

Portugal with new EMBO YIP

22 November 2022 – Elias H. Barriga, principal investigator of the Gulbenkian Science Institute (IGC) was elected member of EMBO's "Young Investigator Programme". The researcher, who leads the Morphogenesis Mechanisms group at the IGC, is the only one in Portugal among the 24 new members selected, will join a network with more than five hundred members, including current and former residents. Elias H. Barriga will receive financial and technical support for four years starting in January.

The programme supports excellent group leaders who have been in independent positions for less than four years and have an excellent track record of scientific achievements. "One of the most remarkable things about this wonderful community is its diversity of expertise. Participation in the programme supports young group leaders at a critical phase of their careers, providing opportunities to develop their laboratories, learn from one another, and make lifelong connections within a supportive network", says EMBO Director Fiona Watt.

Elias Barriga, biologist with a Ph.D. in Molecular Biosciences, started his own research group at the IGC, in 2019. Elias's research aims at understanding how large groups of cells synchronize their collective migratory behaviour to confer robustness to tissue morphogenesis in embryo development and regeneration. Focused on that, the group investigates the mechanical and electrical control of collective cell migration *in vivo*. Elias' research has received support from ERC Starting and EMBO Installation Grants as well as a *la caixa* Foundation grant. Being, now, selected to be part of the EMBO-YIP network will provide the researcher the support to a new adventure: to understand how cells within developing and regenerating tissues robustly behave in a multi-cue environment. In addition, this network will allow Elias to consolidate his group by exploring how his findings can shed lights on how cancer cells integrate multiple inputs into cellular responses.

"EMBO has supported my career from very early steps, first through my postdoc with long term fellowship and more recently with an EMBO Installation grant, the later had already a great impact in starting my lab in Portugal. So, I have no doubts that the YIP will deeply benefit my career by allowing me to stay connected to EMBO, an excellent network that I hope to also start contributing to" explains Elias H. Barriga.

EMBO Young Investigators receive an award of 15,000 euros in the second year of their tenure and can apply for additional grants of up to 10,000 euros per year. They also benefit from a broad range of practical support, including networking opportunities for them and their lab members, mentoring by EMBO Members, training in areas such as leadership skills and responsible conduct of research, and access to core facilities at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL).

This year's Young Investigators are based in ten EMBC Member States as well as Singapore. Ten new EMBO Young Investigators are female (42%) and 14 are male (58%). The programme received 177 eligible applications, with a success rate of 14%.

More information:

Ana Morais

Head of Institutional Communication

@: anamorais@igc.gulbenkian.pt

Contact: +351 965 249 488