

Central and Eastern Europe Symposium on Microbial Ecology (CEESME)

<https://ceesme.ecolres.hu/>

12-15 September 2023

Budapest, Hungary

Meeting report

The meeting aimed to bring together the scientists from Central and Eastern Europe, and also Western Asia, to strengthen the collaboration in the region. The conference attracted 117 participants from 17 countries, including 43 Early Career Researchers (ERCs), of which 28 were supported by Travel Grants from ISME.

Soft Skill Workshop for Young Scientists on Day 1 was dedicated to empowering ERC by showing them Career Opportunities and the importance of Networking. There were three plenary talks by established scientists, who presented their career paths, a talk on science communication, and a talk on the ISME Society and Journal:

1. **Michaela Salcher:** There and back again: Moving from Western to Eastern Central Europe in a scientific career
2. **Anna Székely:** Experiences of surviving Western academia with an Eastern PhD
3. **Hans-Peter Grossart:** Global networking: benefits and excitement
4. **Aleksandra Ziemińska-Buczyńska:** Science communication in environmental research – will, necessity or demand?
5. **Lisa Stein & Colin Murrell:** Publishing with ISME Journals

The following days included four scientific sessions and a poster session. There were 44 talks and 40 posters presented. Moreover, two posters were awarded:

1. **Sofia Amanda Abad-Sojos:** Bacterial communities of Hungarian soda pans and their growth on ammonium-enriched media
2. **Roudaina Boukheloua:** Recovery of eukaryotic metagenome-assembled genomes from decade-long metagenomic time-series in freshwater lakes.

The invited lectures were given by ISME Ambassadors and other recognized scientists from the region:

1. **Petr Baldrian (Czechia)**: Forest soil microbiome: who does what and when (and why)
2. **Colin Murrell**: Focused and functional metagenomics; a case study of trace gas metabolism
3. **Kostas Kormas (Greece)**: Understanding fish microbiomes through ecological principles and concepts
4. **Bogdan Druga (Romania)**: The impact of climate change on microalgae and consequences for human society
5. **Natalie Barteneva (Kazakhstan)**: Beneath the surface: imaging and spectral cytometry combined with next-generation sequencing in analysis of algal-microbial communities
6. **Hovik Panosyan (Armenia)**: Exploring of thermophiles of terrestrial geothermal springs in Lesser Caucasus
7. **Sandi Orlic (Croatia)**: Methane cycling bacteria in Croatian lakes
8. **Meryem Beklioglu (Turkey)**: The Microbial Loop in Lake Ecosystems: Structure and Control

The meeting was finalized with the round table session, during which we discussed how to increase the collaboration in the region, and what are the strengths and weaknesses. It was decided to create an e-mail group to exchange ideas, funding opportunities and other information. The next CEESME will be held in 2025 in Armenia (the chair of the new LOC will be Hovik Panosyan).

In addition to scientific content, four integration events were organized: Welcome Reception on Wednesday evening, Social Gathering on Thursday evening, and Excursions during the day (the participants could choose one of the following options: Microbial Highlights of Buda, Cultural Highlights of Pest or The Hungarian Puszta – a Microbiological Treasure-box), and Wine Tasting at Kálvária Winery in the evening of Friday.



Group photograph of the CEESME participants



Soft Skill Workshop for Young Scientists - Career Opportunities and Networking



Scientific session



Excursion to The Hungarian Puszta – a Microbiological Treasure-box