MCFA WELCOME PACK FOR FRANCE

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What is the Marie Curie Fellowship Association?
The "Marie Curie Fellowship Association" (MCFA) is an association of scientists who have successfully completed a Marie Curie fellowship or some other European Community research training grant for which they have been selected through an independent peer review
system. A Marie Curie fellowship is a grant awarded within a harmonised scheme under one of the European RTD Framework Programmes.

The Association is organised along vertical lines through regional/local groups, national groups and an international level. There are also horizontal structures such as scientific subgroups, committees and working groups. The Association was launched at an inaugural seminar in Brussels in October 1996.

**Regional Groups** meetings are usually informal gatherings of fellows working in large institutions, or living in large cities or within one region. They are useful as social get-togethers, and for help with individual contract problems.

**National Groups** are one of the pillars of the MCFA. A tremendous amount of work is done at this level and a lot of international activities of the MCFA have their roots in activities of national groups. All national groups have their own coordinators for the various national activities. These activities include regular meetings, task forces, advice on contract problems, meetings with national government officials, public relations activities and the like. For a list of national coordinators and links to the national WWW pages, please have a look at the central web pages

http://www.mariecurie.org

and the French pages


**Some notes on this welcome pack**

This Welcome Pack is, due to the evolution of the EU research programmes, itself an evolving document. It was originally prepared by people who received their fellowship under FP4 (Framework Programme 4) and has now been updated. All the information given is to the best of our knowledge correct at the time of writing, but of course we cannot give any kind of guarantee of accuracy. If there are any mistakes or if you feel that important information is missing, please send comments to the authors. Through your participation you can help to assure that this Welcome Pack stays up-to-date and really contains all the information that is important to Marie Curie fellows in France.

For further information on the FP6 mobility instruments and specific rules you should go to the [www.mariecurie.org](http://www.mariecurie.org) website, click on marie curie actions and follow the links to the cordis site.

**Living in France**

This section gives you important information about life in France, at least for most of the everyday matters and legal matters. The following web pages are good sources of information regarding legal matters (at least at an introductory level):

http://vosdroits.admifrance.gouv.fr
http://www.pratique.fr
http://www.sos-net.eu.org
http://europa.eu.int/citizens/

The web page of the "Fondation Nationale Alfred Kastler" (FNAK)
Preparations at home

The first priority is to have good contacts with the host institute and, if possible, to fix the contract matters (see below). If you can arrange accommodation for the first few weeks from your home country, this could save you some trouble and/or money when arriving in France. Also, if you don’t speak any French at all, it may be a good idea to learn at least the basics before leaving your home country.

Additionally we recommend you contact directly the MCFA FRANCE and the Alfred Kastler Foundation, who particularly can aid you open a bank account here before you arrive (which is not so easy to do alone when you arrive).

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs displays booklets, mainly for residents in France, about living in different countries. It may be useful for the Fellow to check if the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of her/his residence state proposes such a booklet about living in France.

Accommodation

It seems that finding accommodation is most of the time not too much of a problem, but the situation can be rather different from one place to another (the Paris area is definitely more difficult than some medium sized provincial town, for example).

There are various ways of finding accommodation:

**ROUS STUDENTS’ ROOMS**: An accommodation possibility is with the "Cités Universitaires". People lodging there have very diverse opinions about them, but it is cheaper than renting an apartment of course. If you intend to do so, you have to prepare it from your home country various months in advance. You can find some pointers on [http://www.cnous.fr](http://www.cnous.fr) or [http://www.crous-paris.fr](http://www.crous-paris.fr), but the best way is to find out with your host institute. Note that they also maintain a list of rooms in town for which you may be eligible if you still have a student card.

**DE PARTICULIER `A PARTICULIER**: In most big cities there exist "newspapers" of (mostly private) adds from people who rent out an apartment (Examples include

De particulier à particulier (http://www.pap.fr)

- The new adverts are displayed on the web site earlier than in the paper version of PAP.
- There is an English version with adverts in English.

and

Seloger (www.seloger.com)

And there are many others

Typically they come out once a week and you should probably know a reasonable amount of French if you want to use this method since you have to negotiate by phone with the landlord/lady in order to arrange to visit the place.
LISTS. An intermediate solution between the agencies and the purely personal contacts are companies which establish lists of apartments (or houses, ...) to rent. You pay a fee to access this list and then contact the landlords if you are interested in something. The purpose is to have access to a big amount of propositions and pay less than if you go through an agency. There have been bad experiences with this (lists may be out-dated so that you pay your fee without having a real chance of finding an apartment), but also good ones, so we cannot give a definite advice on these lists, although this does not seem to be the preferred solution.

INTERNAL LISTS. In many institutes there are internal lists on poster boards in the corridors or common rooms, where many places can be found – for this you will need to contact the people in the department where you are going.

Duration
If you rent an apartment on the "free market", the (theoretical) duration of the lease should be three years. In particular the landlord cannot terminate the lease before this time unless there are exceptional circumstances. However, the tenant can terminate the contract at any time as long as the landlord has been informed in writing at least three months in advance. If you have to change location as a part of change of job, legally, you can also only give 1 months notice to your landlord.

Deposit
Usually a deposit of 2 months rent is asked as a warranty. This deposit is returned at the end of the lease (or two months after at the latest), in total or in part, if there remains something to pay or to be repaired in the apartment. Note that in France the deposit is payed back without interest, contrary to what is the case in some other european countries.

Guarantee
This represents one of the biggest hurdles for foreign scientists moving to france, and there is no easy answer. The landlord will require a guarantee that if you default on your rent payment, someone else who is legally resident in france will pay. For the French citizens this typically means a member of their family, and hence this has evolved into a highly personal ‘relationship’. Solutions for this can include asking your director if he would be willing, but this should be approached delicately due to the personal nature.

The commission needs to address this point in a more ‘solid’ fashion and represents a point that should be lobbied by mobile scientists moving to france.

Rights and responsibilities
Basically, when you move in you sign a document where the state of the apartment is described, and you should hand back the apartment in the same condition, otherwise you have to repair whatever damage you have done. You are allowed to do all kinds of modifications that do not transform the apartment (painting, etc.). You must take care of all the equipment in the apartment and maintain it (e.g. cleaning of the chimney, maintenance of the heating devices, etc.). It is possible that the landlord has a "contrat d'entretien" with some company who takes care of these things. The ‘contrat d’entretien’ is legally required to be performed
annually for the heating (chauffage), if this is not performed and the house burns down as a result of negligence the landlord is legally responsible. In that case you may be expected to pay the monthly contributions for this kind of "insurance". In any case, if there is any malfunctioning of these devices which is not due to a grave lack of maintenance on your part, the landlord should take care of it.

Of course, you should pay the rent (plus various charges, usually for cleaning the staircase, maintaining the elevator, gardening, garbage collection, etc...) every month, unless stated in the contact, ‘charges compris’ or ‘cc’. You will also have to take out an insurance "multirisques habitation" which is a combined insurance against theft, fire, damages due to water leakage, civil responsibility, etc. There are many companies offering this kind of insurance; if you still have a student card, you may try ASSU 2000 SEM or MNAF. To give you some kind of an idea of the cost of such an insurance: In 2002, ASSU 2000 charged for a two bedroom apartment 126 Euros per year, where the insured value of furniture, hifi equipment, computer etc. was up to 25000 Euros in total.

Note that you may not sublet your apartment unless this has been explicitly permitted in the contract.

You can find a lot more information about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant at the following web page: http://www.pratique.fr/vieprat/log

**In addition**, the web site http://www.service-public.fr/ displays in a simple way the rights of individuals in France as well as procedures to follow.

It has a section « [étrangers en France](http://www.pratique.fr/vieprat/log) » and an english version (but quite incomplete for the moment).

**Various notes**

Apartments are often not furnished, and even when they are, it is most of the time very rudimentary. You should note that there is no real second hand furniture market in France, as you could find in Germany or the US. You can however try to contact people who are leaving your host institute, or you can look for cheap new furniture (most of the time in general purpose stores like Carrefour, Auchan, etc., or at places like Conforama or IKEA). Additionally there are ‘trocs’ specific for furniture, while markets in your neighbourhood also sell furniture. A slightly more risky approach is to check the streets: the French often leave old furniture to be disposed of on the streets during the week.

Even though a single person can live quite comfortably on a Marie Curie grant, for a family with children this may not be the case. In this case it may be possible that you can benefit from a financial aid from the "Caisse d'Allocations Familiales" (CAF). You find further information on their web page (http://www.caf.fr). It may also be helpful to have a look at http://www.pratique.fr/vieprat/log.

