

US Customs and Immigration Services

April 22, 2021

Dear USCIS representatives:

This is a recommendation letter for Dr. Razvan Marinescu, an applicant for an EB1A visa. I have known Dr. Marinescu for two years while he has been a postdoctoral researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Aside from his scientific research, Dr. Marinescu is an extraordinary leader, who has been the President of the MIT Postdoctoral Association, a key association overseeing all postdoctoral researchers at MIT. Given my involvement in the MIT administration, and my role as XX of the MIT Postdoctoral Association, I am very happy to provide this recommendation letter for Dr. Marinescu.

I am a Professor of XX at MIT and former Head of the XXX during XX. I am a XX whose research lies in XXX. I served as MIT's XXXX from XXX, and have served on numerous national committees and task forces on XXX. ... During the past 3 years, I have also served as XX to the MIT Postdoctoral Association, so I am highly familiar with their work and impact across the research community at MIT.

The MIT Postdoctoral Association (PDA) is an organization that supports MIT postdoctoral researchers during their professional research and career development. The Association oversees all postdoctoral researchers at MIT, currently numbering more than 1500, who are spread across more than 50 research centers and institutes across MIT. The association serves as a liaison between postdoctoral researchers and the faculty and administration of MIT, and strives to engage with and improve the MIT community. The MIT PDA aims to enhance all aspects of the postdoctoral research experience and to foster a sense of community which promotes and encourages an environment of peer support. The MIT PDA has an Executive Board which is responsible for the general operations, and is currently composed of five executive officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary. The association also comprises a standing committee of around nine additional officers, responsible for fulfilling specific responsibilities. The MIT PDA is governed by a constitution, which was last ratified in 2012.

Given all the functions and responsibilities that the Postdoctoral Association has, its role is of critical importance for all postdoctoral researchers at MIT, and for MIT altogether. In contrast to local postdoctoral associations specific to a particular MIT department or laboratory, the MIT Postdoctoral Association is the only organization that represents all postdoctoral researchers across all departments within MIT, so its work has a broad impact across the entire Institute. To highlight how important the PDA is for MIT, the organization managed over the last few years to increase the benefits of Postdoctoral Fellows, those postdoctoral researchers with funding from outside MIT but who otherwise conduct research at MIT, to match those of Postdoctoral Associates, who are currently funded by MIT. While Postdoctoral Fellows, who represent 30% of all postdoctoral researchers, did not previously have subsidized health insurance, retirement benefits, and subsidized access to public transportation, due to the efforts of the MIT PDA they are now able to enjoy all these benefits just like the rest of the postdoctoral researchers.

Dr. Marinescu was initially elected in August 2019 as Vice President of the PDA by the MIT postdoctoral researchers. However, two months later, due to the previous President having to unexpectedly leave the role, Dr. Marinescu was voted by the PDA board as the new President. While this was a significant increase in his responsibilities, Dr. Marinescu very quickly learned the PDA organizational structure, its constitution and bylaws, and how to lead the organization. I should emphasize that obtaining such an executive role in the Postdoctoral Association is extremely difficult, as anyone of the 1500 postdoctoral researchers at MIT can stand for election, and the candidates each need to prepare a clear manifesto outlining solutions to key problems, and convince all other postdoctoral researchers to vote them. Prior leadership experience is also essential to be elected in such a role.

In the role of PDA president, Dr. Marinescu had significant responsibilities. He presided, chaired and set the agenda for all General Meetings, acted as a liaison between the MIT PDA and the Office of the Vice President for Research, acted as a representative of MIT PDA in the Faculty Postdoc Advisory Committee. Internally, he was responsible for the overall condition of the Postdoctoral Association, ensured that all other officer positions are filled, and coordinated the training of incoming officers. The PDA President role is very demanding, as it involves organizing and running a board of 15-20 PDA officers, representing all MIT postdoctoral researchers, currently numbering more than 1500, in faculty meetings and externally outside MIT, and listening to the needs of postdoctoral researchers and working with the PDA board to find solutions.

During his tenure, Dr. Marinescu, as PDA President, was also on the hiring committee for the new MIT Institute Community and Equity Officer (ICEO), which selected in February 2020 John Dozier, an experienced higher-education leader, in the role. Given that XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, I can confirm that the ICEO is a critical role at MIT, and reports straight to the Provost, Martin A. Schmidt, with a mandate to develop and implement diversity and inclusion strategies for the institute.

Under the leadership of Dr. Marinescu, the MIT Postdoctoral Association has had many accomplishments and launched many initiatives for all postdoctoral researchers at MIT. It ran several new career development programs, such as a six-month mentorship program for postdocs interested in academia or industry, several panel discussions on topics regarding academic research and future career pathways, and also launched a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion journal club, where MIT postdoctoral researchers discussed scientific articles on diversity and inclusion topics. They also

started collaborations with other Postdoctoral Associations, such as the Boston-Area PDA, as well as the Harvard PDA. Perhaps one of the most important initiatives undertaken by Dr. Marinescu was to organize a session where 10 representative postdoctoral researchers across MIT met with 15 members of the MIT Corporation who were visiting the office of the Vice President for Research, in order to give them feedback about postdoctoral academic life. The session had a major impact for all postdoctoral researchers at MIT, as it provided the required impetus to address multiple problems, in particular regarding housing affordability and general living expenses.

As PDA President, Dr. Marinescu also led new directions of advocacy for the PDA. During his tenure, the PDA started advocating on key issues facing postdoctoral researchers at MIT: the ability to find affordable housing, increased childcare support for researchers with children, improved career development programs, and more opportunities for interaction and collaboration between postdoctoral researchers across different institutes at MIT. These directions have been identified after discussing with a broad range of postdoctoral researchers across MIT, in order to understand their needs.

To conclude, Dr. Marinescu, as PDA President, undertook a highly important role with significant responsibilities for the postdoctoral researchers at MIT. The programs and initiatives launched by the PDA have greatly improved the experience of all postdoctoral researchers at MIT. I am certain that Dr. Marinescu will build on this success in leadership roles within academia or other distinguished organizations in the future. Given the need for such talented leadership in the United States, it would be of paramount importance to allow Dr. Marinescu to continue his leadership and research work here. I strongly support his petition for permanent residence, and hope he will get a favorable reply.

Sincerely,