MCEC
Netherlands Center for
Multiscale Catalytic Energy Conversion

Interview with Ivan Devic (UT)

Project : Theory and numerics for dynamics and collective effects

"Surface nanobubbles and nanodroplets are small gaseous/liquid domains that block the surface of catalyst, hence reducing its productivity. Goal of this theoretical research is to analyse fundamental properties of these domains and their interaction with the environment."

1. **Can you do a short presentation about you?**
   I am Ivan Devic, PhD student at the Physics of Fluids group in University of Twente. I did my bachelor and master studies at the University of Split in Croatia, which is my hometown university. After I obtained my Master degree, although I had job offers in my hometown, I decided to try my luck in academia and see where it takes me. As you may already be aware, it took me to MCEC.

2. **How is living in The Netherlands as a foreigner?**
   I would say the Netherlands is a perfect place for foreigners to have an abroad experience in their life. Dutch people are polite and very fluent in English, which makes the culture shock a lot softer. However, after spending all of my life in the Mediterranean city, Dutch culture for me is still completely exotic and I believe it is too late for me to fully adapt.

3. **Would you advice a friend to come to the Netherlands?**
   Absolutely. I highly value my experience in the Netherlands so far, although I miss a lot of things here like normal weather, the sea, and speaking in Croatian, something I never expected I would miss.

4. **How/why did you finish in Enschede?**
   I was interested in the fluid physics, but I only had a vague idea about the field, since in my studies I didn't have any courses close to the topic. I saw my current group online and noticed how they have wide array of topics in research, which seemed like a good environment for me to learn. I sent an enquiry about available positions and here I am.

5. **How did you become interested in science?**
   I don't recall any particular moment in my life where I became interested in science. I always kind of liked it. For example, my kindergarten teacher reminded me how I always as a kid liked a book with the images of constellations. When I told her I was leaving the country to do a PhD, she just said: "I knew it from the start". She didn't even smile.

6. **Did you know right away that you wanted to be a research scientist?**
   I was always switching my ambitions between research and teaching, but in the end research won.

7. What do you enjoy the most (what is the most exciting thing) about your research?
When it comes to my work, I just enjoy that I am contributing to science. There is not a single particular element of my work that brings me satisfaction as much as a general overview of what I am doing at the moment.

8. What is your biggest motivation?
I wish I knew.

9. How do you see yourself fitting in the MCEC project?
At the start of my PhD, I had problems recognizing my role inside MCEC, but after a lot of interactions with other MCEC members, I started figuring out why my field is important to the whole project, which also helped me to understand what is expected of me.

10. If you had a time machine and 2 beers, with which scientist would you like to meet?
It would definitely be Paul Erdos, a Hungarian mathematician with an interesting lifestyle. I personally don't know much about his work, since it is complicated mathematics, but he would probably have interesting stories.

11. Which is the most memorable "Eureka" moment in your life (not necessarily connected to science)?
Once I solved a bug in my code and up to this day I still don't know how. I will let that one to be a mystery of my life.

12. **Which scientific term/phenomena you think is the most misused by media?**
It has to be energy by far. People literally toss the word around, whenever they are not sure what are they talking about, but are really trying to make a point. Half of crackpot conspiracy theories are connected to the misuse of this word.

13. What do you like to do in your spare time?
It largely depends on the season of the year. During winter times I am much more into movies, playing instruments and gaming, while during the summer I prefer sports and literally everything imaginable connected to sea.

14. Is science the answer to everything?
I hope not. It would be a boring world, if it is a solution of an equation.

15. What do you want to do after finishing your PhD?
Again: I wish I knew.