**Telephone + Internet**

In general, France Telecom is quite efficient. Though other private companies exist ("cegetel": http://www.cegetel.fr, "Tele2": http://www.tele2.fr, "La 9" etc.) most of the current fellows stick to France Telecom and are happy with it.
There's one thing to note about France Telecom: The contract runs for a minimum of one year, and there is no way out if you should want to leave France before the contract is over; i.e. in any case you will have to pay the basic rate for the remaining time.

France Telecom offers discounts on international calls to a country of choice or to some numbers for nothing or very little amount of money (1.5 € per month). To get this discounts it is enough to visit their web page, enter your phone number, contract the special offers you want and enter the exact amount of your last bill as a kind of personal password to validate the operation. By doing this, the prices of France Telecom are similar to those of some low-cost companies.

Some members find it unneeded to contract another company since although in the text is not mentioned, the telephone lines belong to FT and you will always have a contract with them even if you also contract Tele2 or any other. They found that doing a contract with another company means to deal with two operators and increase the possible problems of any kind. For a typical stay of not more than two years I would say they feel it is better not to do it.

If your telephone line breaks at all, you can telephone for free france telecom by dialling 1013 from a mobile or a telephone booth and a technician will come to your building to check your line. Typically they will not enter your apartment and you do not need to be present when they visit.

French telephone plugs are different from those in most other european countries and it seems to be impossible to find adapters, except for adapters from RJ-11 ("microfiche") to french plug. However, you can get just the french plug itself at any big supermarket, so if you bring your own phone and you are a bit of a handyman/handywoman, you can change the plug yourself (it works with screws).

Mobile telephone companies are now widespread in France, the most common being 'orange', ‘bouyges’ and ‘sfr’. Each one has its own characteristics, but all offer prepaid cards, and in the case of ‘orange’ ‘international roaming’ so you can take your telephone abroad.

However, mobile telephones with pre-paid card are very very expensive in France. If someone is really using the mobile a “Forfait”, even a small one will be the best choice.

There are various internet providers in France - besides the standard ones (AOL, compuserve, ...) there now exists the possibility to access the internet for free (except for the cost of the local telephone connection), for example with ‘wanadoo’ ‘free’, ‘vnunet’, or ‘World Online France’. Check out their homepages for more details:

http://www.wanadoo.fr
http://www.free.fr
http://www.worldonline.fr
http://www.vnunet.fr

Free, will give you the 512 Kb ADSL for 29 € instead of 45 € of Wanadoo (France Telecom).
How you wish to connect with the internet, i.e. internal modem, ADSL, ethernet card is your choice, although many members prefer the ADSL system, which is often provided free by your provider when you sign up.

**Money matters**

To open a bank account, you must have, in addition to a passport, proof that you have a permanent address in France and proof that you have applied for a "carte de sejour" (you will receive this when you apply for the carte de sejour at the prefecture). You can open a non-resident account using an address outside of France, but some people may refuse to accept a check with a foreign address on it. As proof of address a bill in your name from France Telecom or EDF, the French electricity suppliers, is generally considered sufficient, and in some cases a copy of the contract you have signed with your landlord. At the beginning of your stay you will probably not have these kinds of papers. In this case you can ask your landlord (or, if you share a flat, the person in whose name these bills are) for an "attestation sur l'honneur" stating that you live at that address, which you then have to present to the bank together with the respective bill and/or a copy of the ID card of the person who signed the "attestation". An engagement document from your host institute may also be sufficient.

If you do not have a preferred bank (e.g. linked with your usual bank in your home country), then it seems that "La Poste" ([http://www.laposte.fr](http://www.laposte.fr)) is the cheapest bank, although comparisons are not always easy. They also have the advantage of having agencies even in the smallest places, but on the other hand they also have the tendency to be slightly inefficient as soon as you ask for anything special, for example with international money transfers.

There is also an interesting agreement between the Fondation National Alfred Kastler and the Société Générale ([http://www.societegenerale.fr](http://www.societegenerale.fr)), one of the biggest French banks, but be aware that they are one of the more expensive banks. According to this agreement, foreign scientists coming to France can open a bank account at the SG before actually arriving in France, and obtain a Visa Card at half price. In order to be able to benefit from this agreement you should first obtain a "Guest Researcher Card" from the Fondation Kastler (this is free of charge). You find all the details about this agreement on the following web page: [http://www.cnrs.fr/fnak](http://www.cnrs.fr/fnak)

N.B.: Be careful to bring enough money with you to survive the first few weeks (where you have to include the deposit for the apartment, agencies fees, insurances, etc. in your calculation). The first payment of your grant could arrive rather late, especially in public institutions, although in principle you should receive your first payment at the end of the first month. We have heard of a fellow who for reasons beyond his control was in severe financial difficulties; he managed to obtain a credit from the Fondation Kastler at very low or no interest. However, this solution should only be envisaged if really every other possibility fails.

**Learning the french language**

If you don't speak much French upon your arrival or if you feel that your French could need some brushing up, you may be interested in a language course. Especially in the big cities there are many institutions and organisations that offer such courses. It is well worth to compare prices and ask other foreigners about their experiences. The "Alliance Française" ([http://www.alliancefrancaise.fr](http://www.alliancefrancaise.fr)) seems to offer good courses (which are, however, not exactly cheap), and maybe your host institute/university itself offers French courses for foreigners.
In most big towns and cities: The `"cours municipal d'adultes" which are offered by the `"Mairie" have quite a good reputation. With about 500FF per semester they are not very expensive. Inscriptions for the winter semester are from september first until the 25th, for the summer semester they are from january 3rd until 26th (dates are valid for the academic year 99/00). If places are available, you can also inscribe yourself outside of these periods, but in fact the courses tend to be booked out very quickly. The `"Mairie" in most cities actually offers many other courses as well (languages like german, american, english, arabic, chinese, spanish, italian, japanese, portuguese, and russian, as well as all kinds of artistic courses, secretarial and computer courses, bookkeeping, etc...).

**Kindergarten/Schools**

The different schemes for kindergarten are:

`"CR`ECHES": These are institutions depending on the city in which you are. You have to inscribe your child at the `"Mairie" of your town. If there is place, the child can be accepted directly, otherwise, it will be put on a waiting list. If you (or your companion) are pregnant, as soon as you are pretty sure of it, you should inscribe the child, as waiting lists can be rather long. The price per day is proportional to your income (this could be roughly 0.6 % of the monthly income). There also exist `"CR`ECHES PARENTALES". They do not always work in the same way in each city, but often they are parents' associations in which the parents themselves look after a whole group of children on a rotating basis. If your partner has the time to do this, this may be one of the better ways to look after your children (and possibly the cheapest).

`"ASSISTANTES MATERNELLES AGR éEES"`: These are nurses who are controlled by an institution, where you can put your child. There is a particular procedure to get some financial help from the `"Caisse d'Allocations Familiales" (CAF); see [http://www.caf.fr](http://www.caf.fr). Usually, the Mairie has a list of `"Assistantes Maternelles Agréées" and can point you to the right persons.

`"GARDE D'ENFANTS `A DOMICILE": You can hire a person to keep your children at home and also get some help from the CAF. For one child, this is of course rather expensive ...

You can put your child in the pre-elementary school from the age of 2 1/2, but this can only take place at the beginning of the school year. This pre-elementary school is free (as is the whole school system) and not compulsory. Note however that it may be rather difficult to get a place at short notice, and since it is non-compulsory, there's nothing you can do about it if your child doesn't get a place.

Then, when they are about six years old, children go to elementary school, which lasts 5 years. The particularity is that if you send your child to a public school, then it has to be in the town (or part of the city/arrondissement) where you live, which you may not be completely happy about if you live in a conflictive area. In any case the child has to be pre-inscribed before the end of the school year preceding its entry (at the `"Mairie"), followed by the actual inscription at the school itself.

You can of course send your child to an international school, where it will be given lessons in his/her mother tongue. Your embassy/consulate should have lists of such schools.

After elementary school there's `"Collège" and `"Lycée". For a general overview of the french school system have a look at the following web pages:
The French school system is also very well explained (in a lot of detail) in the booklet "Le guide de la rentrée" which is available at the "Mairies".

N.B.: Note that you cannot inscribe or even pre-inscribe your child for any kind of public school as long as you don't have a proof of address. This makes it practically impossible to inscribe your child before you have physically arrived in France, found an apartment, etc. Also, you have to present the "livret de famille" (or equivalent) and the "certificat de vaccination" of your child for the pre-inscription at the "Mairie".

There exists an association called "AlloScolaire" which you may call if you run into problems trying to get a your child into school. Their phone number is 01.42.76.23.45 (mondays to fridays, from 9am to 5.15pm).

Security

Security is usually not really an issue in France, although sometimes the news may make you believe otherwise. Some parts of the big cities (e.g. Paris/Marseille) can be precarious, especially at night. It may be a good idea not to travel on an almost empty metro wagon late at night; if this is unavoidable at least choose the one closest to the driver, although the French police are now much more visible on all forms of public transport. In general, you should ask other people at your host institute if there are areas of the town/city which you should avoid.

