

International Chairs: the adaptation of oceans to climate change studied in Bretagne by Flavia Nunes



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Press statement for immediate release

In the context of the “International Chairs” program set up by the European University of Brittany (Université Européenne de Bretagne – UEB) with the support of the Région Bretagne and of the ERDF program, LabexMER welcomes Flavia Nunes. The 31 year-old biologist from Canada and Brazil aims to understand how climate change affects marine ecosystems.

Flavia Nunes joins the “A changing ocean” LabexMER which brings together the best researchers in marine sciences and technology to deepen knowledge and understanding of ocean functioning in the particular context of climate change. Her approach in evolutionary marine ecology allows her to study responses from local populations as well as modulations in gene expression during the development of organisms, i.e. two levels on which climate change has an impact and which call for team work. Christine Paillard, senior research at the CNRS and a colleague of Flavia Nunes, praises this “young, very brilliant researcher who has already set up a team and who is actively involved in the scientific animation of research activities”.

Before arriving in Brest, Flavia Nunes worked on the traces of past climates preserved in fossil shells, on the biodiversity of corals in the Atlantic and on the diversity of microbial populations cultivated in the laboratory. All these experiences have shaped her understanding of how climate change impacts marine ecosystems and organisms. Several areas of research are planned to study how reefs of honeycomb worms from north and south adapt differently to changes in temperature, how the acidification of oceans affects abalones, oysters, scallops and mussels when these make their shell, and how the marine environment modulates vibriosis disease in molluscs.

For Arnaud Devillez, head of research and innovation at UEB, “International Chairs represents an important framework through which to promote the research activities of UEB abroad. It allows us to build long-term, durable relationships with other universities, with experienced researchers who are invited for a period of three years”. Two other International Chairs have been created to support research on the impact of pesticides on the reproduction of mammals and on the energy efficiency of radio communication systems.

Each Chair receives 200 000 euros from the Région Bretagne, in the context of the objectives and means contract signed with UEB and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Scientific research in Brittany will thus be able to radiate at an international level, its level of attractiveness will increase and it will reach international standards.

In a full-time position since February 2013, Flavia Nunes has already hired two post-doc researchers and one doctoral student. Research projects are progressing in a satisfactory manner and Flavia would be happy to extend the three-year period of the Chair, in order to fully explore the research projects launched by LabexMER and to be able to make the most of a very good collaborative dynamic within a very stimulating environment.

About the Université Européenne de Bretagne www.ueb.eu

The Université Européenne de Bretagne (UEB) brings together 28 higher education and research establishments (universities, grandes écoles, research bodies, and university teaching hospitals) from all over Bretagne. As the umbrella organisation of higher education and research establishments in Bretagne, the UEB is responsible for the development of joint strategy. This regional hub is also the sponsor of joint projects which are international in scope to increase the international standing of research and to permanently establish Bretagne as a region of knowledge and innovation

In order to achieve this, the UEB has equipped itself with additional tools so as to strengthen the structuring of its networked research departments and to enhance their participation in European and international programmes, such as international chairs and Technosciences, a search engine for scientific and technical expertise in Bretagne’s laboratories.

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