

Hello World! *And why the world is not enough...*

You have made it to my blog – congratulations! Maybe you have already navigated through our website quantimony.eu. If not, I encourage you to do so to find out more about our project and read about the hot topics my colleagues are working on. In any way, you may have (will have) stumbled over words like *ITN*, *MSCA*, *PhD*, *quantimony* and *secondment*. I want to use this first blog post to explain these acronyms, present myself and give you a small sneak preview of what I am going to write about in the near future!

Doing a *Bac+8*

Now you might be wondering what a *Bac+8* is – well let me give you a broad picture of higher education in Europe (a nice overview can be found [here](#)). The European Union currently counts 27 countries and to me, it feels like there are as many slightly different education systems. One thing they all have in common is that school typically finishes with a certificate giving access to higher education. This might be called *Abitur*, *bachillerato*, *Matura* or somewhat different. The French call it *baccalauréat* or short *Bac*. In higher education, the countries of the EU agreed on forming their students in a more similar way. During 5 years of studies, the Bachelor's and the Master's degree can be obtained. The majority of students finishes higher education with one or both of these diplomas. But there is a small group of indomitable students who can't get enough and stick to the university through what is called a Doctorate or PhD. PhD is short for *Doctor of Philosophy* and typically obtained after 3-4 years of PhD-studies. The French call their degrees according to how much time their completion needs with respect to the *Bac*: Bac +3 (Bachelor) + 2 (Master) + 3 (PhD) = Bac+8, here we go!

Me Face: Past-Present-Future

Now that we have deciphered the first acronym *PhD*, it is time to introduce myself: My name is Malte Schwarz. I probably should have started off with that. But now, that you have worked your way through the less interesting part, I can be sure that your interest is worth my efforts, and you will have the endurance to read my blog to the bitter end!

Past



Present



Future



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Past: I have obtained my Bachelor's degree in Germany. For my Bachelor's thesis, I have worked on an instrument for differential absorption spectroscopy to measure halogen oxides and nitrogen dioxide. Then I moved to France to do my Master's degree in semiconductor physics and photonics. For my Master's project, I have worked on the simulation of optical lithography, a technique used to fabricate those microchips that are in shortage nowadays.

Present: But I couldn't get enough of living abroad, learning a new language, and exploring new cultures, the world is not enough! That's why today I am living in Spain! And as you might have noticed - I am doing my PhD within the Quantimony project.

Future: I haven't decided on my career path yet. I could imagine working as an engineer, in research or elsewhere. More important than the specific topic are to me the people I am working with, to learn about things I have not thought of before and to be excited about the future! I expect to live a great life, but if you feel worried about my future, let me assure you that I have a backup plan: The former German chancellor Angela Merkel studied physics (like me) and did a PhD (like me). So, I figure that "Chancelorette of Germany" sounds like a suitable job for me and I wouldn't mind living in Berlin... :D

The MS-CA is not a cruise ship

On our acronym-deciphering hunt, only *MSCA* and *ITN* still need to be explained. *MS* is typically written on large cruise ships that sail towards the horizon, like the one in the picture.

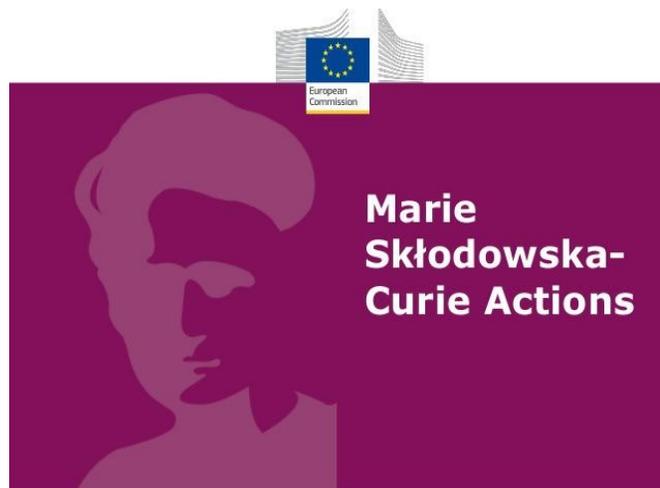


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In this context, *MS* would refer to a *Motor Ship*. In our project, the meaning is different but one could say that also the "eyes of the *MSCA* are fixed on the horizon!".

I think I should now stop with the Dad Jokes and not beat about the bush... [MSCA](#) is short for *Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions*. It is part of the *Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe* research and innovation funding programme and is "European Union's flagship funding programme for doctoral education and postdoctoral

training of researchers." One part of the actions are so-called *Innovative Training Networks (ITN) / Doctoral Networks (DN)*. The *Quantimony* project is an *ITN* "comprising eleven internationally-renowned research teams as beneficiaries". Me and 13 other students have the opportunity to do our PhDs in the framework of intersectoral cooperation with secondments at the different partner institutions. For example, I will be spending part of my time at the University of Würzburg in Germany, at FLUXiM in Switzerland, and at the Universities of Lancaster and Warwick in the UK. I am really looking forward to that!



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Furthermore, the network organizes various events and summer schools. We have already met in December 2021 in Würzburg, we had an online industry day at Aixtron in March and will soon meet in Lancaster for a transferable skills training. I will try to keep you updated on what is going on!

Where are we heading?

This first blog entry has been quite general, and I haven't even told you specifically about what I am working on. Though, I think it was important to give you this broad introduction about a PhD studies and *Quantimony*.

In the next blog entries, I will present to you my place in the project. You will read about solar cells, these semiconductors everybody is talking about, why the project is called *Quantimony*, and so much more! Stay tuned and healthy!