If you should really run into a problem (being robbed or being the victim of a physical aggression), you should inform the police immediately. Make sure that you receive a copy of your declaration, and if you have been assaulted physically, make sure that you obtain a medical certificate. Chances are that the police won't do anything without such a medical certificate, even if they know the aggressor.

How to exercise your right to vote during your stay in France

As a citizen of the European Union legally residing in France you may take part in the local elections of your community, as well as the elections to the European Parliament. However, in order to be eligible you have to inscribe yourself in the "listes électorales" by december of the year preceding the elections. This inscription is done at the "Mairie" of your town/arrondissement.

If you want to vote in national elections in your home country, you may be able to do so through your consulate. You should check directly with them to find out the details. It is possible that you have to be inscribed at your consulate a certain amount of time before the elections take place, so it is a good idea to ask this kind of thing right upon your arrival.

General hints

Public libraries in the big French cities are usually free of charge if you just want to borrow books; if you are prepared to pay a certain amount you can also check out CDs or videos. In Paris for example, general membership is free, but you have to pay if you want to borrow tapes, records and language courses, more to take out CDs, and videotapes.
If you are a sports person, you may be able to participate in the sports activities that are offered by your host institute/university for a small fee. There are probably also courses and activities offered by the "Mairie" of your town. In Paris, you can obtain the free "Guide du sport à Paris" from the "Mairie"; this booklet contains a wealth of information on all kinds of sports facilities in Paris (in order of arrondissements).

**Local authorities**

**NOTE:** This part is largely inspired by

http://www.cnrs.fr/fnak/fguidea.html

Also see

http://www.sos-net.eu.org/indexetr.htm

for more information. As soon as the researcher arrives in France, (s)he should immediately confirm her/his arrival to her/his host institution and possibly also register with the Consulate; this is the most effective way that close relatives can get in touch in case of emergency.

**Obtaining a Resident's Permit ("Carte de Séjour")**

It is important to state that nothing happens or at best goes slow if you do not have a carte de Sejour, or evidence that you have applied for one.

**FOR THE FELLOW:** When a foreign researcher stays longer than 3 months in France, (s)he must have a Resident's Permit mentioning "scientific stay" or "all professional activities". The Resident's Permit always has a "European Community" description for nationals of the EU (on the contrary, for Algerians for example, it is called a "Residence Certificate" and has a different description according to the motive of the stay). The "Carte de Séjour" is free for EU citizens.

This document is the proof of the researcher's right to reside in France. French law states that it must always be carried with you. Usually, you first get a Temporary Resident's Permit (which can be used for most administrative matters) and the actual one afterwards. For EU residents, the duration of validity should be ten years.

To get this "Carte de Séjour", you should present the originals of a number of documents, plus a photocopy of each, at the Préfecture or Sous-préfecture, depending on the region where you are. Phone them beforehand or check the website

(http://www.prefecture-police-paris.interieur.gouv.fr/demarches/etrangers/etrangers.htm)

and


to find out the details; the list certainly includes the following items:

- A proof of identity (Passport or Identity Card);
- a document of your host institute stating that you are employed by it;
• a proof of address (EDF/GDF bill, attestation from your landlord, ""attestation sur l'honneur"" of your cohabitant,...);

• a proof of health insurance (your ""Carte d'assuré social"" or at least a letter from the ""Sécurité Sociale"" stating that your employer has matriculated you);

• recent and good quality passport photographs (the required number depends on each Préfecture, but usually between 2 and 4), either in colour or black and white and in french format (3,5cm x 4,5cm), and the head uncovered. The surname, name, date of birth and nationality must be written on the back. In France, most metro stations have passport photograph machines as do some post offices, but it’s a good idea to have the photos ready before you arrive in france.

The item about the ""Sécurité Sociale"" can sometimes be a problem. Your host institute should make the necessary steps to get you a temporary card rapidly or matriculated (should be automatic but varies from institute to institute), which can be used to ask for your ""Carte de Séjour"".

If the originals of any of the above documents (except for the passport obviously) are in a foreign language, they need to be accompanied by a french translation, but only translations from a certified translator are accepted. In France, you can certify copies of foreign administrative documents only if they have been translated by an organisation approved by the French Consulate. On the other hand, it is possible to obtain certified translations by translators of the High Court in the big cities, or by a private qualified translator (look in the Yellow Pages telephone directory).

If, by any chance, the researcher does not yet have a permanent address when he applies for his Resident's Permit, the host organisation may act as ""landlord", until the researcher can prove that (s)he has a fixed address.

There is no compulsory medical examination for EU citizens.

FOR YOUR FAMILY: Members of your family, if from the EU, have the same rights as you have (i.e. they can get a ""Carte de Séjour", even if they neither work nor study).

FOR NON EU CITIZENS ACCOMPANYING THE RESEARCHER: In principle, the simple fact of being married to or being a child (under the age of 21) of a citizen of the European Union has as a consequence that that person should be treated as a European, as far as the ""Carte de Séjour"" and the work permit is concerned. Unfortunately, this does not always work that way. In fact, if you come to France with a non EU companion, it seems that the best thing to do is to get a ""Carte de Séjour"" of type ""scientifique"" for yourself. The procedure is somewhat different from what is explained above, but is described in great detail in http://www.fnrs.fr/fnak. When you get this ""Carte de Séjour"" of type ""scientifique", your family can get a ""Carte de Séjour temporaire"" (which is not free, but neither prohibitively expensive).

FOR A NON MARRIED COMPANION: There is nothing legally stated in this case, and fellows have had rather varying experiences. Basically, your companion will be treated as an independent person, which means that (s)he can get a ""Carte de Séjour"" either as a student, as an employee, or as an autonomous worker, if any of these apply, but not as an accompanying family member as such. The other possibility is if (s)he can prove that (s)he has sufficient funds for her/his stay in France (the amount required is rather high). The simple fact that somebody lives in a stable relationship with a European person who is in possession of a
``Carte de Séjour'' does not help at all, even if you have a ``Certificat de Concubinage''. If you encounter problems for obtaining a Resident's Permit for your partner, the only thing that you can do is (and this holds for any administrative step), to be very polite, insisting, have some letters from your host institute,... and if nothing works you may ask help from your consulate/embassy.

Work permit
EU citizens do not need a work permit (the ``Carte de Séjour'' is sufficient). The same applies to family members (husband/wife and children under the age of 21) of EU citizens.

According to http://vosdroits.admifrance.gouv.fr, if you have a ``Carte de Séjour temporaire'' of type ``membre de famille'', you can ask for a change to type ``salarié'' without any further requirements.

Driving licence
If you obtained your driving licence in a EU country, it is valid in France. It is not compulsory to exchange it for a French license.

Car registration
This is an extract from the web page of the Fondation Kastler:
You must ask for a fiscal certificate from the tax centre. It will allow you to use your vehicle (on French territory) with its original license plate for a period of 4 months from the date of its delivery.

Motor vehicles from the European Union: To register a European Union motor vehicle in France, you must acquire a certificate which identifies that the vehicle is of a recognised type in France or in the European Union.

You have two solutions: To go through DRIRE (Direction Régionale de l'Industrie, de la Recherche et de l'Environnement), or to the manufacturer or its certified representative. If you choose to go through DRIRE, you must deposit at the Préfecture or Sous-préfecture (at the registration service) a dossier containing:

- A copy of the foreign registration certificate and/or a certificate of conformity from the country of origin of the vehicle;
- a copy of your purchase certificate (delivered by the tax centre);
- if your vehicle is older than 4 years, the original copy of the technical test (``contrôle technique'') stating that your vehicle is in conformance (this test must have been carried out no longer than 6 months preceding your submission of the dossier);
- an envelope (A 5 format) with your name and address, stamped for a 50 g mailing;
- a cheque or money order over the amount of 67.38 Euros for an old car, and 37.81 Euros for a new car made out to the ``régisseur des recettes de la DRIRE ''.

Your request will be registered at the Préfecture or Sous-préfecture and transmitted to DRIRE. If accepted, DRIRE will then send you an identification certificate which you must bring to the same Préfecture registration service to be added to your dossier. It may be that
DRIRE cannot identify your vehicle. In that case, you will have to request the information from the manufacturer.

If you go through the manufacturer or its representative to register your vehicle, all you have to do is follow the instructions, and present yourself directly to the registration service of the Préfecture or Sous-préfecture with the identification certificate and all the other papers required for registration.

Note that a lot of people do not transfer their car registration and hold their insurance in their home country. This is not legal and could present a problem if you have an accident, or if you are stopped by the police.

Once you have done the transfer, one of the cheapest insurances is the MAIF, which was initially only for people in education, but now seems to be open to anyone (for details see http://www.maif.fr).

