

“A POWERFUL DRIVER TO ATTRACT TALENTED RESEARCHERS”

Raffaele Marino, physicist and researcher at the École centrale de Lyon, explains how the PALSE post-doctorate and IMPULSION programs provided him with the means to develop innovative projects, while collaborating with scientists throughout the world

To what extent did the PALSE post-doctorate and IMPULSION programs help you in your research career?

My academic career began in Italy and developed in several countries including France, where I obtained a PhD in physics in cotutelle with the Université de Nice. After working for a few years in the United States, at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (Boulder, Colorado) and the University of California Berkeley, I came to learn of the PALSE initiative and the chance it offered scholars with international profiles to conduct cutting edge research as postdocs within the Université de Lyon. I immediately saw this as a unique opportunity to develop my ideas and new scientific projects while working in one of the most stimulating academic environments in Europe.

I have been a PALSE postdoctoral fellow at the Laboratoire de Physique of the École normale supérieure de Lyon and this has played a very important role in my professional growth. As a matter of fact, PALSE provided me with optimal conditions to achieve major scientific goals and successfully compete for tenured research jobs in Europe and the United States. Indeed, in 2016 I was ranked first in the CNRS national competition for a position as "Chargé de Recherche de première classe" to work at the École centrale de Lyon (ECL). As a permanent CNRS researcher in the Laboratoire de Mécanique des Fluides et d'Acoustique at ECL, I have been able to further benefit from PALSE through the action IMPULSION. The latter is currently supporting my activities with a start-up package that allowed me to initiate research projects at ECL and keep collaborating with scientists and research institutions throughout the world. I can thus say without hesitation that PALSE has made the difference in the possibility for me to move back to and successfully carry on research in Europe. Advantages gained from the PALSE programs have consolidated my desire to work in France and pursue with an academic career in one of the institutional partners of the Université de Lyon.

What do you think these initiatives might represent for the Lyon Saint-Étienne area, in terms of attractive force?

Quality of research, availability of resources and international environments are among the fundamental aspects scientists value when looking for institutions to establish research lines and advance in their careers. Programs enforced by PALSE evidently aim at strengthening the internationalization of the Lyon Saint-Étienne area by supporting fellows with significant experience in recognized foreign institutions, providing them with the means needed to develop innovative projects. All this contributes to the achievement of a critical mass of expertise and people with diverse backgrounds that will act in the coming years as a powerful driver to attract talented researchers in the reassemblment of institutes and universities located in Lyon and Saint-Étienne.

Why did you choose Lyon-Saint-Étienne over another city to conduct your research in Europe?

The presence of laboratories of excellence in my field, that of non-linear physics and multi-scale flows, and the strong collaborations between hosting institutions, such as ENS and ECL, is by far

what triggered my decision to work in the Lyon-Saint-Étienne area. The synergy existing at programmatic level between top-notch teams from the different laboratories is here corroborated by centralized services delivered by the Université de Lyon to promote exchanges of resources at local and international level. As an example I would like to mention the important work done by the Espace Ulys office, of which I have direct experience, whose action looks critical for the integration of the foreign researchers in Lyon and Saint-Étienne. In my opinion the programs sponsored by PALSE have played a role in that too, favoring interactions between young and senior researchers across departments and creating a bridge for people like me to conduct research in France.