



**UKRAINE  
WE STAND  
WITH YOU!**

# Newsletter

Dear EURAXESS friends,

Happy New Year! Here we have the first edition in 2022, in the Year of the Tiger based on the Chinese Lunar Calendar. The zodiac sign, Tiger, is a symbol of strength, exorcising evils and braveness. Let the Tiger influence our lives in the new year with these aspects.

What can you expect from EURAXESS this year? We all hope to meet more personally and organize face-to-face events for you. Not only seminars, meetings, but also the Christmas party in December. Let's see, what this new year brings.

You can already count on some events in the near future. You'll find out more on the last page of our newsletter. But before you get to that, you can enjoy the introduction of one of our youngest EURAXESS Service Centres at the University of Chemistry and Technology Prague (VŠCHT) and the career journey of VŠCHT's employee, Edith M. Kutorglo from Ghana. The period from the feast of the Three Wise Men (January 6th) until Ash Wednesday (this year on March 2nd) is known as „masopust“ in the Czech Republic. Find out more about this period and try one of the recipes connected to this feast. We wish you just the best in this 2022 and lot of health and luck!

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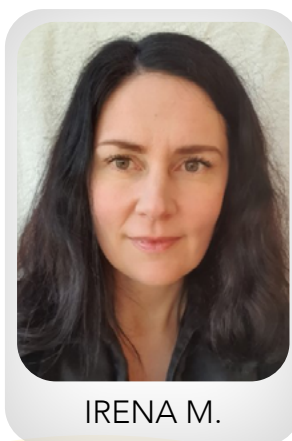
# BRANCH INTRODUCTION



## CONTACT POINT: UCT PRAGUE



ANNA K.



IRENA M.




ANNA M.

**Welcome to UCT Prague** - and the world of modern chemistry!

Prague is not only the capital city of the Czech Republic, but also a city of great opportunities and challenges. One such challenge is modern chemistry. Medicine, pharmacy, computer and communication technology, genetics, environmental protection, food and water quality, space research and many other industries cannot do without modern chemistry.

That is why you can find one of the most prestigious schools in the field of chemistry in the Czech Republic on the Dejvice campus.

The University of Chemistry and Technology, Prague is a natural centre of first-rate study and research in the area of chemistry in the Czech Republic and is one of the country's largest educational and research institutions focused on technical chemistry, chemical and biochemical technologies, material and chemical engineering, food chemistry, and environmental studies. Find out more [here](#). 

We are well aware that moving researchers and students, often with the whole families, to a foreign country is not easy at all. That is why about a year and a half ago, the UCT Prague Welcome Center began

to rise. However, we have been dealing with visa issues, the life and integration of foreigners in our country and the employment of foreigners in the Czech Republic for more than 10 years.

We are trying to make life in the Czech Republic as easy as possible for our foreigners, in all areas that even an ordinary Czech citizen can meet.

One of our main activities is to help with residence permits for researchers, but also for our students. We also focus on the social issues of the life of a foreigner in the Czech Republic and its integration into Czech society.

Our team consists of Anna Kernová, Irena Mináriková and Anna Mittnerová, who are always ready and willing to help with unexpected situations regarding your job, study and life in the Czech Republic.

You can visit our website in your free time <https://international.vscht.cz/international-staff>

We will be happy to see you in person at offices S09 and S10 in building B, UCT Prague, or write us an email on [welcome@vscht.cz](mailto:welcome@vscht.cz)

See you there!

# MY JOURNEY TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

## EDITH MAWUNYA KUTORGLO

Postdoctoral researcher at VŠCHT

My name is Edith Mawunya Kutorglo. I am Ghanaian and currently a postdoctoral researcher at VŠCHT on mobility at the Technical University of Berlin. Prior to this, I studied my bachelor's degree in Biochemistry at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, and after this I worked as a teaching and research assistant in the Biochemistry Department for 1 year. Then I got accepted into an Erasmus Mundus Master Programme in Membrane Engineering (EM3E) which was a collaborative program among different universities in France, the Czech Republic, Spain and finished with my master thesis at the University of Bath (UK). Although I had the opportunity to pursue my PhD at the University of Bath in the UK, I decided to return to VŠCHT instead.

