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## **C8.3.1.2 Report on the first Summer School (short version)**

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Revision [*Final*]

<b>Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Framework Programme (2002-2006)</b>		
<b>Dissemination Level</b>		
<b>PU</b>	Public	x
<b>PP</b>	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
<b>RE</b>	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
<b>CO</b>	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

The First EDIT Summer School 2008 ‘Modern Taxonomy and Field Work’ was held from 31/08/2008 – 14/09/2008 in the French/Italian Alpine nature reserves of *Parc National du Mercantour* (PNM, France) and *Parco Naturale delle Alpi Marittime* (PNAM, Italy).

The School was open to MSc students or early stage PhD students from EDIT institutions or European universities/institutes. The programme brought together students and training providers from all over Europe. 21 professional taxonomists from 7 European countries gave lectures and field work to 20 students from 13 European countries (16♀/4♂ - 16 nationalities).

The purpose of the Summer School was to train students in “Best Practice” of field sampling and various aspects of taxonomic research to be applied in biodiversity and conservation biology research. The Summer School focused on disseminating practical taxonomic experience with theory lectures to give an in-depth understanding of the current state of taxonomic research and its broad applicability in other scientific disciplines and non-scientific initiatives.

Many institutes took an active role in the organisation :

RBINS: Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences  
RMCA: Royal Museum for Central Africa  
NBGB: National Botanic Garden of Belgium  
MNHN : Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle  
SMNS: Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Stuttgart  
PNM: Parc National du Mercantour (France)  
PNAM: Parco Naturale delle Alpi Marittime (Italy)

Funding was obtained from EDIT (WP8) and through an additional financial input from the French Government (Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de La Recherche).

The theoretical courses touched upon a great variety of taxonomical and region-specific issues, such as :

- the national parks of Alpi Marittime and Mercantour
- the EDIT WP7 All Taxa Biodiversity Inventories and Monitoring (ATBI+M) activities
- the basic concepts of taxonomic theory and practice
- modern field work and specimen collection protocols : registration of field (meta)data, basic navigation and GPS use, various kinds of traps (malaise traps, light traps,...), botanical sampling
- processing of specimens in the lab : microscope and binocular use, determination with biological keys
- biodiversity and documenting diversity
- opportunities for further research in the field of taxonomy

In addition, extra-curricular activities strengthened social interaction and provided background to the course topics :

- a documentary about the Santo 2006 expedition
- Social Dinner
- night visit to a cave where a rare species of salamander lives
- evening talks about the region (e.g. Vallée des Merveilles cave paintings), local fauna and flora (Parc National du Mercantour)

At the end of the two-week period, students gave a presentation about their newly acquired skills and insights.

Feedback was sought (through feedback forms) for improving future editions of the Summer School. On the whole, both teachers and students very much appreciated the School, the courses and the practical work - many said they would recommend it to their colleagues/fellow students.

Students specifically liked the discussions with the lecturers, and found the Summer School a stimulating experience in their career.

Teachers found it interesting to work with specialists from other disciplines, and liked the contact with the young biologists.

However there was a call for a more detailed schedule of the day's activities, and for more feedback from training providers before and during the Summer School on their intentions and work plans. Also outreach (press coverage) could be improved, and a closer cooperation with ongoing ATBI+M activities (WP7) would be appreciated, as would more open discussions on current problems in taxonomy and how these are being tackled.

The second Summer School, scheduled for June 2009 in Slovakia, will take into account these suggestions for improvement.

<http://www.atbi.eu/summerschool>

**This is the abbreviated version, by Bart Meganck (RMCA), of a full report describing the EDIT First Summer School for Modern Taxonomy and Field Work in detail, by Kim Jacobsen (RMCA)**