

Academy of Athens

Biomedical Research Foundation

FP7-PEOPLE-2009-RG - Marie Curie Action:  
"Reintegration Grants"

**COMPUT DRUG DESIGN**

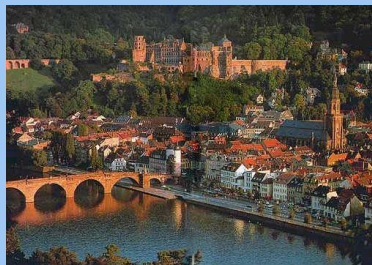
**(Targeting the mutated PI3Ka isoform for the  
development of novel anti-cancer agents)**



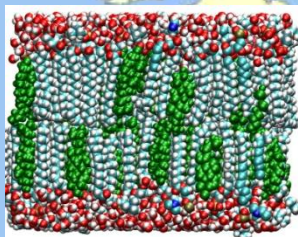
**Zoe Cournia**

**zcournia@bioacademy.gr**

**22 April 2016**



**2001-2006**  
**Doctoral Student in Chemistry**  
**Heidelberg University, Germany**



**1996-2001**  
**Chemistry**  
**University of Athens**



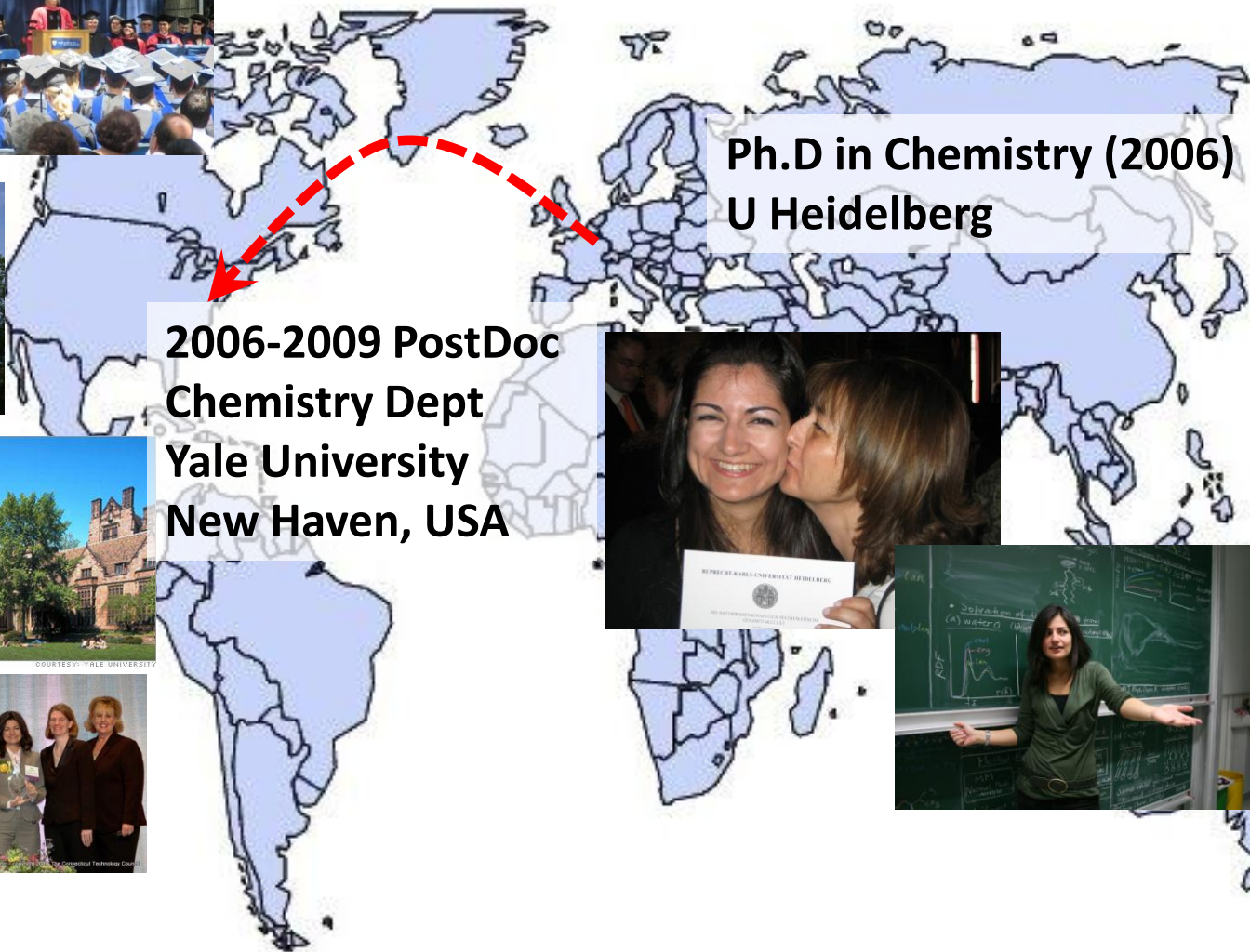




COURTESY: YALE UNIVERSITY



© Commercial Technology Corp.



**Ph.D in Chemistry (2006)  
U Heidelberg**

**2006-2009 PostDoc  
Chemistry Dept  
Yale University  
New Haven, USA**



**Marie Curie Action  
FP7-PEOPLE- 2009-RG**



**2006-2009 PostDoc  
Yale University**

**2009-2015  
Investigator D'  
BRFAA**



**2015-date  
Investigator C'**



# MC Career Integration Grants

- **Aim:** Integrating the researcher in Europe (after a mobility period)
- **Duration:** up to 4 years
- **Funding:** one flat rate grant
- Host organisation must offer full time research post for at least the duration of the grant
- EU contribution: 25 000 €/year paid as flat rate.
- Researcher must move country to take up research job (must comply with Mobility Rule):
  - During the past 36 months no more than 12 months spent in host country;
  - No nationality requirement
  - Possible to return to home country

# Objectives of the Career Integration Grants

- Encourage and help researchers to establish a research career in Europe
- To increase the prospects of integration of the researcher in Europe
- To improve transfer of knowledge and lasting cooperation with previous host(s) of researcher
- A measure to counter European brain drain
- To catalyse significant development in researchers' careers
- Individual competence diversification and skill acquisition
- To support researchers in attaining or strengthening a leading independent position

# How I spent the funds to meet these goals

IRG paid as flat rate → no restrictions on what type of project costs can be covered

**25.000 Euros x 4 years = 100.000 Euros**

**Overhead (20% ): 16.000 Euros**

## **Personnel**

1 postdoc x 2.5 years = 54.000 Euros

## **Conference Travel for myself and lab members**

8.000 Euros x 3 years = 24.000 Euros

**Miscellaneous** (computer parts, invited speakers, consumables etc)

6.000 Euros

***\*Another grant I brought from the US (33.000 Euros) was used to cover another 6 months of postdoc and computer equipment (cluster and desktops for the lab)***



# Achieved goals

- **3 key points for success:**
  - 1. PEOPLE, 2. PEOPLE, 3. PEOPLE**

Had a great post-doc, who produced high quality research in my lab
- **4 publications and 3 conference abstracts directly from project**
- **12 oral conference presentations**
- **8 poster presentations**
- **Mobility, Dissemination, Networking**

Enabled dissemination of research findings and getting involved in new consortia for applying to new grants
- **Advanced to new academic rank one year after the MC Grant**



# Marie Curie-IRG

- **Served as a head-start for my new lab**
- **Provided independence in research activities**
- **Allowed to hire personnel and produce high quality independent research & publications!**
- **Provided prestige for CV (acquired independent funding) that helped other grant applications**
- **Provided overhead to my host institute**

# Marie Curie-IRG

- **Enabled traveling to Europe for forming new collaborations mainly for applying to FP7 / H2020 → built 3 consortia (in one coordinator)**
- **Enabled traveling to the US to keep past ties and could invite past colleagues**
- **Helped me transition to my new rank (Researcher C') in 2015 because I could demonstrate independent research**
- **Access to the Marie Curie Alumni Network**

# Some things money can't buy...

► **Science Careers** From the Journal Science

Career Magazine

My Science Career

Find A Job

Graduate Programs

Tools &

Issues & Perspectives

Career Advice

The Job Market

Career Profiles

## Postdoc Advancement: Marketing Your Value

By Alaina G. Levine  
August 22, 2013

The postdoctoral appointment is not only a time of exploration and hard work, but also a time to learn and hone critical skills that will enable you to move into a position of independent research. Skills such as leadership and management, teambuilding, communication, fundraising, and even marketing are required to advance, and one must be adept in all of

*"You need to be focused on the science, but you also have to have a career perspective in mind. You need to know where you want to go."—Zoe Cournia*

these areas to succeed in this highly competitive economic landscape. There are multiple opportunities for postdocs to not only gain these necessary abilities, but also demonstrate them to current and future employers. The key is keeping a watchful eye out for chances to learn and sharpen your talents and to articulate your value to decision-makers. By **Alaina G. Levine**

**Zoe Cournia** is a Greek chemist who received advanced training abroad and desired to return to her home nation for permanent employment as a researcher. After graduating with her Bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Athens, she pursued her Ph.D. at Heidelberg University, Germany and postdoctoral training at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. To stay connected to her country's academic community while away, she corresponded with her undergraduate mentors and asked for introductions to other scientists. Whenever she came home on holiday, she volunteered to give research talks at her alma mater and elsewhere. Pretty soon, she was receiving invitations from universities across the nation to give seminars. "I may have left the country physically, but I never left the Greek academic system," she says. After five years of notable research which included publishing, presenting, and mentoring combined with connecting with colleagues and lecturing activities in Greece, Cournia landed a job as an investigator (lecturer) in pharmacology and pharmacotechnology at the Biomedical Research Foundation Academy of Athens, Greece.

- **Work hard, do good science**
- **Know where you want to go**
- **Be enthusiastic and show it**
- **Practice soft skills (market yourself)**
- **Practice writing skills**
- **Develop leadership potential**
- **Have a high tolerance for failure and criticism**

# What else could be done

- **Marie Curie technology transfer seminars in view of H2020 SME focus**
- **Intellectual property assistance**
- **Mandatory Marie Curie conference to network with fellows / alumni**
- **Further training opportunities through webinars (creating a career plan, negotiation skills, lab management)**



# Thank you!

---

**Zoe Cournia**

[zcournia@bioacademy.gr](mailto:zcournia@bioacademy.gr)



**Twitter: zocournia**