical dimension of an ancient Greek *polis* in the West. She also improved her training in “3D Modelling for Cultural Heritage” and in “Acquiring and Post-Processing 3D Data in Archaeology”. For her new methodology in the use of digital technology in virtual environments, she received the Prize ITWIIN 2016 for the most “Exceptionally Creative Woman”. More recently, thanks to the second Marie Curie Individual Fellowship, she carries out her research at the Institute for Archaeological and Monumental Heritage devoting her attentions towards archaeoacoustics as a new approach in the study of intangible cultural heritage. She has been Chair of the Northern Italy Chapter of the Marie Curie Alumni Association. At present, she is Chair of the Events & Network Working Group and an active member of the MCAA. As the main organiser, she is engaged in the organisation of the MCAA panel for the European Association of Archaeologists Annual Meetings in order to promote MCAA’s activities and the community of MCAA. Currently, she is also engaged in the organisation of the Archaeomusicology Interest Group panel for the Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America that will take place in San Diego, 3-6 January 2019. This event will involve European and American researchers.



Hubert Zajicek, MD, MBA
CEO & Co-founder
Health Wildcatters

Hubert Zajicek, MD, MBA, is CEO & Co-founder of Health Wildcatters, a top ranked healthcare accelerator and fund in Dallas, TX. Health Wildcatters provides mentorship, capital and guidance to up to 12 healthcare related startups during an intensive 3 month program annually. The fund has invested in over 50 healthcare startups, which have attracted over \$50M in capital in less than 5 years. Dr. Zajicek has extensive experience with startups and is an active speaker, panelist and thought leader on healthcare startups, entrepreneurship, financing & healthcare. He serves as advisor, mentor and board member on various organizations and startup companies. He was managing director – medical technology at NTEC (North Texas Enterprise Center), where he ran what eventually became the Southwest’s largest medtech investment conference, showcasing startups that attracted in excess of \$300M. Prior, he was on faculty at UT Southwestern, as an NIH funded principal investigator, in the Departments of Internal Medicine and Cell Biology. He has an MD from the University of Vienna and an MBA from SMU. He lives in Dallas, with his wife, Beth McNally Zajicek, MD and two daughters.



Judit Jimenez, PhD

Co-director

E-Visibility Program, Spanish Scientists in USA (ECUSA)

Judit is co-director of the e-visibility program at Spanish Scientists in USA (ECUSA) and member of the advisory group. She records and publishes ECUSA podcasts at the Yale Broadcast Center. She is the assistant producer of audiovisual materials, coordinates the radio program “Investigadores por el mundo” and interviews scientists in industry and academia. She is an Associate Research Scientist in the Jensen group (<https://www.jensen-lab.org/>) in Therapeutic Radiology Department at Yale Medical School. Her current research involves biochemical and cellular-based approaches to prevent and unmask the initial steps in breast and ovarian cancer formation. She received her PhD from Universidad de Valencia, Spain and University College London, UK. She is a member of New York Academy of Science (NYAS) and Women In Science at Yale (WISAY). She has been a coordinator of the Networking and Community committee for the Yale Postdoctoral Association (YPA). She strongly believes in supporting new generations of students in STEM and in communicating to society the scientific journeys and discoveries. Send her an e-mail here: judjisa@gmail.com, judit.jimenezsainz@yale.edu



Pavol Cekan, PhD

CEO & Co-founder

MultiplexDX

Dr. Pavol Cekan is an innovative leader with over 15 years of experience at the top research and government institutions. He received his PhD in Chemistry from the University of Iceland in 2009, worked as a Postdoctoral Associate at Rockefeller University for 4 years, and later at a premier cancer research organization - National Cancer Institute (NCI) for another 4 years. Pavol has 35+ scientific publications, is the inventor of 4 patents, and is a member of the Science Advisory Board of the Slovakian Ministry of Health. Pavol is a member of an exclusive network of CEOs in Washington metropolitan area called Mindshare and won a several prestigious awards highlighting his business/scientific achievements including the 2007 Award at NACON VII conference at the University of Sheffield, the 2017 Mayor's Award, JCI Creative Young Entrepreneur Award 2018 and the 2017 New Europe 100 Challenger Award. In 2016, Pavol founded a Slovak/American biotech start-up called MultiplexDX (see www.multiplexdx.com), which is a StartUp'16-awarded, a Biotech Standard of Excellence'18-awarded, a CES Awards'18-awarded (the best social impact start-up in CEE region), a Horizon2020 Seal of Excellence-awarded, and leading SME developing revolutionary molecular cancer diagnostic technologies. MultiplexDX raised €1.5M in seed investments, been awarded 3 non-dilutive grants worth of €187k Slovak government institutions, recently became a member of Health Hub Vienna accelerator, has already generated €200k. MultiplexDX is operating in the Comenius University Science Park in Bratislava and consists of 6 core and 3 external team members, 7 business advisors and 8 scientific advisors.



Giovanni Sogari, PhD
Marie Curie Global Fellow
Cornell University

Dr. Sogari is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Food and Drug at the University of Parma (Italy) and a Marie Curie Fellow with his project “CONSUMEHealth. Using consumer science to improve healthy eating habits”. Since 2017 he has been appointed as a visiting fellow at the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management of Cornell University (USA) where he studies behavioral economics through interviews, lab and field experiments among college students and young population. He often attends workshops, seminar and high-quality courses on food consumer research methods which provide excellent training. Inspired by the findings of his Marie Curie project and striving to maximise the impact of the research outcomes, he is planning to organise both public engagement activities and publications of articles in highly ranked journals that will benefit food scientists, agricultural economists and policy makers interested in healthy eating habits. His other main research interests involved consumers behavior and market of Geographical Indications, GMOs, sustainable wine, and edible insects. For more information, please visit his blog: www.gioannisogari.com.