**General hints**

If you come to France with your partner, always try to have the EDF/GDF contract and/or the contract with France Telecom in both names. This way both you and your companion can use it as a proof of address.

Also, it is very advisable to bring an International Birth Certificate with you when you come to France. With this document it is possible to obtain a "Fiche d'État Civil" at the mairie; this kind of paper will be asked for at many instances during your stay.

**History of European grant schemes**

Since the launching of exchange of scientists in the EURATOM RTD programme more than 8000 researchers received EEC fellowships. The fellowship programme has undergone a number of modifications since its initiation in the 1950s. It has changed not only the total number of grants per year but also the nature of the grant contract. The time table below provides a summary of the evolution of the fellowship:

**FIRST FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME 1958 - 1986**

- Direct contract between the Commission and the fellows.
- Individual fiscal responsibilities of fellows.
- Scale calculated since 1981 in ECU.
- A correction coefficient serves to equalise purchasing power in each country.

**SECOND FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME 1986 - 1990**

- Since 1989 readjustment of the scale to account for social security costs.

**THIRD FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME 1990 - 1994:** "Human Capital and Mobility"(HCM)

- Contracts between the Commission and the Host Institution.
- The Host Institution signs a contract with the Grant Holder respecting national social and fiscal regulations.
- The general conditions define the amounts to be paid to the Host Institutions.
• The fellowship accounts for differences in the cost of living in member states, salary costs covered by the employer for hiring a researcher, and travel allowance.

• The different social and fiscal contributions in the member states lead to variations in net salaries from one country to another.

**FOURTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME 1994 - 1998: “Training and Mobility of Researchers” (TMR)**

• A proposal for a unique contract between the Grant Holders and the Commission is rejected by the national delegations of France, Germany and Denmark.

• Grants should provide income comparable to that of national researchers at an equivalent level.

• In comparison with the HCM programme the TMR gross salary is reduced by about 10% (for category 20, i.e Ph.D. students) or 15% (for category 30, i.e. post-doctoral fellows and comparables) in France, but publications and conferences no longer have to be covered by the salary.

• The mobility allowance is introduced.


• Conceived to help solve problems and to respond to major socio-economic challenges facing the European Union.

• Three basic principles combining technological, industrial, economic, social and cultural aspects:
  
  o European "value added" and the subsidiarity principle, for example, to reach a critical mass or contribute to solving problems of a European dimension.

  o Social objectives, such as quality of life, employment or protection of the environment in order to meet the expectations and concerns of the Union's citizens.

  o Economic development and scientific and technological prospects in order to contribute to the harmonious and sustainable development of the European Union as a whole.

• The under-representation of women in science, representing a loss for science as well as for European society as a whole, is of concern to the Commission. It especially encourages the participation of women in all of the Marie Curie fellowships.

**Principles behind the fellowship**

The actual amount allocated in the grant is jointly determined by the Commission and the representative of the host country. Fellows funded under the same category and working in the same country should receive the same standardised grant regardless of marital status. The grant should be similar to the salary of local researchers of equal qualifications and experience in the host country. Furthermore, a monthly flat rate and possibly tax-free allowance should be offered as a compensation for the higher costs of living in a foreign country. Besides the aforementioned principles concerning remuneration, another principle is the integration of the fellow into the local social security system.
The calculation of the grant allocation by the French Ministry of Research and Technology

The calculations of the net salary are based on the relative positioning of the grant with respect to the national salary system. The public research institutions in France distinguish three categories of researchers and technicians: "chargé de recherche", "ingénieur de recherche", and "ingénieur d'étude" with a respective scale of salaries. The entry conditions required for instance at one institution to enter in one of the three categories are listed below:

"CHARGÉ DE RECHERCHE": Ph.D. or compatible research, or a degree obtained abroad which has been judged as equivalent.

"INGÉNIEUR DE RECHERCHE": Doctorat d'État (until the 1980's two complementary Ph.D.s existed in France) or Ph.D., engineering Ph.D., Aggregation, an Engineering degree from one of the "Écoles nationales supérieures", Universities or public "Grandes Écoles" or a degree obtained abroad and judged equivalent.

"INGÉNIEUR D'ÉTUDE": DEA, DESS, Maîtrise or Licence, Diplôme d'ingénieur or equivalent degree or a professional qualification in industry judged equivalent.

The "Ministère de Recherche et Technologie" (MRT) classified the Marie Curie category 30 fellowships as contracts of limited duration (standard contract in the CNRS), corresponding to "INGÉNIEUR DE RECHERCHE DEUXIÈME CLASSE". This evaluation is based on the fact that the Grant Holders do not enter by the standard concours which is required for the higher grades of researchers.

The basic features of a grant contract

A typical contract should state clearly the obligations on the side of the Host Institute and on the side of the fellow, as well as a detailed budget plan. The detailed budget plan should state all deductions performed by the Host Institution from the amount allocated to the fellow. The plan should itemise the various contributions and the ways they are calculated.

Formal requirements of the contract

Each Host Institution has its own standard contracts which are difficult to change. On the other hand such a contract can only be accepted by the Commission if a number of formal requirements are met. It is usually sufficient to amend an existing local contract with an agreement which contains the items of the following check list:

(1) A reference to the contract between Commission and Host Institution.
(2) An affirmation including the General Conditions given in Annexes II and III of the contract.
(3) The status of the fellow (this should usually be "employee").
(4) A statement saying that the fellow is in full time and exclusive employment.
(5) A statement about intellectual property rights.
The total amount of the grant and the monthly amount allocated to the fellow distinguishing between scale and mobility allowance.

A statement about the unique travel allowance (relocation allowance), to be paid with the first monthly payment.

Signatures of the fellow and of the legal representative of the Host Institute.

To avoid any unnecessary misunderstanding, it is highly preferable that a written agreement be reached well before the beginning of the fellowship. It is also advisable to sign the contract with one of the following statements:
(a) ``sous la reserve de tous mes droits"
(b) ``découlant des conditions générales annexées au contrat CEE"

Such a statement reserves the right for the General Conditions of the fellowship to override any conflicting articles in the contract. Signing the contract without such a statement means the acceptance of the contract independent of the General Conditions of the fellowship and may therefore leave no room for future negotiation when discrepancies arise.

Typical budget of a grant contract
The grant fixed in the contract includes:
1. A sum, allocated for the benefit of the Grant Holder, including:
   (a) a gross amount designed to cover the subsistence expenditure, including all the compulsory charges applicable under the legislation of the Host Country (for example, social security contributions payable both by the Institution and the Grant Holder, taxes, insurances);
   (b) mobility expenditure including:
      i. a mobility allowance;
      ii. a single flat-rate allowance for travelling expenses.
2. An adequate contribution allocated to the Institution, as a flat-rate contribution to research and management costs incurred by the Institution connected with the Grant Holder's stay and with the implementation of the Project.

The amounts awarded may be reviewed if changes are made under the legislation of the Host Country to the factors taken into account to determine those amounts which result in a significant increase or decrease in the net amount allocated to the Grant Holder. The factors taken into account are those communicated by the representatives of the Member States to the Programme Committee for the Training and Mobility of Researchers and used as a basis for setting the national gross and net reference amounts.

The Institution must notify the Commission of these changes within a period of three months from the date they take effect in the Host Country. The revised amounts will apply to the contracts signed subsequently and to contracts in progress.
Here are some more details about the different parts of the Grant:

1.(a) **AMOUNT ASSIGNED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE GRANT HOLDER**

This gross amount designed to cover subsistence expenditure was calculated to enable, as far as possible, the Grant Holder to be offered a net amount comparable to the one received by a researcher of equivalent level in France (cf. Section 4.3). **FOR THE FP6** the commission has set the amount assigned fellows in France as:

- Early stage scientist – 2530 Euros/month
- Experienced researcher <10 years experience – 3882 Euros/month
- Experienced researcher >10 years experience – 5845 Euros/month

If the Grant Holder continues to receive other income connected with his/her activity or professional status, without engaging in that activity de facto he/she is required to declare this in the application form. In this case, the gross monthly amount allocated to the Grant Holder is fixed by the Commission taking into account his/her additional income, in order that the Grant Holder's gross amount corresponds to the amount which he/she could have claimed otherwise.

A researcher receiving other income, connected with his/her activity or professional status in the country of nationality, cannot benefit at the same time from a category R Grant.

**N.B.**: The gross amount allocated to the Grant Holder includes the social charges (health insurance, retirement scheme, unemployment insurance, etc.), other compulsory insurances (accident insurance, "assurance veuvage", etc.), compulsory deductions ("CSG", "Allocations Familiales", "Formation Professionnelle", "Construction", etc.) and taxes ("taxe sur salaire", "taxe sur les revenus", etc.) which are payable *both* by the Grant Holder and by the Host Institute. It also includes the partial reimbursement of your daily transportation costs, if applicable (in Paris, for example, you have a right to a 50% reimbursement of the monthly "Carte Orange", in other french towns similar schemes may apply). In Section 4.7 two sample "Bulletin de Salaire" are included from which it should become a little clearer what the many different deductions are that have to be paid from the gross amount.

