



Interview with a Czech researcher in Brazil, Lenka Ptackova, PhD student at IMPA (National Institute of Pure and Applied Mathematics)



Lenka Ptackova studied Mathematics at the University of West Bohemia (UWB) in Plzen, Czech Republic. During her master she spent three months as a Free-mover (funded by UWB) at the Queen Mary University of London working on her thesis. She is currently studying for her PhD at the Instituto Nacional de Matematica Pura e Aplicada (IMPA) in Rio de Janeiro with a scholarship from CNPq. She plans to finish her PhD studies in February 2017 and start her postdoctoral research at IMPA in March 2017.

You have studied in Europe and are currently working in Brazil. Could you tell us more about your research and research career so far? How did you come to Brazil? With which initiative or funding?

When I was working on my master thesis in London, my co-adviser professor F. Vivaldi of Queen Mary recommended me to pursue my PhD at IMPA. The application procedure at IMPA is done online. Moreover, all master and doctoral students accepted to study at IMPA are granted to receive a scholarship (either from CNPq or Capes). So when I got accepted, I was automatically offered a scholarship, thus I decided to move to Rio de Janeiro in January 2013 to start my doctoral studies here.

Having conducted research both in Brazil and in the Czech Republic, what are the best aspects of either research community, and how does it affect you?

During my research I have been working with five different advisers and co-advisers of three different nationalities (Czech, Italian, Brazilian) and I can only say that all of them are great researchers and advisers, but I cannot find any traits linked to their nationalities.

I am currently working with two Brazilians: Luiz Velho (full researcher at IMPA) and F. de Goes (senior research scientist at Pixar Animation Studios), so I am fully enjoying the great hospitality of Brazil, IMPA, and CNPq. In the future I hope to create more connection with European research centers and maybe enjoy some EU research funding.

In your opinion, what could be done to further enhance the mobility of international researchers? Would Europe be an option for you again?

Master and doctoral students should be better informed about the possibilities to pursue their future careers abroad.

Yes, I would be considering the option of going back to Europe. First, I would look for a research center or a researcher with similar research interests, then I would look for a funding.



Have you heard of the ERC or MSCA grants/Horizon 2020? Would these be of interest to you at some stage of your career?

Yes, I have heard about these programmes and they are very interesting to me.

What are the challenges of doing research in Brazil as a foreigner? Could you tell us more about your personal views on working in Brazil and with Brazilian researchers?

So far and compared to Brazilians, I have been having equal opportunities and equal challenges. It seems to me that Brazil treats doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers equally well without distinction of their nationality.

I love Brazil and I am happy to study at IMPA, which is an excellent institute.

My experience has been great, I have learned a lot - professionally and personally as well. I have met so many interesting people, made many good friends, got to know more about Brazilian culture.

I hope the findings of my PhD thesis will contribute to research in Mathematics and Computer Graphics at IMPA.

What advice would you give to Brazilian researchers seeking closer collaboration with Europe?

To get in touch with EURAXESS.

What are you going to miss if you leave Brazil?

I would miss Brazilians, Rio de Janeiro, my friends, the ocean, the music, the climate, fresh fruit and vegetable, and the lifestyle I have here.