Host organisation: Institute of Informatics, Slovak Academy of Sciences (IISAS)
Country: Slovakia
Organization role: Beneficiary
Project Acronym: COBRA
Project start and end date: 1.2.2020 – 31.1.2024
Type of MSC action, H2020: ITN

Your story:
Project objectives and research field:
COBRA is a network for training the next generation of researchers and sharing tools, methods, and resources for characterising and modelling the linguistic, cognitive and brain mechanisms that allow conversation to unfold in both human-human and human-machine interactions. The consortium partners offer complementing expertise, excellent academic training, and exposure to the non-academic sector.

Tell us why the topic is important and/or how it brings to advancement in your research field:
Traditionally, the relationships between language, cognition and the human brain have been studied in the paradigms based on individually-administered protocols. New advances offer a shift of this paradigm to studying how spoken language works in its most natural application: when jointly used by two or more talkers. This promises to not only advance our understanding of human cognition, linguistic and interactional competencies, and the role of alignment between talkers and predictive processes during dialogues, but also to improve the naturalness of human-machine spoken interactions when this increased understanding transfers to modelling and architecture of automatic dialogue systems.

What are the benefits of participating in an MSC action?
The action is just in its early stages but there are multiple benefits for IISAS linked to participating in this action already. Primarily, the mobility of people and ideas fostered within the COBRA network offers exciting avenues for scientific collaborations and sharing ideas and resources among the partners. Additionally, the participation of the non-academic partners and training they provide improves our understanding of, and subsequent positioning of IISAS in, the entrepreneurial landscape in terms of readying us for the future collaboration with non-academic partners in Slovakia.

Did you encounter any challenges during application/ implementation and did you get any help?
As we are in the early stages only, I can speak only about challenges linked to the employment and Ph.D. studies of ESR recruited for our action. Some of the
administrative procedures have not been established and some dissonance between the national laws and EU regulations have been discovered. As the nature of these challenges is highly variable, getting help and expert advice is not always easy. But the NCP, EURAXESS, and others helped tackle some of these challenges.

**Would you recommend others to apply? What useful advice/tips can you give them?**

As we are in the early stages only, I can certainly recommend others to apply but I would not give any tips at this stage.

**What strategies did your organisation use to attract the fellow/s? Are they in line with national strategies supporting the widening EC policy?**

Above all, IISAS offers up-to-date and attractive research topics, working with up-to-date technologies and access to a powerful computing cluster of the IISAS, involvement in research projects at national and international levels, work in large international project consortia, cooperation in production of interesting applications for practice, international mobility, financial coverage of travel expenses for active participation in international conferences, Ph.D. internship at foreign scientific institutions, and the possibility of accommodation in a boarding house of SAS for a discount price, food allowance and recreation in our recreational facilities. We offer job vacancies, Ph.D. and postdoc positions through our web page, other relevant web-portals for researchers and through the EURAXESS portal.