1.(b)i **MOBILITY ALLOWANCE**

A mobility allowance is also to Grant Holders in order to compensate for expatriation and the expenses connected with travel and temporary accommodation in a country other than the country of origin. This monthly flat-rate allowance is allocated throughout the duration of participation in the implementation of the Project.

The amount of this allowance is fixed as: 900 Euros/month if you have a family, and 600 Euros/month if you do not have a family

**N.B.**: The term "flat-rate" does *not* mean that the monthly mobility allowance is paid as a net amount. The philosophy of the Commission is that it should be paid as a net amount "if possible", ultimately leaving it up to the Host Institution and the local Tax Authorities to decide whether the mobility allowance is added on to the gross amount, thus being submitted to all social charges and taxes, or whether it is paid as a tax free net amount. Unfortunately, french legislation is not very clear about this, with the result that some Grant Holders are
treated one way and others are treated the opposite way. This may lead to noticeable differences in the final net amount different Grant Holders receive every month.

1.(b)ii TRAVEL ALLOWANCE (RELOCATION ALLOWANCE)

A flat-rate reimbursement of his/her return travelling expenses between the country of nationality and the Host Country is also allocated to each Grant Holder. In the experience of some grant holders, YOU HAVE TO ASK FOR THIS FROM YOUR HOST INSTITUTE or they do not pay it. For Grant Holders moving to France the relocation allowance has been fixed as set out in the following table, depending on the country of nationality of the Grant Holder. When the Grant Holder has several nationalities, the nationality selected will be the first nationality of a Member State of the Community or of an Associated State indicated in the application form. Where fellows are eligible through having resided for at least the last five years in Member States, this will be the last Member State where the fellow was residing prior to proposal submission.

For the FP6 travel allowance is based on distance covered as opposed to specific countries, which ranges from 250 to 2500 Euros depending on distance traveled (see Marie Curie fellowships handbook)

N.B.: The relocation allowance is payable as a non-taxable net amount with the first payment.
In the past, some institutions refused to pay the relocation allowance if the Grant Holder already resided in France (with a different grant or contract), although he/she was a national of another member state, or paid only half of the relocation allowance at the start of the contract and the other half at the end. Neither of this is acceptable as it contradicts the conditions of the contract between the Commission and the Host Institute. Also, the relocation allowance is not intended to pay for travel costs connected with the Grant Holder's participation in scientific conferences etc. Such costs should be covered from the amount allocated to the Host Institution (see below).

1(c), career exploratory allowance :

2000 Euros are set aside, independent of training stage to permit the fellow to attend job interviews, congresses etc… so as to find a job

2. CONTRIBUTION ALLOCATED TO THE HOST INSTITUTION

An Institution hosting a Grant Holder receives, throughout the duration of the Project, a flat-rate monthly amount as an adequate contribution to research and management costs connected with the relevant Project. This amount has been fixed for the FP6 as 750 Euros for lab based and 500 Euros for non-lab based work for experienced researchers, and 500 Euros for lab based and 250 Euros for non-lab based work for early stage scientists.

Moreover, this amount covers the Community contribution to expenditure for publication of the research results. The attendance of the Grant Holder at conferences or other scientific events deemed necessary or useful for the successful implementation of the Project are also covered by the Institution.

N.B.: Some Institutions have their grant contracts managed by an independent organisation (there may be legal reasons for this or simply trying to avoid the paperwork). These organisations will usually charge a certain amount, e.g. a percentage of the grant volume, for
their administrative work. These charges have to be carried by the Host Institute and may be paid from the monthly contribution allocated to the Institution. Under no circumstances shall these administrative costs be paid from the amount allocated to the Grant Holder.

The formulation "conferences or other scientific events deemed necessary or useful for the successful implementation of the Project" leaves plenty of room for interpretation. In the past, some Grant Holders have been refused to receive any kind of reimbursement for participation in scientific conferences, with the sole justification that the Institution did not have enough money for this, without disputing the usefulness of the conferences in question. This reasoning is unacceptable, since the money allocated to the Host Institute is designed specifically to cover these costs.

The same applies to buying equipment necessary for the implementation of the Project. After the termination of the Project this equipment should generally stay at the Host Institute.

**Causes of variation in net salaries of Grant Holders**

One major reason for differences in the net salaries of Grant Holders at different institutions has already been mentioned in Part 1(b) of Section 4.4.2: a fellow who receives his/her mobility allowance as a tax free payment not submitted to any social deductions may end up with a total monthly amount higher than the final net amount of a fellow whose mobility allowance is integrated into the gross income, thus submitted to all kinds of deductions and income tax (and possibly pushing the fellow into a higher tax bracket). Unfortunately, there is nothing the fellow can do about this.

The second reason for variation is the fact that different establishments are charged with different rates for the social deductions. For instance, if the host institute belongs to the private sector, then the "charges patronales" (deductions on the employer's side) are usually higher than in the public sector, but then the opposite applies to the "charges salarié" (deductions on the employee's side). It is also possible that a host institution may have its own unemployment security arrangement which requires considerably higher contributions and results in a lower net salary. In fact, since the Marie Curie fellowships are temporary contracts, unemployment insurance may pose a problem to public institutions like universities, since in the case of unemployment after the fellowship it is the universities themselves that have to pay unemployment benefits to the fellow, from their own funds. For this reason, some universities prefer to have their Marie Curie (and other similar) grants handled by a private subcontractor (in Paris for example, ADFAC (Association pour le Développement des Facultés de Sciences) is such an organism). See also Part 2 of Section 4.4.2 with respect to this point.

Finally, depending on the personal circumstances of a fellow, taxation may vary. A Marie Curie Fellowship is considered as a taxable income in France; however, exemption can be given in two cases, namely if

(a) a fellow has a family with several children, or
(b) a fellow stays at the host institute for less than two years.

In the second case a fellow is expected to pay social and fiscal deductions in his/her home country. The details depend on bilateral regulations between France and the home country of the Grant Holder, for example Italian Fellows.
**Paid holidays**
You should receive 2 1/2 days of paid holidays (``congés payés'') per month. There does not exist any special ``holidays allowance'' in France.

**If you want to change your host institution**
Under exceptional circumstances you may want to change your host institute during the implementation of your grant (for example if your scientific supervisor changes the institute or stops working altogether for medical reasons, or because you yourself find out that you are allergic to the paint used in the whole department your working in, or ...). In such cases you should immediately notify the Commission who will try to find a solution together with you.

**If you want to resign from your fellowship before the end of the contract**
There may be certain situations where you would want to resign from your fellowship before it has come to its end (for example, because you found a permanent position elsewhere, or because for personal reasons you want to move to a place where you cannot continue your fellowship, ...). Again, as soon as you know that your move is definite you should contact the Commission so that the necessary administrative steps can be taken.

**The ``Bulletin de Salaire''**
As part of your fellowship you should receive a ‘bulletin de salaire’ at the end of every month from your institute/company. In this it details all the information regarding deductions and what the deductions are for. The administrative department of your institute should tell you what these deductions are for, or alternatively contact one of the MCFA france members.

**General advice concerning your grant and grant contract**
It is unlikely that the administrative aspects of your contract will run one hundred percent smoothly - there may be small misunderstandings because of the language barrier, wrong expectations on your side, lack of experience with this kind of grant on the host institute's side (you may be the first Marie Curie fellow they have!)... The important thing is to stay calm, not to loose your temper, and try to solve any problems as soon as they arise. If you cannot clarify matters with your employer/scientific supervisor directly, you should contact the National Contact Point (NCP) for France at the following address.

**Important point:**
The contract shouldn’t be signed if there is something the fellow does not understand. The arriving Fellow may contact the Fellows already based in France for additional information concerning the negotiation of the contract and redirect them to either the proper administration or the national contact point:

**Mr Alain Gaudemer- Mobility NCP**
CPU (conference des présidens d’universite)
47, Rue Montoyer
B-1049, Bruxelles
Belgium

Tel: +32-2-5068859
Fax: +32-2-5068845
URL: http://www.cpu.fr
Email: gaudemer@clora.net

He will try to do what he can in order to help you solve any administrative problems that you cannot resolve yourself. He will also decide whether your problem needs to be viewed by the Commission.

Of course you are very welcome to address yourself to the national coordinators of the MCFA for help, especially if you have questions related to life in France in general, but any important issue having to do with your grant contract and your working situation should be addressed to the NCP (however, the MCFA would be grateful to be informed so at least we know what's going on).

