

## The 2016 European Young Researchers' Award

The International Selection Committee for the European Young Researchers' Award 2016 appointed by the Euroscience Board, has selected **Dr. Marta Entradas and Dr. Martijn Wieling as co-recipients** of the 2016 **European Young Researchers' Award**. As in all even years, this year's EYRA is to recognize post-doctoral researchers who have demonstrated an outstanding research performance, leadership and outreach and have incorporated a clear European dimension in their research.

The International Jury was pleased to receive thirty-four applications, nearly all of them with very strong scientific credentials. In line with the character of the EYRA, they were evaluated on three different criteria: scientific quality, leadership and communication skills and European dimension of the research, the most important being scientific quality. The Committee first selected seven candidates who met those criteria in the best possible fashion. For those candidates, independent reports by experts in the fields of the candidates were obtained; it is on the basis of these reports and of its own evaluations that the jury made its final decision in April of 2016. The discussion was difficult, given the outstanding quality and very diverse fields of the candidates on the short list; it resulted in the unanimous and enthusiastic choice of **Dr. Marta Entradas and Dr. Martijn Wieling** as co-recipients the 2015 EYRA laureate. They were judged to best fulfill the profile of EYRA as an award for European excellence in research as well as European engagement and leadership. It is notable that the prize is awarded, for the first time, to researchers in the humanities and social sciences.

**Marta Entradas** is Portuguese. After obtaining her licentiate in Science Education at the University of Lisbon in 2001, she was a biology and geology high-school teacher for two years, before switching to science communication. In 2005, she obtained a master's degree in Science Education, again at the University of Lisbon, choosing Science Communication as her thesis topic, while working as European Communications Officer at the European Centre for Marine Science and Technology in Lisbon. In 2008, she went back to an academic track, starting a PhD programme at University College London, from which she graduated in 2011; her dissertation was titled "Who is for the Planets? The public for space exploration and views of practitioners of science communication on 'the public' and public communication in the UK."

Since 2011, she has worked for the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council in the UK, the International Astronomical Union and has been engaged in research activities at Cornell University (USA), the London School of Economics and Lisbon University. She has received Fulbright and Marie-Curie Fellowships.

She is the principal investigator of the Portuguese funded European research project “Mobilisation of resources for public engagement” whose aim is to investigate how research institutions respond to European demands for societal engagement in science and technology. Quite strikingly, the project, which started as a study of Portuguese institutions, was extended to cover six other European countries and the USA in 2016/2017. More specifically, Marta Entradas has focused her research on communication and societal engagement of Research Centres and Institutes, showing among other things that the involvement in communication of the scientific part of universities was a good predictor of public communication and public engagement at large, and that the size and funding of institutes had a direct influence on their engagement in public communication.

Entradas is the author of twenty papers published in international peer-reviewed journals and has given ten talks at international conferences. Besides her scholarly work on science communication, she is also very active as a science communicator.

By selecting Marta Entradas as the co-winner of the European Young Researchers’ Award 2016, the committee expressed its endorsement of science communication, an essential part of the “Science with and for Society” agenda, and acknowledged her role in breaking the barriers between scientists, citizens and policy-makers.

**Martijn Wieling** is Dutch. He did all his studies at the University of Groningen; after his BSc in computer science in 2005, he pursued his curriculum by a MSc in computer science, with a focus on Intelligent Systems, which he finished in 2007, obtaining simultaneously a MSc in Behavioral Cognitive Neuroscience. By then, he was already very interested in linguistics, particularly phonetics; he wrote his master’s thesis on a comparison of Dutch dialects, using different approaches, including sophisticated stochastic methods to identify dialect variations.

He proceeded to work on a PhD in linguistics, specializing in dialectometry; he defended his thesis: “A Quantitative Approach to Social and Geographical Dialect Variation” in 2012. The linguistic variety in his dissertation speaks highly of the depth of his work, and also of its European dimension, showing the “Babel tower” linguistic dimension of the European entity: Dutch, English (in England, Wales and Scotland), German, Bulgarian, Catalan, Tuscan, with an escape to Africa with Bantu vowels. Indeed, the methods that he developed for his study of Dutch dialect variation were applied to other languages, like Catalan. A very interesting feature of his work is the mixing of geographic, social and generational data as factors in dialect variability.

After 3 years as a postdoctoral fellow, Martijn Wieling has been appointed assistant professor in 2015 at the university of Groningen. He is involved in two research projects funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), one of which being a prestigious Veni grant for which he is the principal investigator. He was elected in 2015 to become a member of the Dutch Young Academy.

Wieling has authored more than 50 research papers, 26 as first author, several of which in top journals. He has ongoing collaborations with scientists in Italy, USA, UK, Spain and Canada. He devotes a lot of time and energy to address the needs of a non-specialized audience by newspaper articles, radio and TV interviews, as well as various projects for children. Indeed, he has made a presentation at the “Night

of Arts and Sciences” (2015), a science and music festival held in Groningen, and participated in an interdisciplinary symposium about “Time” organized by the Dutch Young Academy (2016). With several other members of the Dutch Young Academy, he is presently designing a comic book to be distributed among primary school children, focusing on countering the stereotype of the scientist as being a Caucasian male doing research in the natural sciences.

The selection by the EYRA jury of Martijn Wieling as the co-winner of the European Young Researchers’ Award 2016 is a strong sign of the unity of science, social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, humanities, and acknowledges the breadth of his involvement as a remarkable scientist engaged in society.

The International Selection Committee consisted of *Stephane Berghmans, Eugen Gheorghiu, Zaneta Ozolina, Slobodan Radicev, and Chair Martin Andler.*