



CAtalytic membrane REactors based on New mAterials for C1-C4 valorization

CARENA is a large-scale integrating project funded by the EC

Interview with Hank Vleeming – PDC, The Netherlands.



Prof. Dr. Ing. Gilbert M. Rios has extensive hands-on experience of European projects management and coordination: he coordinated the NanoMemPro Network of Excellence (funded by FP6 for 4 years) and the MemBridge project (funded by FP7 for 2 years). Now EMH's executive director, he has furthermore developed over the years a valuable network of membrane key players all over Europe, in academia and industry. Gilbert has an initial background in chemical engineering and automatics. During his career at University, he held different positions in food and chemical engineering (10 years), then membrane engineering (more than 25 years). He now holds an emeritus position at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Chimie and at the European membrane Institute (IEM UMR 5635) in Montpellier, France.

What made you opt for a career as a researcher? How would you define your job?

Interest for education and research at the start, and progressively less interest because of inefficient administration in the French system and too much lost time. A real discovery for European projects during the NoE NanoMemPro and for societal problems in developing countries with UNESCO. After this first experiences, the need to stop my career as active professor/researcher and the interest for developing new activities at the service of international associations ...

We'd like to catch a glimpse of your daily activities. What is an average day (or week) for you?

An average day is day spent to "imagine and find the way to make ideas" become reality thanks to appropriate personal contacts networks, project funding,... A huge work involving a lot working hours (certainly more than during my previous activities as Professor) and travels, but quite enthralling...Freedom to do what I want as I want when I want... with the strong support of my colleagues Laurence and Guylène.





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The CARENA project has been designed with a strong emphasis on multidisciplinary approach. What progress can be expected if chemists work in closer relation with other disciplines?

Multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity... are too poor words to describe what is "life": being in relation with, rather than having own specificity (chemistry... or others...). What can be expected following this way : adaptation to our changing world in order to be able to progress!

CARENA brings together Research labs, SMEs and industry. How do you view research-industry collaboration within the framework of the project?

Here yet no wall/separation between these partners... only in the men's mind ...

What is the added-value of an EU project such as CARENA compared with other partnerships on the same topic you may be involved in?

A good access to a large funding and a broad network ...

CARENA in brief

Starting date: 1st June 2011

Project duration: 2011 – 2015

Number of partners: 19

Coordinator: Arend de Groot, ECN, the Netherlands

Programme: FP7-NMP-2010-LARGE- 4

Project Reference: GA 263007



You were a member of the organizing committee of the join Reforcell, DEMCAMER, Comethy and CARENA workshop on Pd Membrane (20-21 November 2014, Petten, The Netherlands). Could you tell us your feeling, feedback... ?

The renewed interest of finding new synergy....

Last but not least, let's zoom out on broader themes. Sustainable development and environment issues are key concerns nowadays. How does membrane chemistry fit in the pattern? Would you say chemistry is going through major changes?

Isn't "natural" that membrane, as a basic concept/tool of life since billions of years, may serve sustainable development and environment.. I do not want to discuss about chemistry or biochemistry... I leave that to specialists...

Thank you Hank for answering my questions, and all the best for CARENA and the other projects you are involved in.

Interviewed by Laurence Bosch