Taxes

Income tax

The "impôt sur le revenu (IR)" is a global tax which is applied to the total income of any physical person resident in France for more than 183 days (i.e. 6 months) during any specified calendar year (persons staying for less than half a year within one calendar year will be taxed in their home country). Without exception, it takes into account any kind of income, without regard to its origin (French or foreign), in order to determine the net global income to which the unique tax rate is applied. However, note that there are double taxation agreements between France and numerous other countries (in particular with European countries) which prevent foreigners having income both in France and in their home country (or a third country) from having to pay income tax on foreign income in France if they are paying the corresponding tax in the other country. For tax purposes, the following persons are considered "residents" in France: anybody having her/his household in France or her/his usual place of activity, anybody who exercises a professional activity in France, anybody who has in France her/his centre of economic interest. The tax is calculated with respect to the total income of the fiscal household, which means that husband or wife as well as children are taken into consideration. However, if you live with your partner in an extra-marital relationship, you are considered "single", even if you have obtained a "Certificat de Concubinage'' from the "Mairie'' of your town. The unique tax rate is characterised by having various different "tranches" i.e. different levels of income are submitted to varying percentages:

At the end of the year your bulletin de salaire will state ‘revenu imposable’ which is after all social deductions:

To calculate your tax, take off 10% = new total, reduce again by 20% = new total 2

This is the REAL revenue imposable R*.

To calculate your tax:
If your R* is between 8242€ and 14506€, then multiply your R* by 0.1974 and subtract (1341.38xN) where N = the number of dependents = THIS IS HOW MUCH TAX YOU HAVE TO PAY

If your R* is between 14506€ and 23489€, then multiply your R* by 0.2914 and subtract (2704.94xN) where N = the number of dependents = THIS IS HOW MUCH TAX YOU HAVE TO PAY

If your R* is between 23489€ and 38218€, then multiply your R* by 0.3854 and subtract (4912.91xN) where N = the number of dependents = THIS IS HOW MUCH TAX YOU HAVE TO PAY

NB: The income tax is payable once a year on the total global income that a fiscal household has at its disposition during a given calendar year; this income has to be declared the year after. Fellows should be aware of this fact and remember that the income they receive in their bank account every month is called "net" because it has been submitted to social deductions (and certain taxes), but that in general the income tax has not yet been deducted. It will have to be paid in July or August the following year (the tax declaration has to be submitted in March). Many more details on taxation in France can be obtained from the following internet site:

http://www.finances.gouv.fr/impots_et_taxes

Especially interesting are the points "Présentation de la fiscalité française" and "Calculez votre impôt sur le revenu".

Alternatives for payment now do occur – you can opt for a ‘mensuelisation’, which is based on your previous years tax payment, and is taken out of your bank account for the first 10 months of the year. You still have to declare your tax in March, but a) the money you get at the end of the months is yours b) when you do get your bill for tax payment it is typically very small.

Furthermore, the tax office has also started pre-empting this process by asking you to pay tax, again based on the previous years salary, but every three months.

The first bill arrives the end of January, the second the end of April, and the third the end of July (each bill representing one third of what you paid the previous year)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU PAY YOUR TAXES – IF YOU ARE CAUGHT NOT PAYING THE BILL CAN BE RATHER HIGH

Taxe d'habitation

The "Taxe d'habitation (TH)" is a local tax which has to be paid once a year (in September for the current year). As the name suggests, it's a tax for the flat you live in; you will only have to pay it if you are tenant or owner on January first of the respective year. The amount of the taxe d'habitation depends on the size, state and location of the flat; to each flat there is associated a certain official "value" on which the amount of the TH depends. There are certain deductions possible if you had a low income the year before the one you're paying your TH
for. If this applies to you, you will be informed about it with your ``Avis d'imposition'' which you will receive in july or august if you submitted a tax declaration in february. For details consult the following internet address:

http://www.finances.gouv.fr/a_votre_service/informations_pratiques/fiscalite/idl/

**Church tax**

France is a laic country, hence there exists no specific church tax in France.

**Social security**

**General conditions for the community provisions on social security**

(Excerpts from the leaflet ``The Community Provisions on Social Security'' prepared by the Unit for Social Security for Migrant Workers, European Commission, Brussels, 1995.)

The Community provisions do not replace the different national social security systems by a single European system. The Community provisions provide rather for a simple co-ordination of these systems. Each Member State is free to decide: who is to be insured under its legislation; which benefits are granted and under what conditions; how these benefits are calculated; and what contributions should be paid. The Community provisions establish common rules and principles which have to be observed by all national authorities, social security institutions, courts and tribunals when applying national laws. The person who has exerted his or her right to move within the European Union and the European Economic Area may not be placed in a worse position than a person who has always resided and worked in one single Member State.

**Basic principles**

- The migrant worker is subject to the legislation of only one Member State.
- (S)he is insured in the country where (s)he exercises his/her professional activity, even if (s)he still lives in another EC country.
- (S)he has the same rights and obligations as nationals of that country.

**Old-age pension**

In France the retirement scheme is divided into two parts: First, there is the ``Caisse nationale d'assurance vieillesse''. The corresponding deductions appear on your ``Bulletin de Salaire'' probably simply under the heading ``Cotisation Vieillesse'', ``Assurance Vieillesse'' or similar. But then there is also a supplementary pension scheme, also obligatory, which could be for example IRCANTEC if you are employed by a public institution (e.g. directly by a university) and ANEP if you are in the private sector (e.g. if you have your contract run by a private subcontractor).

As far as benefits from these insurances are concerned, there are general rules:

- Waiting periods: If the period during which the person has been insured in a country is not long enough to qualify for a pension in this country, account will be taken of any periods of insurance which (s)he completed in other countries.
• Residence or stay abroad: The old-age pension will be paid to the person regardless of where (s)he stays or resides within the European Union or the European Economic Area without any reduction, modification or suspension. This applies not only to former migrant workers but to all pensioners residing in another State.

NB: Note that contributions to the above mentioned pension schemes are not transferable to your home country. On the contrary, if for example by the time you retire you have worked two years in France, three years in Italy, and four years in Spain, then you will receive pensions from all of these countries (provided you paid contributions). This can become rather complicated, especially since retirement ages may be very different from one country to another.

For more information see the following web pages:

http://www.sos-net.eu.org/indexetr.htm
http://www.CNAV.fr

Unemployment

As was pointed out before, unemployment insurance may be a problem for some public institutions like universities: If a fellow becomes unemployed right after the end of the contract and decides to stay in France, it is the university itself who has to pay the unemployment benefits to the fellow. This is one of the reasons why public institutions may choose to have their temporary contracts handled by private associations, or to have their own unemployment funds (contributions to which may be higher than in the private sector). If your employer is a private organisation, you will be able to identify your contributions under the headers "Assurance chômage" and "Assedic" on your "Bulletin de salaire". If on the other hand you are directly employed by a public institution, you may not even find your contributions on your "Bulletin de Salaire" even though the contributions are paid from the money allocated to the fellow.

As far as benefits are concerned, there are basic rules: In contrast to old age pensions, unemployment insurance applies only if the person completed a certain period under the legislation of the country in which the benefits are claimed, immediately before becoming unemployed. Therefore, a person cannot claim unemployment benefits in a country if (s)he was not insured in that same country immediately before (s)he became unemployed.

If you become unemployed in France you may be eligible for unemployment benefits and the services provided by ANPE, the "Agence Nationale Pour l'Emploi". For this you have to satisfy certain conditions:

The "ALLOCATION UNIQUE D'EGRESSIVE" requires the following conditions to be met:

• Possession of a valid "Carte de Séjour".

• Having paid contributions to the unemployment insurance for at least four months (in France) within the last eight months before you stop working.

• You have to stop working involuntarily, either because you have been dismissed, or because your temporary contract has come to its end.

• If you quit your job voluntarily, in principle you don't qualify for the "allocation unique dégressive", except in cases which are considered legitimate (for example,
because you follow your wife/husband who has obtained a new job in a different place).

- You have to be inscribed at ANPE as a job seeker (you should register with them at least four weeks before the end of your contract).
- You have to actively look for employment (and be able to prove this).
- You have to be below retirement age and physically fit to work.

There are two other kinds of unemployment benefits: the "\texttt{ALLOCATION D\textasciitilde{I}N\textsc{sertion}}" and the "\texttt{ALLOCATION DE SOLIDARIT\textsc{e} SP\textsc{ecifique}}". In principle these only apply to certain groups of persons -- people who have been in prison for at least two years, persons with refugee status, persons who have been victims of an accident at work or an illness connected to their work, or long time unemployed. This will most probably not apply to you.

The amount of the "\texttt{ALLOCATION UNIQUE D\textasciitilde{E}gressive}" is calculated as a function of your last gross salary.

