The Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences & The University of Liège recruit a doctor in science in the fields of Plant Palaeontology and palaeopalynology.

Project

PALEOGREEN – The Palaeozoic green revolution: how plants shaped environments

In the scope of the FED-tWIN program of sustainable research cooperation between the federal scientific institutes (FSI) and the universities, supported by the Belgian Science Policy Office (Belspo), the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (Operational Directorate Earth and History of Life) and the University of Liège (Evolution & Diversity Dynamics laboratory) aim to develop a new research avenue in the plant-side story of terrestrialisation. Often described as one of the most important events in the history of life, the conquest of emerged lands had major consequences on the global equilibrium of planet Earth, leading to major biodiversity crises of the end of the Devonian (Kellwasser and Hangenberg events). The research project focuses on the Devonian (419–359 Ma) and Carboniferous (359–299 Ma) periods that concentrate most of the innovations and revolutions that were necessary to the construction of diverse continental ecosystems. The project combines both organism-centered and assemblage-centered approaches. It is structured following three main research axes:

1. the study of the diversity, architecture and phylogeny of early land plants;
2. their integration in and their relations with the evolving structure of mid-Palaeozoic land ecosystems;
3. the impulse of a necessary quantitative twist in order to study the Devonian-Carboniferous diversity crises.

Institutions

The Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences and the University of Liège represent the ideal environment for the involvement of a researcher in plant palaeontology and palaeopalynology. Both institutions have extensive experience in plant palaeontology and house world-class collections. The proposed profile will be a strong link between the two institutions, with a view to creating a hotspot in the field of palaeontology.

The Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS, http://www.rbins.be) is one of the ten federal scientific institutions that are governed by Belspo. The institute aims to provide the scientific world, public authorities and civil society with good and relevant science, appropriate advice, opening up avenues of discovery in nature, its long history and its sustainable management. One in three people employed at the RBINS is a scientist. The scientific personnel include mainly biologists, palaeontologists and geologists, but also oceanographers, anthropologists, prehistorians and archaeologists, as well as geographers, physicists, bioengineers and mathematicians, which facilitates multidisciplinary research. With 37 million specimens conserved as Belgian heritage of global significance, the RBINS collections are the third largest in Europe, just after London and Paris, and are among the largest in the world.

The University of Liège (ULiège, http://www.uliege.be) is the only complete public university in French-speaking Belgium. Founded in 1817, it now has 11 faculties and offers undergraduate and postgraduate training in all areas of knowledge, as well as hundreds of lifelong trainings. With its 23,500 students, including 23% foreign students, 1,400 teachers, more than 3,000 assistants and
researchers and its 80,000 graduates, the ULiège is balanced between teaching, research and activities at the service of society.

The Evolution & Diversity Dynamics laboratory analyzes fluctuations in ancient biodiversity, from fieldwork to cutting-edge quantitative analysis. Research in the laboratory focuses on a variety of fossil groups (reptiles, corals, mammals, plants); the researchers collaborate at the level of analysis techniques, allowing a cross-application of methods.

**Function**

The function is organized around the following activities:
- The researcher will implement a cutting-edge research program in the field described above;
- The researcher will participate in the teaching of Palaeobotany at the University of Liège in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles;
- The researcher will actively participate in the management of plant palaeontology and palaeopalynology collections of the RBINS and the ULiège;
- The researcher will participate in the communication and dissemination of knowledge and research results to the student community, the scientific community and civil society.

**Work Places**

Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, 29 Rue Vautier, 1000 Brussels.
University of Liège, Département de géologie B18, 14 Allée du 6 Août, 4000 Liège.

**Profile**

- You have a Doctor of Science degree in a domain that matches the vacancy (notably palaeobotany), which was obtained maximally 12 years before the end date of the period within which you can apply for this vacancy. This maximum period of 12 years for possession of a doctorate is extended by one year for every absence due to pregnancy, parental or adoption leave, as well as any long-term absence due to illness of the candidate or/and long-term absence due to illness of a family member of the first degree.
- You have at least five years of postdoctoral experience in the fields of Palaeozoic palaeobotany and/or palaeopalynology. Solid field experience is required.
- Your research qualities are in line with the policies of the ULiège and with the RBINS research strategy.
- You have (potential) leadership qualities.
- You are quality-oriented, honest, creative and cooperation-oriented.
- You have already done research in an international framework.
- You have an in-depth knowledge and use of techniques for the preparation and analysis of plant (micro)fossils (in compression and anatomy).
- You have a good knowledge of French and of English.

**The following knowledges are assets**

- Functional knowledge of Dutch.
- Teaching experience at the university level and in the supervision of Master's and / or PhD students.

**Working conditions**

The position consists of a joint commitment by both partners for an initial period of 10 years:
- *Chef de travaux* (scientific staff, grade SW2) half-time (0.5 FTE) at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences. Gross monthly salary ranging from € 4,534.66 to € 6,877.39 (with full reimbursement for commuting by public transport, or a bicycle allowance).
- a post-doctoral researcher part-time (0.5 FTE) at the University of Liège. Gross monthly salary (part-time) c. 2.454,32 €.
The start of the contract is scheduled for January 1st, 2020.

**Selection procedure**

Candidates must submit their application file (pdf file) no later than November 15th, 2019 by e-mail to: Dr. Bernard Mottequin (bмоттеquin@naturalsciences.be) and Prof. Valentin Fischer (v.fischer@uliege.be) (reference: FEDTWIN / PALEOGREEN application).

The file consists of a cover letter, a detailed CV with a list of publications, a copy of the required diploma and a criminal record.

For further information, please contact Dr. Bernard Mottequin or Prof. Valentin Fischer.

Brussels and Liège, October 22nd 2019