



## Magdalena Kutnik

I was born in the city of [Lublin, in Poland](#), on April 30, 1977. As a kid, I experienced cold winters and silly mixtures prepared by my grandmother for preventing flu and other infections: hot milk with honey and garlic!

I moved to France when I was 6 and grew up there, which means that, well, I'm definitely French. I studied biology at "Pierre et Marie Curie" University in Paris and after getting my master's degree in Life Sciences with a specialization in Entomology, I moved to the wonderful region of the Loire Valley, to the city of Tours. I did my PhD research work there, at the [Institute of Research on Insect Biology](#) (IRBI). I spent three years collecting subterranean termites in the south-west of France, Spain and Portugal and



analyzing their chemical and genetic cues and affiliations. Travelling on my own in this part of Europe was an amazing experience – I spent hours sitting on the side of mountain roads and banging on dry pieces of wood to collect termites, I stopped in breath-taking places such as Cordoba or Granada and enjoyed their beauty and peaceful atmosphere. Finally, I got my PhD degree in 2004, for the study I made on the phylogeny, evolution and population genetics of *Reticulitermes* termites in the south-west of Europe.



During these three years of research I had the chance to attend several conferences, including a COST E37 meeting in Madrid where I met for the first time my future great friends Lina Nunes and Mayte Troya (and also several of my present colleagues!). In 2005, I was hired for a position at CTBA (now FCBA) and moved south to the sunny city Bordeaux. I worked for a couple of years as a research scientist in the FCBA Biology Lab and thanks to this job, joined the IRG family in 2008, in Istanbul. I met new people, saw amazing places ... and collected termites on Prince's Island (thank you Roland for bringing me there!). I have attended every IRG conference since that time (and well, sampled more



termites!). My position at FCBA changed two years ago, when I became the leader of the Biology laboratory. My activities are now very diversified, including management, communication, research, development, and standardization (I'm the chair of the European standardization committee CEN/TC38 since 2010). I love my job but 24 hours a day are definitely not enough to do all I would like to do!

What could I tell regarding the "private" side? Nothing very exciting, I'm afraid! No swimming with sharks, no pole dancing in bars at night - I'm a happy wife and mother, I live in Bordeaux with my high school sweetheart Alex and our two kids, Roxane (10) and William (6). I spend most of my weekends and holidays outdoors with my family, visiting





exhibitions and “old stones” is our favourite activity. I love very simple but essential things and put all my energy into enjoying them as much as possible: kids, friends, nature, sun, rain, music (all kinds, from Bach to [Nirvana](#)), cinema, literature (from all over the world, currently Japanese and Scandinavian), art (I like modern art the best, because it’s always opened to interpretation – I don’t care if I like or dislike a piece of art, if it shakes something inside of me, the goal is reached), architecture, design, food (especially chocolate), cooking (chocolate cakes, obviously), dancing. I love all the good things that life has to offer; well, you would have to say that I simply love life.