Note that you will not start receiving any benefits immediately after the end of your contract. In fact, ASSEDIC will take into account any payments that you receive from your employer in exchange of holidays that you didn't take or "\textsc{indemnités rupture}" which exceed those that may have been fixed by some law. Example: The contract of Mrs. Sample ends at the end of August. She gets paid for 15 days of holidays that she didn't take and an "\textsc{indemnité rupture}" which exceeds the "\textsc{legal}" amount by 1374 Euros. Her monthly salary of 1145 Euros/month corresponds to 65 Euros/day. Now the following calculation of the waiting period applies: 7\times 6 times 15 days, i.e. 17 days, for the paid holidays (since ASSEDIC pays every day and not only workdays); 1374 Euros divided by 65 Euros/day, i.e. 18 days, for the "\textsc{indemnité rupture}". Afterwards there is an additional 8 days waiting time which applies to everyone, which makes a total of 43 days. In other words, Mrs. Sample will receive her first unemployment benefits on October 14th, one and a half months after her dismissal.

\textbf{N.B.:} If you leave France after the end of your contract and don't find work immediately, you will\textit{ most probably not be eligible for unemployment benefits of the country you're moving to}, since you didn't pay into their unemployment scheme immediately before becoming unemployed. This even applies if you worked there \textit{before} coming to France and at that time paid contributions to the national unemployment scheme of that country. You may export benefits from France to another Member State of the Union for a maximum of three months, if you are going there to look for employment. Once these three months are over, if you come back to France you may still receive unemployment benefits in France for the remaining time (depending on the duration you're eligible for), but if you decide to stay out of France, payment from the French authorities will cease after three months.

Have a look at the web pages

http://www.sos-net.eu.org/indexetr.htm
http://www.assedic.fr/unipublics.html

for more information.

\textbf{Health insurance}
Who is eligible to benefit from the "Sécurité Sociale"?

As a full time employed person in France you are covered by the "Sécurité Sociale", the french national health insurance. If you are married and/or have children, these family members are automatically insured as well (you may have to supply a marriage certificate/birth certificates for the children, with french translation - ask at the centre of the "Sécurité Sociale" that you belong to whether this is necessary). If you live in a stable heterosexual relationship without being married, you can ask for a "certificat de concubinage" at the Mairie (for this both partners have to be in possession of a "Carte de Séjour"). The procedure should be very simple (you may need two witnesses who have no family relations to you). Once you have the "certificat de concubinage" your partner can also be included into the "Sécurité Sociale" with you. It may also be sufficient to directly supply an "attestation sur l'honneur" to the "Sécurité Sociale" in which you and your partner declare that you live in a relationship which resembles that of a married couple ("vivre maritalemment"). It may also be possible to include a homosexual partner into the "Sécurité Sociale", if you can prove that you've been living together for at least one year and that your partner financially depends on you.

If by the time you come to France you are still insured in your home country (or another Member State of the Union), it may be a good idea to bring the corresponding form E111 with you for the first couple of weeks. (The E111 only gives rights to medical attention in the case of emergency, in which case the form should be presented and YOU DO NOT PAY ANYTHING). If you go to a doctor before matriculation, and present your E111 do not expect to be reimbursed. It always takes a while before your immatriculation in the "Sécurité sociale" becomes active, and if you don't want to take any chances, you should make sure that you have some kind of alternative health insurance for the first month or so (you may also choose to subscribe to a short term private insurance in your home country, there may be special deals for researchers going abroad).

On the other hand, once your contract has finished, you are still insured in the "Sécurité sociale" for up to one year without paying contributions, as long as you are still resident in France and in possession of a valid "Carte de Séjour". So if you decide to stay in France after the end of your fellowship but are not employed immediately thereafter, you are still covered by the national health insurance (even if you are not officially unemployed). If you are unemployed and receive unemployment benefits in France, you are insured by the "Sécurité sociale" as long as you keep receiving those benefits and up to one year thereafter.

In order for your matriculation in the "Sécurité sociale" to become active you have to fulfill certain requirements:

• In order to be reimbursed your expenses at doctors, pharmacies, medical laboratories, hospitals, etc.
  o you either have to have worked for at least 1200 hours or contributed at least the equivalent of 2030 SMIC/hour during the year before the treatment,
  o or you have to have worked for at least 120 hours or contributed at least the equivalent of 120 SMIC/hour during the trimester or the three months before the treatment,
  o or you have to have worked for 60 hours or contributed at least the equivalent of 60 SMIC/hour during the month before the treatment.
NB: In particular, if your work contract states that you work 35 hours per week then from the commencement of your contract until the day that your health insurance becomes effective it takes almost two weeks. If you don’t arrange for supplementary coverage during this time and you become ill or have an accident, it may be quite a costly experience.

**SMIC = SALAIRE MINIMUM INTERPROFESSIONNEL DE CROISSANCE I.E. MINIMUM SALARIES FOR PROFESSIONALS**

- If you have to stop working for a certain amount of time, you can also benefit from certain daily indemnities. For this you need to satisfy the following conditions:
  
  o During the first six months of not working you have to prove that you worked at least 200 hours during the trimester in which you stopped working, or that you paid contributions corresponding to at least 1015 SMIC/hour during the last six months before you stopped working.

  o If you are out of work for medical reasons for more than six months, in order to keep benefitting from the daily indemnities, you have to have been matriculated at the "Sécurité Sociale" for at least 12 months before you stopped work. You also have to prove that you worked at least 800 hours during the four trimesters before you stopped working, or that you paid contributions corresponding to at least 2030 SMIC/hour during the last 12 months before you stopped working.

  o You have to inform the CNAM within 48 hours from the time that you stopped working.

  o You have to supply the CNAM with the attestation by your employer stating that you have stopped working.

**How much does the "Sécurité Sociale" reimburse and what is the amount of the daily indemnities?**

The "Sécurité Sociale" usually does not reimburse 100% of your costs, except in certain cases which are for example important operations, hospitalisation for more than 30 days (starting from the 31-st day), necessity of a big prothetic or orthopedic apparatus, treatments during the last for months of pregnancy, or if you suffer from one of certain grave diseases which are on an official list (AIDS for example). In all other cases you get reimbursed only a certain percentage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reimbursement from the &quot;Sécurité sociale&quot;</th>
<th>Your own participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>First 30 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor's charges</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse's charges</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other medical personnel (masseurs, ...)</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitalisation in a public or recognised clinic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine with a white sticker</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certain products which have been recognised</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The percentage given for "doctor's charges" refers to doctors who have signed a convention with the "Sécurité Sociale" and who charge the "tarif conventionnel secteur 1". There are actually four different categories of doctors:

- A "médecin conventionné" respects the "tarif conventionnel de secteur 1". About 70% of all doctors belong to this category.
- A "médecin conventionné à honoraire libre" (also called "secteur 2") will charge you slightly more. About 24% of all doctors fall into this class.
- A "médecin conventionné ayant un droit permanent à dépassement" may charge you more per consultation. Only about 5% of all doctors belong to this category.
- A "médecin hors convention" may again charge you more. Only about 1% of all doctors in France practice "hors convention".

The "Sécurité sociale" reimburses you 70% of the "tarif conventionnel secteur 1" as long as your doctor is conventionné (one of the first three categories above), regardless of how much you actually payed. However, if you consult a "médecin hors convention" your reimbursement will be practically zero.

| certain products which have been classified as treatment for problems which are not very grave (blue sticker) | 35 % | 65 % |
| biological analysis | 60 % | 40 % |
| other services: glasses, apparatuses, transportation costs, ... | 65 % | 35 % |
From the above it becomes clear that it may be a good idea to ask before consultation whether a doctor is "conventionné". The same applies to other medical services at laboratories etc., if you want to avoid unpleasant surprises.

If you are out of work for a certain amount of time, you may receive daily indemnities, as described above. The amount is half the average daily salary of the previous month, but the first three days are not paid.

For certain grave diseases, the daily indemnities may be paid up to three years; otherwise the maximum is 360 days within 3 years.

More details on the subject of this section can be found at the following internet address:

http://www.sos-net.eu.org/interne/sante.htm

**Miscellaneous**

If you want to be sure to be reimbursed 100 %, or if you know that you need medical services more often than the average person, you may want to subscribe to a "mutuelle", a supplementary health insurance. There are numerous companies which offer different packages; ask your colleagues about their experiences, maybe they can recommend a specific company. It is also possible that your host institute automatically subscribes you to a "mutuelle", without even consulting you.

If you are accompanied by someone who cannot be included into your "Sécurité Sociale", you may be interested in private health insurance. You can find some information on this subject on the web pages of the Fondation National Alfred Kastler (http://www.cnrs.fr/fnak/). They have special agreements with the insurance company AXA which may be interesting.

Maybe you would like to be treated by a doctor who speaks your language or some other language you feel more confident with than french. Many embassies have lists of doctors who speak the respective language, often with additional information (whether they are "conventionné" etc.).