Choosing a place to spend 4 years of my life was as important to me as any other life decision that I would make. The semester that I spent at VŠCHT as part of the EM3E program was very influential, not only was it a very fun and memorable experience but it was also the semester that I learnt the most. During the semester I spent at VŠCHT I had the chance to do an internship at MemBrain s.r.o. in Stráž pod Ralskem after an industrial visit to the company. I found this all-round education structure to be student-centered and of high quality so when it came to choosing a place to pursue my PhD studies, the decision was easy. It wasn't surprising that our whole EM3E group coined the term "Pragadise" to describe our beautiful experience in Prague and VŠCHT as synonymous to living in paradise.

Moving to a new country without speaking the language and dealing with paperwork can be overwhelming, not to mention the feeling of living far away from your family and friends and just trying to find a new normal life. But for me coming to VŠCHT as a PhD student was completely smooth and easy thanks to the team at the Department of International Relations and Department of Scientific Research and Development.

Being accepted into a PhD program at VŠCHT was a very fulfilling experience working in a very multinational and multidisciplinary research group led by Prof. Miroslav Šoóš. It was demanding in the beginning, but it was overall a great learning experience with many good memories. Apart from the research parts of the PhD, there were many opportunities to be involved in teaching laboratory courses, co-supervising bachelor and master students and attending international conferences. VŠCHT also offers the opportunity to participate in exchange programs through Erasmus+ or MOBI grants in order to get experience and training in laboratories abroad. I had the opportunity to visit ETH Zurich for a 3-month internship as part of my PhD studies. VŠCHT also announces internal grant competitions (called IGA) annually offering PhD students the opportunity to



EDITH MAWUNYA KUTORGLO

train their grant preparation/writing skills. I have been awarded IGA grants 3 consecutive times. All these experiences have given me a big head start during the preparation of the proposal for my postdoctoral research and most importantly equipped me with the skills needed for implementing the project.

I am currently working on a project "3D-Composite Photocat" which focuses on the development of composite catalysts for CO<sub>2</sub> conversion into fuels using sunlight at the TU Berlin. Carbon capture and storage (CCS) has been widely investigated for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. However, CCS is currently an expensive and non-competitive technology and has been criticized due to the possible negative consequences (e.g. leakage) of storing large amounts of captured CO<sub>2</sub> in underground reservoirs. Converting captured CO<sub>2</sub> into new products and chemicals such as methanol, ethylene glycol, bioplastics or coatings for industry has a dual benefit of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and producing alternative energy. My project "3D-Composite Photocat" falls under the umbrella of current research directed towards carbon emission mitigation and utilization of CO<sub>2</sub> as a sustainable carbon resource. The project is within the framework of National OP RDE (Chemfells IV) funded program.

I am grateful for the opportunity of spending 4 long years of my life in the charming city of Prague and meeting so many amazing people. The PhD experience in terms of academic, work-life balance and personal growth opportunities was priceless and I thank my supervisor Prof. Miroslav Šoóš and my supervisor specialist doc. Mgr. Fatima Hassouna for dedicating a lot of time and resources into my training. I am happy that I chose VŠCHT for my PhD studies and even more importantly, to still be working for VŠCHT.



# MASOPUST

## (CARNIVAL SEASON)

Nowadays, if you check event websites, you may get the impression that the world has gone crazy. People in silly costumes walking through the villages and towns. This is the Carnival season, or in Czech "Masopust". The tradition comes from the pre-Christian Slav celebrations of the end of Winter. The word "Masopust" means "fasting from meat", which actually does not correspond with the mentioned period – the time from Feast of Three Wise Men (6th January) until Ash Wednesday (this year on 2nd March) should be full of delicious, heavy and fatty dishes, including meat and alcohol. The "Masopust" ends during the weekend before Ash Wednesday with a Carnival parade. You might be imagining the Carnival in Rio de

Janeiro with fancy masques and costumes, but the Czech version is connected with specific costumes like a bear, a bride and a groom, the Death, or an old lady with a wicker basket. After "Masopust" time, the real lent starts and it lasts until Easter.

If you want to learn more about this tradition, the following Saturday (26th February) is the best – you can experience the real "Masopust" in Prague – e. g. Letenský masopust, Karlínský masopust or Malostranský masopust. You can get more information about each event on their Facebook pages.

