

EMBRC

European Marine Biological Resource Centre

A Major European Infrastructure for Marine Biological Research, EMBRC (European Marine Biological Resource Centre).

EMBRC: Unlocking the secrets of marine organisms.

The European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) has selected EMBRC to become the newest large-scale research infrastructure for marine biology. This research infrastructure will enable scientists to use the most up-to-date techniques to study the composition, functioning and diversity of marine organisms, providing important benefits for life sciences and biomedicine and bringing new insights to the way organisms evolve and adapt to a changing environment,

Versailles, 9 December 2008 - The European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) published today its selection of the most promising next generation of large-scale research infrastructures. In the area of biological science and biomedical research, the proposal for a European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC) was highlighted as mature and ready for inclusion on the roadmap. Marine biological researchers were today celebrating ESFRI's recognition of this new initiative led by a consortium of the main marine biological research laboratories in Europe.

Sustainable management of marine biodiversity

This announcement is a recognition that now and in the future, marine organisms are of enormous scientific, social and economic interest. The sea provides astonishing biological diversity (32 of 34 fundamental phyla are found in the sea of which 13 are exclusively marine) but a large number of species are still to be discovered and only a handful have been studied in detail. 'Mining' marine organism diversity will provide important resources for biotechnology, biomedicine and conservation ecology. EMBRC will undertake to put in place methods to culture and maintain organisms of interest so that their use for the benefit of science and society will be sustainable.

The plan aims to provide access and technological support to explore in depth the biology of marine model organisms using the latest technologies. The research infrastructure will accelerate the trend to bring genomics, molecular methods and systems biology into marine biology, and at the same time provide access to marine model organisms for all European researchers working in research institutes and universities where such resources are not available.

This initiative builds on the synergy developed between partner marine Institutes during the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Commission, where Networks of Excellence in marine biology, such as Marine Genomics Europe, have

had a major impact on advancing marine research. New infrastructure initiatives under the Seventh Framework Programme are continuing and deepening the trend for convergence by introducing in a systematic way the sharing of common 'omic' resources.

Action plan

The action plan to realize the EMBRC research infrastructure will begin with practical steps to obtain governmental commitment from the Member States and initiate the construction of this new European entity. Importantly the partners will collaborate on the legal and practical issues and liaise with their national representatives and research councils to make this proposal a reality. In the longer term, the ambition is to develop EMBRC as a major global player providing European researchers with a world class research infrastructure to explore the world's valuable marine biological resources.

Web sites

EMBRC <http://www.EMBRC.EU>

ESFRI <http://cordis.europa.eu/esfri/>

Marine Genomics Europe <http://www.marine-genomics-europe.org/>

Professor Roberto Di Lauro President,
Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn
Villa Comunale
80121 Napoli
Italia

Tel (0039) 081 583 3215

Fax (0039) 081 764 1355

Email dilauro@szn.it

www.szn.it