

Chiara Barretta

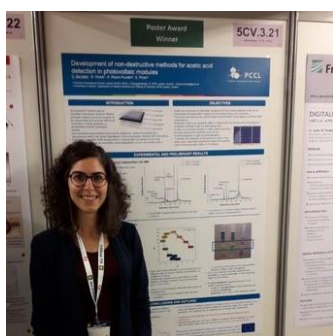
PCCL, Polymer Competence Center Leoben GmbH



I am an Italian chemical engineer who studied at University of Salerno. During my studies, I spent a semester at the Tomas Bata University in Zlín (Czech Republic) to carry out the experimental part of my master thesis. The experience abroad gave me the chance to get out of my comfort zone and to accept all the challenges I had to face in a foreign country, an environment I was not familiar with.

I have been always interested in environmental protection and sustainability, and during my studies I developed my interest in polymers. As a researcher within the framework of the Solar-Train project I could combine my two main interests. Additionally, it is the professional and personal network I have built, that makes Solar-Train very special to me. Not only have I had the chance to meet and work with experts in the field but I have learnt from them a lot.

A better understanding of how polymers degrade during ageing and how they interact with the other components of the PV module is a key factor to improve the reliability of the whole technology.



Award for best poster at the 36th European PV Solar Energy and Exhibition (EU PVSEC)

My research in Solar-Train has been focused on the investigation of changes in material properties, especially of encapsulants, due to accelerated ageing tests. In particular, I studied how to detect additives and stabilizers present in encapsulant material by means of chromatographic techniques. I investigated how changes in material properties are influenced by additive consumption due to the effect of environmental stress factors. Further, I applied non-destructive and innovative methods able to describe polymer ageing.

Having presented my research at international conferences, workshops, meetings and scientific events helped me to develop my presentation skills and to improve my self-confidence.

I see my future as a researcher and I am sure that everything I have learnt in Solar-Train, professionally and personally, is going to help me in my future career.

My Solar-Train story

“Failure is not an option.”

I pronounced this sentence during the *Beginners Week* as a joke, but then it has become a sort of motto. Failure is not an option for PV modules, because we work towards the improvement of PV modules' reliability and lifetime. The quote is also an encouragement to remind oneself, that even when things go wrong, there is always the possibility to find a different way to achieve the goal.



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