

## Introduction by Didier Pilot

### Summertime: nothing but quiet!

For a number of students all over the world, July is a month of holidays. Agris mundus is some sort of strange group in this picture, I have to say. Quietness and relaxation do not set the scene for most of them.

For the newly selected students of the Batch 6, time is to prepare everything to leave home for a long time (sometimes two years!). Do not forget anything that may be needed, including some field data you may have collected in the past... Did you think of the plugs adaptors? Exert bicycle, especially if you go to Wageningen and Copenhagen! Or get trained to speak with your hands if you go to Catania!

Those of the batch 4, on their side, are still suffering with the research of their master thesis, but some of them find some time to send us news, they show their appreciation of the exer-cise: addressing scientific challenges, demonstrating innovative ideas, reinforcing professional networks, building links for a future job or PhD position, but also feeling lost sometimes, this is all but quiet!

In between the young and the old, the "middle age" batch 5 is organising its move from M1 place to M2. Field trip to Spain, internships in Holland, Ireland or Senegal, organising transport and lodging, finding cheap flights on the internet (also to visit some places in Europe sometimes) or getting to the Summer Campus in Montpellier, inception courses in Copenhagen... There is very little time to rest...

At least the two last groups, plus some of the alumni will, meet end of August for the Orientation week and Research Methodology Workshop. They will go to Prague, one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. We planned a very serious programme, but also we expect to have a lot of fun! This year, we shall experiment a number of innovations: less packed programme, to allow more time for interaction, connection with other groups who will be present at the same time in the Czech University of Life Sciences, more diverse conferences to get deeper awareness about the strengths of each of the Agris Mundus Universities, and last but not least, Czech beer instead of the French wine...

The staff is eager to know the new Agris mundus students and to see how the M1 has changed those from last year. We are excited to meet again some of the Agris mundus alumni not only to discuss their first professional experience, but also to exhaust them in the volley ball match we shall play.

See you soon!

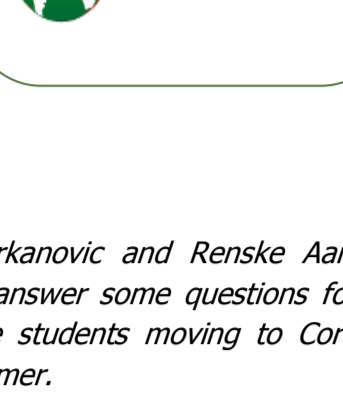
Didier Pilot — Agris mundus coordinator

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### AMA Logo

This is what the AMA logo can look like, what do you think? During the next general assembly (to be held in Prague) we will make a final decision, so take your chance and give your opinion now!



## Moving to your next university

**Moving from one place to the other can mean many different things. It means discovering new places and saying goodbye to old places. It means throwing out stuff and buy new things. It is not easy, luckily it is exciting. The AMA regional representatives help you finding your way in your new home town.**

*Aimable Uwizeye answers some questions for all those students moving to Catania this summer.*

### What to expect course wise?

The Catania University is well organized, when students arrive at the airport, the staff manage to assist everyone in the accommodation, administrative process, opening Bank account, getting fiscal code,...

However, all courses in Agriculture are in Italian, the University offers the opportunity to study the Italian language before the opening course. The first semester (from October to February) of studies is very long and not very busy at all, the second one (from March to July) is very busy, many courses to follow, different technical visits to attend, Internship, ... A good advice, is to do more optional courses in first semester. There two campus, the old at Via Valdisavoia and the new one at via Santa Sofia, 100 where Agris Mundus courses are being held.

### Where should I start looking for a room?

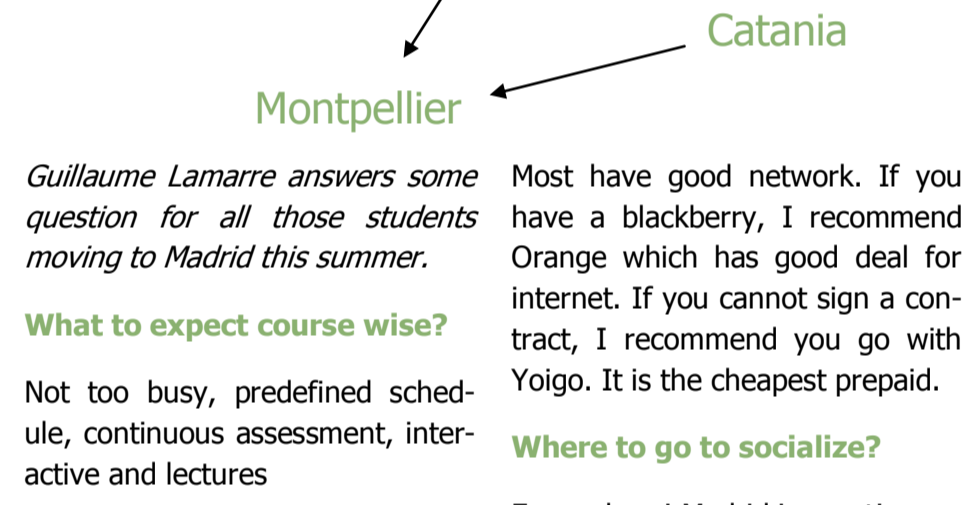
For the room is better to coordinate with the Agris Mundus staff of Catania, but according to the weak of public transport, is better to live very close to university or very close to the City center. The center city is not far from the university .

Generally, the accommodation are in flat/apartment sharing with others students, according to the choice, there are one bed room or double bed room. The rate are between 150 - 250 Euros, without extra charges (electricity, water, internet,...).

### What are the nice neighbourhoods to live?

To live around the city center is better, because Catania is very busy the night, all young people, students, tourists have funny in the night.

### Cork



### What phone provider has the best network and or deals?

Wind telecommunication is the most used by students, it offer different promotion rate and the low cost mobile internet navigation.

### Where to go to socialize?

The historic center of Catania, is the most popular part of the city where you can find some folkloric parties, Sicilian restaurants, Bars, Cinema, Sport center and discotheques. Interesting, Catania don't sleep special Wednesday and Friday night. Every day, you can enjoy in different Sicilian restaurant. From the Via Etna to Piazza Teatro Massimo, walking around, is very possible to meet a lot of young people and students. Catania beach are not very far from the city center, it is a good place to enjoy in summer. There are some private beach and public ones.

### What are good and affordable places to do the groceries?

The are many supermarket in Catania city but is also possible to go in some commercial center (Porta di Catania, Etna Polis, IPortali, Katanè,...) where is possible to find all kind of food and ingredients. Commercial centers are very far from the city, is better to go there by bus. For those who want to eat typical food from Africa, South-America or Asia, there is a place around Sicilia Avenue where is possible to find all.

### What should I definitely know/ be aware of before moving on to Catania?

Before moving from Catania, is very necessary to visit historic sites like Greek and Roman amphitheater, some beautiful cities like Syracuse, Taormina, Caltagirone, Palermo, Messina,... and of course to visit the Etna Mount, a very active volcano of Europe located around the Catania City.

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*Sanja Brkanovic and Renske Aar-nouse answer some questions for all those students moving to Cork this summer.*

### What to expect course wise?

Not too busy, predefined schedule, mainly end of year exams, lectures

For AgrisMundus students there are two programs in Cork. If you have the combination Cork-Copenhagen you will be enrolled in the MSc Food Business, if you have the combination Cork-Montpellier/Madrid you will be enrolled in the MSc Cooperative Organisation, Food Marketing and Rural Development. Even though there is some overlap in these courses they still differ a lot. In Food Business you need to write more literature based essays, in the Coops program you get to do more group work. Classes are not too big and contact with lecturers is quite informal.

