

## EURAC'S HEART

**It was she who built up the EURAC-Department of International Relations and Project Service. It was she who pushed EURAC to participate in the My Science Program. And it was she who in February 2010, just a few weeks into My Science, passed away at the far-too-young age of 44. Cristina Boglia remembered...**

“Opportunities for researchers depend a lot on the success of funding applications and development of new partnerships.” This is Cristina Boglia, speaking last year to ACADEMIA about the role of her department.

How right she was: EURAC would not be where it is without her.

For six years now, the EURAC-Department of International Relations and Project Service has had its finger on the pulse of funding sources for research. Today, the department she founded in 2004 boasts a staff of ten, is responsible for over 32 EU projects, and manages 15 million Euros in project financing.

She could have done much more too. But in the early days of February 2010, Cristina Boglia, our accomplished colleague and beloved friend, died at the age of 44. She leaves behind a husband and two teenage daughters, and we are thinking of them in this time.

Cristina arrived at EURAC in 2000. At first she worked for the Institute for Minority Rights, seeking funding opportunities for their research projects. Cristina understood this work intimately from “the other side” — she had a great deal of experience at “The European Training Foundation” in Torino. There, she managed and evaluated a number of EU Commission projects in the Balkans.

“Cristina was extremely creative at elaborating project proposals for EURAC,” remembers Emma Lantschner, former researcher at the Institute for Minority Rights, now assistant professor at the University of Graz. “I was always amazed by her positive energy and attitude. What surprised me the most was that, whatever the project —language minorities, democracy, human rights, or the social integration of new minorities—she always had such impressive background knowledge. Cristina was capable of giving us content ideas to elaborate research projects.”

Eva Maria Moar, the new director of EURAC's Department of International Relations and Project Service, remembers her fine professional abilities. “She was incredibly patient when explaining the basics of project development to researchers and helping them make a successful application. Cristina knew the subtle difference between general and concrete objectives, between project goals and project outcomes. She taught us how to interpret calls for submission and which documents needed to be included in them. From her, we learned

how to translate an initial idea into a concrete project which would fall in line with the goals of an EU program.”

Sometimes Cristina had to cool researchers down, if they started to get too technical about their projects. “Science has to go hand-in-hand with society. The EU likes funding projects that have a direct impact on the everyday lives of people,” was her advice to EURAC’s researchers.

Her perseverance paid off. From year to year, EURAC received more and more financial support from the EU. Suddenly other research institutes starting looking to her expertise too. Finally, in 2004, the Department of

International Relations and Project Service began working for all eleven of EURAC’s institutes.

**In the end, it was the people--not just the projects--that were important to her.**

Now Cristina would work tirelessly to keep all researchers informed about calls for submission. She took the time to understand the nature of their work, and would very often offer a new project idea along with the call for submission. In countless meetings, the Department discussed content and possible project challenges. There, Cristina was able to brush off the skepticism (“We don’t have enough time to make this happen!”) with her endless optimism and enthusiasm. She was capable of finding pragmatic solutions for the most complex situations. And even if she cajoled an institute to submit an application over and over and over again, by the time they finally did, no one was fed up with her—she always found a way to strike a healthy balance between gentle persuasion and passionate prodding. And whenever the deadline loomed close (it was always close), and documents or texts were missing, the department just rolled up its sleeves and had a good laugh.

In the end, it was the people—not just the projects—that were important to her. She studied assiduously the social context of EURAC’s work in Cypress and Asia. She participated in people’s lives. And for some, she made a big difference. While travelling through India, she met a young girl and decided on the spot to personally provide her with a scholarship. After the earthquake in Pakistan, she immediately organized a multicultural lunch break at the EURAC to collect money for EURAC’s partner institutions in Pakistan. She brought project partners into her home, and we too, have often enjoyed the hospitality of her wonderful family.

Cristina, you founded and managed the Department with enthusiasm, level-headedness, good humor and practicality. The architecture is there now. We will continue the work in your spirit.

And you will be missed!

Your colleagues