# KOBLIHY

(DONUT WITHOUT THE HOLE)



You can buy them everyday in every bakery, but the home-made ones are still the best. The process is not the easiest one, but the result is worth it.

## **INGREDIENTS:**

- 500 g flour (hladká mouka)
- 50 g icing sugar (moučkový cukr)
- 60 g butter (máslo)
- 1 piece of yeast (droždí, cube of 42 g)
- 250 ml full fat milk (plnotučné mléko)
- 1 package of vanilla sugar (vanilkový, not vanilinový cukr, about 10 g)
- 3 table spoons of Czech rum (Tuzemák)
- 4 egg yolks
- marmelade, jam or chocolate cream for filling
- 1 liter of sunflower oil

## **DIRECTIONS:**

All ingredients need to be left at room temperature before you start. Pour half of the lukewarm milk into a big bowl, add vanilla sugar and crumbled yeast. Cover the bowl with a dish-towel and let the yeast rise in a warm place. It takes about 15 minutes. Whip egg yolks with icing sugar and very lukewarm butter until it forms a "foam". Add the sifted flour, the rest of the milk, the raised yeast, rum and stir thoroughly with a wooden spoon until it forms a smooth and non-sticky dough. Powder the dough lightly with flour, cover again with a dish-towel and let the dough rise in a warm place for 30 minutes until it doubles in size. Prepare the filling and a glass with a diameter of around 5 cm for cutting out the "koblíhy". Move the raised dough to a suitable, flour-powdered work surface and roll out the dough into a 1,5 cm thick layer. Cut out the circles using the glass. Put a small piece of jam/marmelade/chocolate cream to one circle and cover with another circle. Connect the circles thoroughly (carefully press the sides of circles together, so that the filling does not leak during frying). Let the donuts rise again for another 15 minutes.

Preheat enough oil in the pot, put in a pinch of salt, so that the oil will not sizzle. Carefully put the donuts into the oil and fry until golden from both sides. There must be enough oil in the pot, so that the donuts can "float" there. Take out the donuts using a toothpick and lay them on the kitchen paper tissues. This will soak the extra oil from the donuts.

Powder with the icing sugar before serving. Enjoy the fresh koblíhy"!

# MEETINGS & EVENTS

## BOOK THESE DATES:

### FEBRUARY

- 22nd, 13:00-15:00 Let's meet! with the ice-breaker topic „What can you do in Prague in the Winter“, for spouses of researchers, online; **registration closed**
- 24th, 9:00 – 13:00 Adaptation and Integration Course for researchers and their family members (Prague), **registration already closed**

### MARCH

- 3rd, 10:00 – 12:00 Webinar Hard life in the Czech Republic – the intercultural insight into the Czech soul, webinar not only for spouses of researchers, but also for the newcomers; contact [here](#) 🖱️
- 15th, 10:00 – 11:30 Webinar Maternity and Parental leave – what to expect? – online meeting for everybody who is interested in this topic related to the maternity, childbirth, parental allowance etc.; contact [here](#) 🖱️
- 29th, 13:00 - 15:00 Let's meet! with the ice-breaker topic „Spring is coming!“, for spouses of researchers, online/personally according to the situation; contact [here](#) 🖱️

### APRIL

- 7th, 10:00 – 12:00 Webinar/seminar How to get a trade licence – presentation of the process of applying for trade licence and start of a freelance job; contact [here](#) 🖱️
- 20th, 9:00 - 13:00 Adaptation and Integration Course for researchers and their family members (Prague), registration [here](#) 🖱️
- 26th, 13:00 - 15:00 Let's meet! with the ice-breaker topic „Spring is coming!“ plus an additional topic, for spouses of researchers, online/personally according to the situation; contact [here](#) 🖱️
- 28th, 10:00 - 12:00 Webinar/seminar How to apply for a job in the Czech Republic – for the newly coming spouses of researchers (Prague), number of participants is limited; contact [here](#) 🖱️
- TBD Adaptation and Integration Course for researchers and their family members (Brno), registration [here](#) 🖱️
- TBD 7th edition of EURAXESS Newsletter

## THANKS FOR READING!

Feel free to send any comments, suggestions or questions to [volunteer@lib.cas.cz](mailto:volunteer@lib.cas.cz).