### Where should I start looking for a room?

If you're looking for a place outside of the student housing the university offers, there are lots of places to look. Before you arrive, you can check some online websites. daft.ie is a really popular one that has a lot of student/shared accommodation posted. let.ie is also good. When you arrive, you can check in the with accommodation office at UCC, they have some postings on their wall, although in general, I have noticed that the prices are higher than on the postings online. Another option, if you are still looking for a place, is to look at the bulletins in the Quay Co-Op. It is a restaurant that is located in the centre of the city and many people post requests there for roommates in the entrance way. To find the Quay Co-Op you can look up the address online on google maps by typing "Quay Co-Op Cork Ireland"

### What are the nice neighbourhoods to live?

Cork is a small city, so almost any apartment that is listed as being in Cork city should be fine. You shouldn't feel that you need to rent anywhere that claims they are in the very centre of the city as these places are usually more expensive, and most listings will be reasonably close to the centre anyways. If you are unsure, you can check the distance to the University by looking at google maps. Shandon street may be a good neighbourhood for a stiller within walking distance to the campus and close to the city. In general, the neighbourhoods in the north of the city including Sunday's Well, Shandon and anything around McCurtain street is nice, and sometimes the rooms have a very nice view because they are on a hill. However, I should mention here, if you would like to avoid a cold winter, you should ask if the place is well insulated, if it uses electrical or gas heating, if it has a fireplace, and what the average monthly electricity bill is in the winter. We have found that in cork, while apartments are insulated well, some others are not. There is no easy way to know this, especially if agreeing to a place online, but asking some of those questions may give you some additional information to help you make a decision.

### What phone provider has the best network and or deals?

Between Meteor and O2 it doesn't matter too much as long as everyone had the same provided. Phoning and texting is usually free if you are phoning to the same network, therefore, it is best to discuss this with other students and simply pick a network together.

### Where to go to socialize?

The Irish pubs are world famous for a reason, they are great. Nightlife happens early, between 8pm and 2am, which means you can still get a fairly good night sleep. The student union organises a whole lot of activities, both through societies and clubs. You will, for example, have free access to the gym and swimming pool, and on a weekly basis lectures and activities are organised by the societies.

### What are good and affordable places to do the groceries?

In all fairness, Ireland is not the cheapest country when it comes to groceries. Luckily Cork has the English Market which you can find in the city centre. There you can buy fresh fruit and veggies, nice cheese or good meat for reasonable prices. Besides that there are bigger supermarkets such as the Tesco or Dunnes and a multitude of small express shops where you can do you last minute shopping.

### What should I definitely know/ be aware of before moving on to Cork?

You will probably want to explore life outside of the university too. Especially in the first term you will have time to spend on other activities so do not forget to plan these! Ireland is a beautiful country and especially the west coast and the North of the country are worth visiting. The Irish are very friendly and hospitable so after a few months your classmates will probably start inviting you over to their home place, do make sure to take advantage of such opportunities!

### What to expect course wise?

Not too busy, predefined schedule, continuous assessment, interactive and lectures

About 20 students are in the masters. Some of them work full time and are able to do it. Obviously, extra efforts are always helpful but in general, the workload allows for enough free time to enjoy life in Madrid. It also depends on the efforts you put on the thesis. The schedule in predetermined and is from 16:30 to 20:30 every weekdays with some days without classes between different courses. Courses normally last between 1 to 2 weeks with some evaluations at the end of each course.

### Where should I start looking for a room?

Idealista.com,  
http://madrid.loquo.com/en\_us  
http://www.campusanuncios.com/  
http://www.segundamano.es/  
http://www.easypiso.com/

I also have some friends that will be looking for roommates.

### What are the nice neighbourhoods to live?

It depends on what you look for. It is cheaper to live further away from the centre but you have to travel in metro. I personally recommend the neighbourhoods Moncloa, Argueles, Tribunal, La Latina. I was living in Moncloa being able to walk to University in 15 minutes and near most of the interesting parts of the city.

### What phone provider has the best network and or deals?

Do not hesitate to contact the regional representatives from the other three universities!

### What phone provider has the best network and or deals?

Most have good network. If you have a blackberry, I recommend Orange which has good deal for internet. If you cannot sign a contract, I recommend you go with Yoigo. It is the cheapest prepaid.

### Where to go to socialize?

Everywhere! Madrid is great!

If you feel alone, you can always make friends on couchsurfing.com , the Madrid community is very active and plans lots of activities.

