

"la Caixa" Foundation Fellowships help to attract and retain talented researchers

Goretti Torres Perez receives a fellowship in the framework of th doctoral INPhINIT program and Prof Nioletta Liguori in th postdoctoral Junior Leader Programme

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Two ICFOnians are among the 105 recipients of doctoral and postdoctoral fellowship from the i¿½la Caixai¿½ Foundation in their most recent calls. . The **doctoral INPhINIT** and **postdoctoral Junior Leader fellowships** pursue the twofold aim of supporting young talents to carry out their research in Spain or Portugal and attracting international researchers to these countries.

Goretti Torres Perez, PhD student in the Functional Optoelectronic Nanomaterials research group led by ICREA Prof at ICFO Dr Gerasimos Konstantos, receive INPhINIT Fellowship. During her career as a mechanical engineer in Mexico and, currently, as a PhD student at ICFO, she has developed projects in different fields, such as energy, aerospace engineering,

biomechanics and nanotechnology. All these projects, while diverse in their applications, were intended to address global social and technological challenges. In addition, these experiences linked to her participation in different international forums led her to find a new technological innovation strategy in nanofabrication and optics. Currently, she works closely with the industrial sector and researches technology transfer for functional optoelectronics.

Prof Nicoletta Liguori, leader of the new Photon Harvesting in Plants and Biomolecules research group at ICFO, received the Postdoctoral Junior Leader Fellowship. She is graduat in Physics and has empirical and computational experience in biomolecular physics especially photosynthesis. She graduated cum laude in Physics from the Universita degl Studi Roma Tre (IT) and then presented a master's thesis on molecular dynamics (MD simulations of biomolecules at UC Berkeley (USA). To carry out her PhD, she joined th Photosynthesis Biophysics Group, directed by Roberta Croce at the Vrije Universitei Amsterdam (NL). During her PhD, she combined ultrafast spectroscopy with molecula dynamics simulations to investigate how light-harvesting complexes from plants and alga activate photoresist. In 2018, she was awarded a prestigious VENI national grant that enable her to develop a spectroscopic tool to measure how photoactive molecules respond to p changes. In 2022, she became a Principal Investigator at ICFO, within the Cellex Nest elit fellowship program. Her group develops new experimental and computational tools to stud the functional response of photosynthetic proteins to changes in the microenvironment. I 2022, she received her Junior Leader postdoctoral fellowship from the i¿½la Caixa ¿½ Foundation to apply her integrated approach to a biodiversity of photosynthetic orga isms and understand how they activate photoprotection in different ecological ni hes. i¿½la Caixai¿½ Fellowship calls offer competitive salaries and cross-disciplinary tra ning. In the case of doctoral fellowships, complementary training is provided to streng hen such areas as scientific communication, the researcher's emotional wellbeing, leader hip, and opportunities for funding. On the other hand, this training in the postdoctoral fe lowships promotes the independent scientific degree program as an option for a professiona future, and fosters innovation and le

dership.

Funding in science and technology is essential to avoid human knowledge becoming stagnant, to be able to go further and propose new solutions to old problems or new challenges. The coming future is in the hands of people like these fellows, with huge potential as agents of change and as co-creators of a future in which the long list of global issues becomes ever shorteri¿½, indicated **Elisa Duran, Deputy General Manager of the i¿½ a Caixai¿½ Foundation**, during the presentation ceremony of the fellowships at the CosmoCaixa Science Museum which took place on March 22nd.

The i¿½la Caixai¿½ Foundation fellowships programme is the most important of t ose promoted by private institutions in Spain and Europe, both in terms of the numbe of fellowships offered and the variety of disciplines covered. In all, the Foundation will allo ate 20.2 million euros to this intake of doctoral and postdoctoral fellows. Both programs

ave been jointly financed by the European Commission through the Marie Sk?odowska-C
rie COFUND Action, in the context of the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme.