



The European Marine Research  
Stations Network

## MARS Executive Committee meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2003, Barcelona.

The meeting was organised by MARS in the building of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas in Barcelona, Spain, following the meetings of the MARBEF Network of Excellence and MARBENA.

Present: Erik BONSDORFF, Friedrich BUCHHOLZ, Anastasios ELEFThERIOU, Jean-Pierre FERAL, Stephen HAWKINS, Carlo HEIP,  
Apologies: Giorgio BERNARDI, Herman HUMMEL  
Absent: Krzysztof E. SKORA

The agenda containing 11 points was accepted.

### 1. Remarks on the previous meeting minutes (19 March 2002, Amsterdam: executive committee) and approval of the minutes.

# **MARS teaching activities** are still at a **very low level**. They should be encouraged and better advertised on the web. No news either from the summer school in Naples on molecular biology or from the summer school on modelling proposed by Yerseke. A summer school is planned in July 2003, in Poland (H. Hummel).

### # **MARS membership**

The problem of Associated members should be presented at the next general assembly where a ruling should be made.

#### **Reminder**

Membership includes:

- **Regular members**: Regular members are laboratories, institutes, or university departments primarily devoted to fundamental marine science and possessing coastal research facilities.

Only directors, or their delegates, from **regular members** do have **voting rights** at general and director meetings.

The Executive Board can co-opt members for specific purposes. One of the co-opted members shall be the Executive Secretary to be proposed by UNESCO Venice.

**Co-opted members** can be appointed on the basis of being: 1) editor of the Newsletter, 2) co-ordinators of major MARS related scientific projects, 3) responsible for other duties strongly related to MARS.

Co-opted members have, once invited, the same rights and duties as the regular members of the steering committee.

Membership subscriptions are:

- **150 euros for labs with less than 20 total personnel**

- 250 euros for labs with between 20-50 total personnel
- 500 euros for labs with more than 50 total personnel

#### # Membership subscription:

The fee for 2001 and 2002 is due as well as the fee for 2003.

#### # Secretariat

Same situation.

No money from UNESCO. There was no candidate for this position. H. Hummel still acts as executive secretary.

#### # Honorary MARS fellows

The Executive has invited honorary MARS fellows. Professor Otto Kinne was nominated and has accepted to be the first MARS honorary fellow.

Publication of the Newsletter on the web is successful. They are downloadable from the MARS website:

<http://www.marsnetwork.org/newsletters.php>

#### # External relationships

##### ESF / ESF Marine Board

Since the departure of Laurent d'Ozouville, the relationship with the Marine Board has been quiet for some time, but has recently been revived through discussions with John Marks and Niamh Connolly.

The Eurocores mechanism remains a viable option to develop common projects from the MARS laboratories.

##### Census of Marine Life (CoML)

CoML is an international program for research to assess and explain the diversity, distribution, and abundance of marine organisms throughout the world's oceans. The main field projects should occur in 2005-2007. Analysis and integration of information should culminate in 2008-2010. CoML has recently established a European committee, with Carlo Heip as acting chair. The definitive composition of Euro-CoML will be established in the Autumn of 2003 (meanwhile Dr. Ulf Lie of Bergen, Norway, has accepted to become the first chair of the EuroCoML committee)

##### The National Association of Marine Laboratories (NAML) <<http://www.naml.org>>

NAML will be invited to send a representative to the Conference of Directors. MARS is on the mailing list of NAML and receives the messages sent to the membership of NAML (now over one hundred marine and limnological laboratories in the US and Canada).

##### DIVERSITAS <<http://www.icsu.org/DIVERSITAS/>>

The next scientific committee meeting will be held in Paris on 12-13 April 2002. The place of marine biodiversity in the DIVERSITAS Science Plan is still weak and needs improvement in preparation of the next SSC meeting in 2004. Two initiatives in the sixth framework programme are coming from the members of the DIVERSITAS SSC.

##### International Association of Biological Oceanography (IABO)

URL: <<http://www.olympus.net/IAPSO/>>>

A good link with IABO now exists through the new president, Dr. Annelies Pierot-Bults from the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

# **Euroconference:** 11-15 May 2003 in Moermond Castle, Renesse, The Netherlands:  
*Biodiversity of Coastal Marine Ecosystems: A Functional Approach to Coastal Marine Biodiversity*

# **The MARS travel award** laureates have reported on their grants. These reports can be found on the web site <http://www.marsnetwork.org/newsletters.php>

The minutes were approved.

## **2. Conference of directors 2003**

*Preparing the future of marine research stations in Europe*

Planned in Amsterdam for two days (25-26 November)

### **Topics**

- Progress since the last meeting in Venice
- Future of MARS
- Prospects and opportunities of marine stations in Europe

## **3/ Elections – new members**

The electoral committee consists of : A. Eleftheriou, J.-P. Féral & C. Heip.  
New mandate: 2004-2007

## **4/ Financial situation**

**Accumulated balance in €**

accumulated balance 01/01/1999	24115,29	travel/accomodation/symposia	-22331.29
contributions received	33050.67	printed matter	-6556.74
interest	524.55	other costs	-4052.12
other income	12688,81	bank costs*	-647,02
	<b>70379,32</b>		<b>-33587,17</b>

**Balance 06/02/03 in €**                      **34364,36**

The financial report was approved.

# Problem to get contributions from French laboratories:

The treasurer, J.-P. Féral, will try to open a MARS account in France.

# Other financial points:

- Secretariat: a maximum of 16000 € per year is decided.
- The VLIZ (Flemish Institute of Sea Research) is now responsible for the MARS web page (2000 € per year)
- Advertisements in the Parliamentary Journal (magazine of the EU community): 4554€

# Abandoning the “associated membership” category. This has not worked in practice. Interested laboratories should become new members if seaside facilities are occurring.

## **5/ EU framework programme: MARBEF**

MARBEF is now on the short list of the NoEs, thanks to the structuring role of MARS (*Meanwhile MARBEF has entered the phase of contract negotiations with the EC*).

## **6/ ESF**

Proposition to have an observatory mandate in the Marine Board. This is to be discussed again. (*Meanwhile contact was made with Dr. John Marks who mentioned that observatory*

*status was not in use by the Marine Board. MARS will be invited as a guest organisation to the meetings of the Marine Board for the open agenda points).*

The EUROCORES programme may be an alternative for organizing marine biodiversity research if MARBEF fails.

### **7/ MARS awards**

One award of 2000 € for Young Scientists have been awarded to: Piotr Kuklinski from Institute of Oceanology , Polish Academy of Sciences, Sopot, POLAND

- *Bryozoan taxonomy and ecology*

Receiving MARS Institution is the Centre d'Océanologie de Marseille, UMR CNRS 6540 DIMAR, Station Marine d'Endoume, Marseille, France

(see newsletter n° 5)

Other awards will be attributed in 2003. This only concerns young scientists (max 35 years old) of regular members (full paying institutes).

The announcement is on the MARS web page. The deadline for application is the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003.

### **8/ Summer schools**

- Previously planed in July 2003 (Postponed to May 2004): Baltic Summer Course "On adaptive strategies and Biodiversity among intertidal and coastal marine organisms", organised under the colours of Gdansk university (Poland) in cooperation with Herman Hummel from NIOO-CEME, the Netherlands. Contact: Dr Adam Sokolowski. MARS provides three grants for attending the summer school. More information and application form are available on their web site, or send an e-mail to Dr Herman Hummel.
- Other summer school:
  - . Helgoland (Fred Buchholz), 2004: shelf seas ecology (sediments and rocks)
  - . Endoume/Marseille (Jean-Pierre Féral), 2005 : model organisms
  - . Naples (Giorgo Bernardi): to be contacted by J.-P. Féral

### **9/ BIOMARE**

**Final results on the concerted action for large-scale long-term MARine BIOdiversity research in EUrope.** (Co-ordinators: Carlo Heip & Herman Hummel, NIOO-CEMO, Yerseke, the Netherlands)

BIOMARE followed from a MARS initiative. Within theme 4 "Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development" of the EC 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, the Concerted Action BIOMARE aimed at establishing the infrastructure and conditions required for marine biodiversity research at a European scale. BIOMARE lasted two years from November 2000 till October 2002. It included 26 participating European institutes.

The objectives of the Concerted Action were to achieve a European consensus on

- 1) a network of reference sites for long-term, large-scale marine biodiversity research in Europe,
- 2) the establishment of internationally agreed measures and indicators for biodiversity, and
- 3) the creation of facilities for, and the co-ordination of, marine biodiversity research, by running workshops, improving training and mobility, setting up a web-site, including an overview of current research in, and existing infrastructure for, marine biodiversity research

in Europe, creating a database for authenticated data, including socio-economic data such as the impact of fisheries and tourism.

Three work-packages had been set in motion, consisting of a series of evaluations, recommendations, regional meetings and joint workshops. The methodology was similar in all three work-packages and followed a sequence of inventories and reviews made by WP leaders in consultation with all members, regional meetings and two general workshops to discuss drafts and recommendations, and reports and implementation. The inventories, meetings and reports focused on:

- 1) expanding the existing networks of marine biodiversity research organisations. Many MARS members have been involved in the BIOMARE actions, and in turn several BIOMARE participants became MARS member.
- 2) recommending reference sites for marine biodiversity research. A set of 30 Reference stations and 80 Focal sites have been selected. The stations will be described in a booklet [Warwick (R.M.), Emblow (C.), Féral (J.-P.), Hummel (H.), van Avesaath (P.) & Heip (C.) (in press - 2003) - *BIOMARE European Marine Biodiversity Research Sites*].
- 3) establishing methodologies, protocols, and indicators of marine biodiversity in Europe. A scheme on the priority indicators of marine biodiversity has been selected, and will be printed in a booklet [Féral (J.-P.), Fourt (M.), Perez (T.), Warwick (R.M.), Emblow (C.), Hummel (H.), van Avesaath (P.) & Heip (C.) (in press - 2003) - *BIOMARE European Marine Biodiversity Indicators*]
- 4) publishing an annotated check-list of long-term data-sets, species-diversity lists, and associated publications. All the data-lists are available through the internet: <http://www.biomareweb.org>.
- 5) initiating Euroconferences on marine biodiversity. A conference was organised in May 2001, a next one will be organised from 11-15 May in Renesse, the Netherlands (see above)
- 6) establishing a web-site for dissemination of information on European marine biodiversity to scientists, administrators and the public at large (<http://www.biomareweb.org>),
- 7) indicating data available to end-users, suitable for integration with socio-economic questions.

This Concerted Action enhanced research on marine biodiversity in Europe through the establishment of a network of marine institutes and an agreed set of reference stations and indicators. This will enable comparisons to be made between sites and trends in long term surveys to follow. It will enhance the integration of research throughout Europe, to the benefit of students, research scientists and managers dealing with socio-economic questions, and it will increase awareness among the public.

Further information about this project can be found at <http://www.biomareweb.org>

### **10/ Field station in Portugal**

University of Aveiro: Henrique Queiroga asked in a letter to MARS to support the creation of a marine research station.

### **11/ Any other business**

Five groups will be invited to prepare a document on the MARS strategy concerning:

- Pelagial in shelf sea ecosystem (F. Buchholz)
- Model organisms (A. Picard)
- Genomics (J.-P. Féral)
- Transition to deep sea (D. Billet)
- Long-term ecological observations (S. Hawkins)

A sixth group may discuss on land-ocean exchanges.

*The next meeting of the MARS Executive Committee will be held on  
Saturday 28 february 2004*

Jean-Pierre Féral, Banyuls-sur-mer  
July 2003