



The EuroDIVERSITY Programme: Challenges of Biodiversity Science in Europe

I. Jonckheere

European Science Foundation, Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences (LESC), Strasbourg Cedex, France
(ijonckheere@esf.org, +33 3 88 37 05 32)

In close cooperation with its Member Organisations, the European Science Foundation (ESF) has launched since late 2003 a series of European Collaborative Research (EUROCORES) Programmes. Their aim is to enable researchers in different European countries to develop cooperation and scientific synergy in areas where European scale and scope are required in a global context. The EUROCORES instrument represents the first large scale attempt of national research (funding) agencies to act together against fragmentation, asynchronicity and duplication of research (funding) within Europe. Although covering all scientific fields, there are presently 13 EUROCORES Programmes dealing with cutting edge science in the fields of Earth, Climate and Environmental Sciences.

The aim of the EuroDIVERSITY Programme is to support the emergence of an integrated biodiversity science based on an understanding of fundamental ecological and social processes that drive biodiversity changes and their impacts on ecosystem functioning and society. Ecological systems across the globe are being threatened or transformed at unprecedented rates from local to global scales due to the ever-increasing human domination of natural ecosystems. In particular, massive biodiversity changes are currently taking place, and this trend is expected to continue over the coming decades, driven by the increasing extension and globalisation of human affairs.

The EuroDIVERSITY Programme meets the research need triggered by the increasing human footprint worldwide with a focus on generalisations across particular systems and on the generation and validation of theory relevant to experimental and empirical data. The EURODIVERSITY Programme tries to bridge the gaps between the natural and social sciences, between research work on terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems, and between research work on plants, animals and micro-organisms. The Programme was launched in April 2006 and includes 10 international, multidisciplinary collaborative research projects, which are expected to contribute to this goal by initiating or strengthening major collaborative research efforts. Some projects are dealing primarily with microbial diversity (COMIX, METHECO, MiCROSYSTEMS), others try to investigate the biogeochemistry in grassland and forest ecosystems (BEGIN, BioCycle), the landscape and community ecology of biodiversity changes (ASSEMBLE, AGRIPOPES, EcoTRADE), and others focus on the diversity in freshwater (BIOPOOL, MOLARCH). In 2009, the EuroDIVERSITY Programme will integrate the different European research teams involved with collaborative field work campaigns over Europe, international workshops and conferences, as well as joint peer-review publications.

For more information about the Programme and its activities, please check the Programme website: www.esf.org/eurodiversity