

**Name of the MSC Fellow: Vincenzo Lagani**

**Nationality: Italian**

**Host organization: Ilia State University**

**Country of the Host: Georgia**

**Project Acronym: CHARM-Vis**

**Project start and end date: 01/07/2019 – 30/06/2021**

**Type of MSC action, H2020: IF**



**Your story:**

**Project objectives and research field:**

What happens at the genomic level when a memory is formed within the brain? The CHARM-Vis project aims at investigating this topic, by studying molecular mechanisms within the chick brain associated with imprinting.

During imprinting the chicks learn to recognize any moving object as their mother. This phenomenon is an ideal model for studying memory formation. We will characterize gene expression levels and chromatin landscape in cells belonging to the Intermediate and Medium Mesopallium (IMM), a chick brain region previously associated with visual recognition. Changes occurring before and after imprinting will allow to improve our understanding of the biology behind memory formation.

**Tell us why your topic is important and/ or how it brings to advancement in your research field:**

Memory formation in vertebrates is still far from being fully understood, and improving our knowledge on this subject may, in turn, have positive repercussion on our understanding of mental disabilities, especially amnesias. In order to maximize the impact of our project, we will make publicly available all the data produced during CHARM-Vis, so that future research can maximally benefit from our work.

**What are the benefits of participating in a MSC action?**

Participating in an MSC action gave me the opportunity of devising and realizing my own research project. I consider this a necessary step in the path towards becoming an independent researcher.

**Did you encounter any challenges during application/ implementation and did you get any help?**

The biggest challenge was finding a host laboratory that could be a good match for my skills and experience. The ideal host laboratory should allow to further develop your professional capabilities. At the same time, you should be able to complement and support their research topics.

**Why did you choose a widening country as a Host? What was the reason that convinced you? What is making you professionally happy here?**

I initially had personal reasons for choosing a widening country as a host. Once in Georgia, I realized that a country that is in the middle of a rapid development process offers several opportunities for professional growth.

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

Applying for a MSCA is challenging: it requires careful preparation and considerable time. I would recommend others to apply only if they are seriously committed. The most useful advice that I can give to potential candidates is to discuss their proposal with as many qualified people as possible. Discuss in-depth the science behind the proposal with the supervisor at the host laboratory. Seek the help of more senior researchers for any point that is not clear enough. Talk with other MSCA fellows that were successful in submitting their proposal, and ask for any little trick useful for writing the proposal. Require the assistance of the administrative personnel for the parts related to the description of the host institution and project management. If possible, participate in seminars or workshops focused on project writing.