Postdoctoral position in biochemistry and plant molecular biology

We are looking for a highly motivated, talented and skilled individual to join our ongoing research projects on understanding the molecular mechanisms of selective autophagy and plant abiotic stress responses. The focus of the project is to understand structure-function relationships of defined core autophagy-related (ATG) protein complexes and their involvement in the initiation and formation of the phagophore, then the autophagosome, to target a specific cargo such as the stress-induced membrane-bound Translocator protein (TSPO) in plants (Plant Cell, 2011, 23: 785-805; Plant Cell, 2014, 26: 4974-4990; Trends in Biochemical Sciences, 2015, 40: 497-503). The project will involve a combination of protein biochemistry, proteomics, molecular genetics, genome editing, and cell biology. Most of the basic studies will be conducted in Arabidopsis, and translation of the acquired knowledge into related crop species. The position is associated with the research group of Henri Batoko at the Institute of Life Sciences (ISV), University of Louvain in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.

Research environment: The successful applicant will work in the group of Henri Batoko, at the Institute of Life sciences (ISV) (uclouvain.be/en/research-institutes/isv) for an initial period of one year with financial availability for extension for a total duration of 3.5 years. Henri Batoko’s team is part of the research unit of Molecular Physiology (FYMO), which belongs to the ISV from the University of Louvain (UCL, Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve), bringing together 20 research teams sharing the common interest of understanding biochemical, molecular and cellular fundamental processes in different organisms (animals, plants and microorganisms) with a broad range of expertise. The ISV institute has shared technological platforms (mass spectrometry, transcriptomics, and microscopy). This project will take advantage of the in-house MASSPROT technological platform, dedicated to proteomic analyses. The University of Louvain is ranked fourth in the world among French speaking full universities, and within the best 1% ranking of world universities. In numbers, UCL is a multisite university, founded in 1425, has about 5854 staff members for more than 30 000 students, 2 scientific parks and 4 business incubators hosting more than 343 enterprises employing 7346 staff, up to 62 active spin-offs. The main campus of Louvain-la-Neuve is a lively pedestrian (centre) city in commuting distance to Brussels (40 minutes by train).

Qualification: The candidate should have proven expertise in plant molecular biology, biochemistry and proteomics as demonstrated by a strong publication record. Prior lab experience with methods to study protein-protein interactions using mass spectrometry and bioinformatics skills are assets. Excellent English communication skills both oral and written are expected. Candidate with strong interest in plant cell biology and in particular autophagy are especially encouraged to apply. Candidates are sought which are within 2-3 years of their PhD graduation.

Project funding, stipend and starting date: The position is funded by the Belgian Funds for Scientific Research (FRS-FNRS), and the stipend attached is about 46k Euros/annum. The starting date is flexible but not later than April 1st, 2018.

Application: Please submit your application to Prof. Henri Batoko (henri.batoko@uclouvain.be) by email. The application must contain:
1. A complete CV with full publication list and a copy of PhD diploma
2. A statement of scientific interests and motivation for applying to this position
3. A description of research experience and other activities of relevance to the position
4. Contact information (email + phone number) of at least 3 references.

The University of Louvain is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer with strong institutional commitment to the achievement of diversity among its faculty and staff.