If you suffer from a prolonged illness or if you have an accident that prohibits you to work for an extended period of time, you should inform the Commission about this by contacting the National Contact Point (NCP). Although the fellowship runs in the form of a work contract, your situation is not just that of any employee. In particular, it may be possible to extend the duration of your grant if you have to interrupt your research because of illness, so it is in your own interest to keep the Commission informed if anything grave happens.

**Accident insurance**

You should be automatically insured for any accident happening at work or on your way to work from home and back. The most important point to mention in this context is that you have to inform your employer as soon as possible (in any case within 24 hours). You will then receive a "feuille d'accident" from your employer, with which you can consult a doctor and receive medication free of charge (as long as the doctor is "conventionné secteur 1"). In case you have to stop working during a certain period of time, you benefit from daily indemnities and, if you are left with a permanent handicap, from a pension. You also benefit from a certain protection with respect to loosing your employment.

In the worst of all cases, i.e. a fatal accident, your husband/wife, children or parents benefit from a small life insurance. The amount that is paid in this case is three monthly salaries.
More details may be found at the following web page:

Your rights in case of maternity
A pregnant women who is employed has right to 16 weeks of maternity leave: 6 weeks before and 10 weeks after birth. Starting with the third birth this goes up to a total of 26 weeks. The pregnant woman benefits from complete reimbursement of the medical expenses connected with pregnancy (within the usual limits, i.e. what is reimbursed is what a "médecin conventionné secteur 1" charges). She also benefits from daily indemnities which are of the same amount as in the case of prolonged illness (see Section 6.2.2).

Pregnant women benefit from a certain protection as far as loosing the job is concerned: During pregnancy and up to four weeks after the end of her maternity leave, a woman may not be dismissed from her employment, except in certain extreme cases. Any kind of discrimination because of pregnancy is illegal. During one year after birth, a mother who breastfeeds her child has a right to one hour per day during working hours for breastfeeding.

For more information on the subject you can consult the following web page:
http://www.sos-net.eu.org/externe/travail.htm

As in the case of prolonged illness or accident, you should inform the Commission via the NCP if you have to interrupt your research because of pregnancy. In that case perhaps an extension of the fellowship for the duration of your maternity leave may be possible.

Administrative steps necessary before and after leaving the country

Preliminary tax declaration
Before leaving France at the end of your contract you have to fill in a preliminary tax declaration for the income received in the current year, about 10 days in advance of your departure (this is form 2042). On the basis of this declaration your "impôt sur le revenu" (IR) will be calculated. The year following your departure you have to submit your definite tax declaration for the year of departure, and the final amount of tax you have to pay will be calculated. For more information see
http://www.finances.gouv.fr/IR99/

then click on "Départ de France -- Retour en France".

Taxe d'habitation for the current year
You also have to pay your TH before moving out -- if it is too early in the year for this your "Centre des Impôt" will calculate a preliminary TH which you then have to pay at the corresponding Trésorerie in order to obtain a "Bordereau de Situation". It is very important to do this before leaving: you may have great difficulties getting back the deposit for your flat if you can't present the "Bordereau de Situation" to your landlord. This is quite understandable - - if the tenant does not pay the TH, it will have to be paid by the landlord; for this reason your landlord may refuse to pay you back the deposit if you can't prove that you actually paid the TH.

Asking for a certificate of insurance from the CNAM
Before your definitive depart from France you may want to ask at the CNAM ("Caisse nationale d'assurance maladie") for a paper stating that you have been insured by the french national health system, with dates and duration of affiliation ("attestation relative à la totalisation des périodes d'assurance"). If the national health insurance of the country you're going to work in next requires a certain minimal time of contribution before your affiliation becomes active (as is the case in France), this paper may be useful to you.

**Asking for a "Relevé de Carrière" from the pensions insurances**

Once you have left France for good you can ask for a "Relevé de Carrière" from the "Caisse nationale d'assurance vieillesse" (CNAV) that you paid your contributions to during your stay in France. This is something like a "statement of account" with all the information about your affiliation. If there still exists something like a state run pension system by the time you retire, this document may help you to prove your affiliation and hence to obtain the benefits that you are entitled to. You can obtain a pre-formulated "Demande de Relevé de Carrière" from your local office of the CNAV. Alternatively you can just write to them supplying the following information:

- First name(s) and family name, maiden name if applicable.
- Date and place of birth, country of birth, nationality.
- Number of matriculation at the "Sécurité Sociale" (in the form 9 99 99 99 999 999 clé 99).
- Address.
- Date and signature.

Additionally, you can also ask for a "Relevé de Carrière" from the obligatory supplementary pension scheme that you paid into, i.e. either ANEP or IRCANTEC, whichever applies to you.

General hints for your stay in France, useful addresses and web sites

**Books, booklets, leaflets etc.**

The CNOUS (Centre National des uvres Universitaires et Scolaires) publishes each year a booklet entitled "Je vais en France". This booklet is addressed principally to foreign students coming to France, but it also contains a lot of information, useful addresses etc. which may be interesting to Marie Curie fellows. You can ask at the french embassy of your home country if they can spare a copy, or ask for it at one of the offices of the CNOUS once you are in France.

If you are in Paris, you may find the following book interesting: "PARIS - 300 lieux pour les curieux" by Vincent Formery and Thomas Jonglez (Éditions Bonneton Paris, ISBN 2862532142). This book contains information on "the other Paris", places off the beaten track and curiosities which even many parisiens don't know. There are for example the japanese pagode not far from the Metro Saint-François-Xavier, the narrowest house in Paris near the Metro Château-d'Eau, the Hindu temple "Sri Manika Vinayakar Alayam" close to the Metro Marx-Dormoy or the "Jardin suspendu de l'Atlantique" near Montparnasse-Bienvenüe, and many other interesting places and curiosities to discover.
Web pages

``Marie Curie Fellowship Association'' (MCFA):
http://www.mariecurie.org

``MCFA France'':
http://www.mariecurie.org/fr

French Centre for international exchange programs - EGIDE
http://www.egide.asso.fr/fr/guide/ (or http://www.egide.asso.fr/uk/guide/ in english) contains practical information about living (including basic rules in France) and studying in France.

``admiFrance - vosDroits'':
http://vosdroits.admifrance.gouv.fr

``SOS-Net'':
http://www.sos-net.eu.org

``Europe Direct'':
http://europa.eu.int/citizens/

``Ministère de l'Education Nationale, de la Recherche et de la Technologie'':
http://www.education.gouv.fr

``Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et de l'Industrie - Informations pratiques'':
http://www.finances.gouv.fr/a_votre_service/informations_pratiques/

``Caisse d'Allocations Familiales'':
http://www.caf.fr

``Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Vieillesse'':
http://www.CNAV.fr

``ASSEDIC'':
http://www.assedic.fr/unipublics.html

``Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi'':
http://www.anpe.fr

``Centre National des uvres Universitaires et Scolaires'' (CNOUS):
http://www.cnous.fr

``CROUS Paris'':
http://www.crous-paris.fr

``Fondation Nationale Alfred Kastler''
http://www.cnrs.fr/fnak

``L'Alliance Française'':
http://www.alliancefrancaise.fr

``France Pratique'':
http://www.pratique.fr

``ParisFranceGuide - Living in France'':
http://www.parisfranceguide.com/France/living

``Paris Voice Magazine'':
http://www.parisvoice.com
Useful addresses

The address of the National Contact Point for France is the following:

GAUDEMER, Alain (Mr.)- Mobility NCP
CPU (Conférence des présidents d'université)
47, Rue Montoyer
B-1049
Bruxelles
FRANCE
Tel: +32-2-5068859
Fax: +32-2-5068845
URL: http://www.cpu.fr
Email: gaudemer@clora.net

There exists a european network called "EURO-JUS network". There is a contact point in almost every european country to which you can address yourself if you feel that you are not treated correctly by the local authorities, especially as far as your rights as a european citizen are concerned (free of charge). This may include problems with obtaining a Carte de Séjour for you and your family or with obtaining benefits that you are eligible for through your quality of being european. The address of the french office is:

Sources d'Europe
M. Gérard Nafilyan,
CCE-BRF Socle Grande Arche,
F-92054 Paris Défense Cedex,
Tel: 01.41.25.12.53,
Fax: 01.41.25.12.13
open mondays and fridays, 9am - 1pm

We don't have any experience with the french office. However, the second author found the german EURO-JUS contact point extremely helpful and competent:
Herr Axel Voss,
Europäische Kommission Bonn,
Zitelmannstr. 22, D-53113 Bonn,
Tel: 0049-228-530.09.29,
Fax: 0049-228-630.343 (EURO-JUS office),
Fax: 0049-228-5300.950
open fridays, 9am - 4pm
email: Axel.Voss@Deutschland.DG10-bur.cec.be