### What are good and affordable places to do the groceries?

Most groceries are very similar. Lidl is cheaper but has less diversity. El Corte Ingles and Carrefour are more expensive but have almost everything you can look for. Personally, I went to the closest one. Distance was more important to me.

### What should I definitely know/ be aware of before moving on to Madrid?

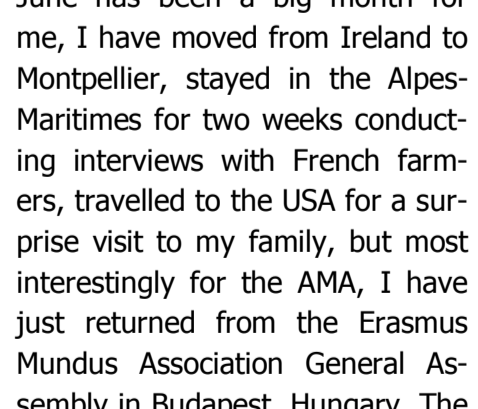
If you wish to present your thesis, you should have it fairly well developed before October. Classes start in mid-October which gives you 1 months and a half to prepare your proposal. Otherwise, you will have to stick to the proposals made by the professors of the University which you might not like. I highly recommend that you start trying to find partners and make contacts for your research right now if you know what you want to work on.

Although Madrid is a fairly big city, it is also very close to natural parks. 45 minutes in train north of Madrid is the Sierra de Guadarrama which includes many parks. It is a perfect spot for going for a walk and relaxing.

## Guillaume in Timor

Last March, classes of the Master in Madrid ended. However, for the students, this was only the start of an almost more difficult task; preparing a thesis. Topics for the thesis are very diverse including: Truffle cultivation in Mexico, Agricultural reform in Columbia, Reorganization of protected areas using GIS and many more. As for myself, I have been working on a thesis named "Social learning to facilitate integration and cooperation between international and local organizations working for rural development in the district of Lliquiça, East Timor." In order to realize this research, on April 4, I left Madrid to go explore East Timor during 2 months.

East Timor is a very interesting country. It consists of one half of a small island located north of



Independence day celebration

Australia. It has reached full independence only recently, in 2002 following a difficult referendum in 1999. Prior to 1975, it used to be a Portuguese colony. On that same year, the country was offered the opportunity to become independent. Unfortunately, independence did not last long since Indonesia invaded the country at the end of the year. Years of struggle for independence and

oppression by the Indonesian government have left their scars on the country. Following the referendum, militias supported by the Indonesian army burned down and destroyed around 75% of the country's infrastructure. Although it had gained independence, East Timor was left without anything and the new country got classified amongst the poorest countries of Asia.

The crisis, that the struggle for independence generated, attracted an important number of foreign development agencies and NGOs willing to work on the reconstruction and the development of the country. However, the abundance of foreign aid has created a chaos within the community of international NGOs. Additionally, local NGOs have been complaining that they are not sufficiently integrated within the development effort. For this reason, a project named Rural Development Project in Lliquiça II and funded by the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AECID) made a

proposal to the Universidad Politecnica de Madrid to have a student do a research on this topic.

For this research, I spent 2 months doing interviews with the various organizations working in the district of Lliquiça, one of the poorest regions of the country. This work was very interesting since it allowed me to speak with a broad range of agents working for development. All of them with very different ways of doing things! It was not always easy since the common language for communicating in Timor is Tetum. I managed to learn a bit of Tetum and a friend helped me with translation. The trip also gave me a unique opportunity to visit East Timor, learn about its culture and struggle and visit its wonderful beaches.

Now that I am back in Madrid, I have to present my thesis by the end of July before moving on to Montpellier for my M2. See you all in Prague!

