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COST Action TU1208 "Civil Engineering Applications of Ground Penetrating Radar:" training initiatives

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This contribution offers an overview on the training activities organised in the framework of the recently ended COST Action TU1208 "Civil engineering applications of Ground Penetrating Radar" (www.GPRadar.eu).

TU1208 was exceptionally active in offering educational activities: as many as 15 Training Schools (TSs) were successfully organised during the Action lifetime.

The presence of so many international schools on GPR was an unprecedented phenomenon. Overall, almost 450 Trainees attended TU1208 TSs and could learn about Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) technology, methodology and applications.

After attending a school, some Trainees decided to join the Action as MC or WG Members. Thus, for TU1208, one of the positive consequences of having organized so many schools was a strong presence of young participants in the Action. What is most important, however, is that young scientists will notably benefit, in their future career, from having participated to TU1208 TSs: not only because they could learn, but also in view of the fact that they had the opportunity to know each other and establish international cooperations with their peers in such an early stage of their career. This will affect positively the long-term development of the GPR technique in Europe. To favour the scientific interaction between Trainees and encourage them to keep in touch after the school, the Action almost always requested them to prepare joint TS reports. In most cases, Trainers arranged teams of three/four Trainees from different countries, with different scientific background and maturity level, and proposed them topics to be developed in their reports.

The list of TSs, with links to webpages where the lecture schedule is reported along with further information on each school and its outcomes, is found here: www.GPRadar.eu/events-dissemination/training-schools/
Conference and journal papers were published, resulting from the experimental or practical activities carried out during the TSs. Moreover, the Action published a selection of TS reports in a series of open access ISBN volumes. Let us also mention that some schools were organised in cooperation with the European School of Antennas, the European Microwave Association, the European Association on Antennas and Propagation, and COST Action TD1301.

Another educational initiative of the Action was the development of TU1208 Education Pack, an open access package of didactic material structured in modules and conceived for teaching GPR in University courses. Although the Action ended, there is work in progress to further enrich it. The Action Members observed that the level of knowledge and experience on GPR is not the same in all Countries. The Education-Pack initiative will likely help professors and researchers in less research-intensive Countries to initiate new courses on GPR in their universities. The material is available at www.GPRadar.eu/resources/educationpack.html

Finally, and to complete this overview, we wish to shortly mention a series of educational activities organized by Members from Estonia (Institute of Ecology, Tallinn University) to teach GPR to elementary and secondary school pupils.