## Patrick represents AMA in Budapest

### Hello Everyone!

June has been a big month for me, I have moved from Ireland to Montpellier, stayed in the Alpes-Maritimes for two weeks conducting interviews with French farmers, travelled to the USA for a surprise visit to my family, but most interestingly for the AMA, I have just returned from the Erasmus Mundus Association General Assembly in Budapest, Hungary. The event on the 24th and 25th of June was the annual general meeting of the association, where nearly 100 course representatives, observers, and EMA support staff gathered together to discuss the current state of the EMA and vote on a new president, vice president and re-structuring the organization of the EMA. Speakers presented from the Central European University (Budapest), the Directorate General of Education and Culture of the European Commission, the European Research Council, and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology. The topics ranged from the promotion of studying an Erasmus Mundus

course, to research grants available to new graduates, to the current state of the EMA and its members. All topics were quite interesting and yielded new insight as to how the EMA can be a service to Agris Mundus members, as well as Agris Mundus members, as well as our very own AMA! As course representatives, we have elected Jean-Carlos Pelicano as the new president of the EMA, and Hady Abi-Nader as the vice president. They are both veterans of the association and with their intimate working knowledge and insight, the EMA will surely continue to grow and prosper. We had also voted in favour to restructure the organization. The rapid growth of the EMA had called for new positions to be added and as such, their description of responsibilities, the overseeing body, and other logistical attributes became quite complex. The new system seems a more efficient organizational structure as

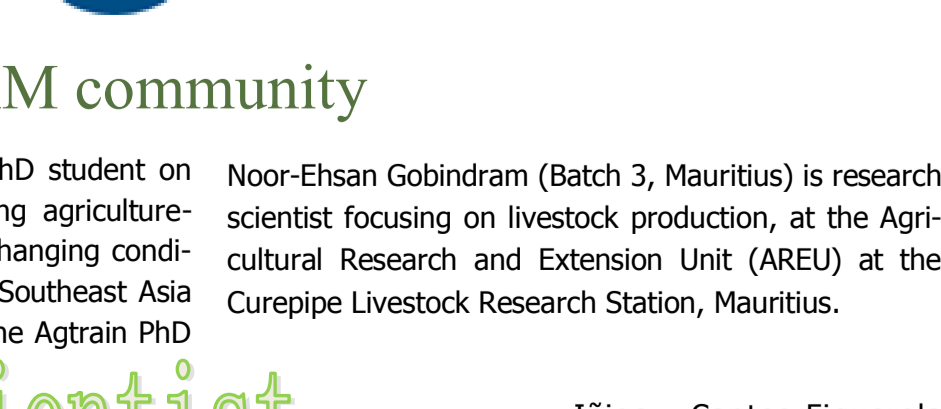
well as adding the position of Secretary to manage internal workings.

I will spare the masses the details of all the votes, discussions and lectures in this newsletter, however if you are interested in more information on what happened in Budapest, more information on how the EMA operates and its purpose, or if you would like to become more actively involved with either the EMA or one of its regional chapters throughout the world, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I hope the summer is going well for everyone and to the new M2s, I will see you in Prague to kick-off another successful year for Agris Mundus and the AMA!

Cheers!

Patrick - PDimanin@yahoo.com



## Updates from the AM community

Kimlong Ly (Batch 2, Cambodia) is PhD student on "Integration of youth into smallholding agriculture—challenges, impact and prospects of changing conditions: comparative case studies from Southeast Asia (Cambodia) and Africa (Uganda)" in the Agrain PhD program.

Wirat Songsri (Batch 1, Thailand) is environmental analyst, working on EIA and IEE in water management at Lotus Consultant Co., Ltd, in Bangkok, Thailand.



Noor-Ehsan Gobindram (Batch 3, Mauritius) is research scientist focusing on livestock production, at the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU) at the Curepipe Livestock Research Station, Mauritius.

Thi Phuong Linh Huynh (Batch 3, Vietnam) is PhD student in the WISDOM project (water-related information system for the sustainable development of the Mekong Delta, Vietnam). The topic is water management at the local level, and the host institute is the Centre for Development Research (ZEF) University of Bonn, Germany. <http://wisdom.caf.dr.de/content/thi-phuong-linh-huynh>

Iñigo Cantos-Figueroa (Batch 1, Spain) is international technical coordinator at the water and environmental management department of Intecs-Inarsa (part of the SNC-Lavalin Group) in Spain.