

The 9th European Workshop on Astrobiology “EANA’09”, annual meeting of European Astrobiology Network Association EANA (<http://www.astrobiologia.pl/eana/>), was held in the Royal Library of Brussels, Belgium, from October 12-14, 2009, hosted by the Belgian Astrobiology Group BAG (www.astrobio.oma.be). A main section of EANA’09 was devoted to sessions paying homage to Darwin’s theory of evolution, thereby celebrating the 150th anniversary of the first publication of the path-finding book “The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection” and the anniversary of the 200th birthday of Charles Darwin:

1. In Homage to Darwin’s Theory of Evolution: Prebiotic Chemical Evolution
2. In Homage to Darwin’s Theory of Evolution: Early Biosphere and Biological Evolution

On October 12, an invited lecture entitled “Darwin’s Warm Little Pond: the Origin and Early Evolution of Life” was given by Antonio Lazcano, former President of ISSOL.

Further sessions included the following topics:

3. Life in Extreme Environments
4. Astrobiology of Planets and Small Bodies of our Solar System
5. Planetary Protection
6. Astrobiological Aspects in Astrophysics and Astrochemistry
7. Human Exploratory Missions and Astrobiology
8. Education and Networking in Astrobiology

The abstracts of oral and poster presentation given at EANA’09 will be published in 2010 in the journal *Origins of Life and Evolution of Biospheres*. They reflect the various facets of European astrobiology activities and achievements that were highlighted by the successful retrieval of the astrobiology exposure facility EXPOSE-E from the ISS after 18 month in space and the on-going preparation of astrobiology missions within our solar system, like ExoMars to planet Mars and MARCO POLO to an asteroid.

In a panel session on October 13, the major European projects related to Astrobiology were presented in short statements as follows: J. Hatton on “ESA Projects in Astrobiology”, N. Walter on “CAREX, Coordination Action for Research Activities on life in Extreme Environments”, H. Lammer on “EuroPlanet”, T. Berger on “HAMLET - Human Model MATROSHKA for Radiation Exposure Determination of Astronauts”, C. Muller on “ULISSE - A Knowledge Management Project for Life and Physical Sciences from the International Space Station”, N. Walter on “THESEUS”, W. Geppert on the COST project “The Chemical Cosmos; Understanding Chemistry in Astronomical Environments”, M. Hofmann on the study of the International Academy of Astronautics “PECB, Protecting the Environment of Celestial Bodies”, M. Burchell on “Astrobiology teaching in U.K”, and M. Sabbatini on “ABC-Net – Astrobiology Lecture Course Network (<http://streamiss.spaceflight.esa.int>)”.

The posters were evaluated by co-chairs according to the scientific and presentation quality and finally 5 poster book awards were granted to A. Perfumo for the poster “Extremophiles Populating Hematite Sand: a Model for Extraterrestrial Investigations?”, to J.P. Mason for the poster “Airborne Dust and Water Vapour at Visible Wavelengths in the Martian Atmosphere”, to A. Probst for the poster “Detection, Sampling and Analysis of Spores on Rough Surfaces in Terms of Planetary Protection”, to S. Denifl for the poster “Chemical Processes of Electrons with Biomolecules Inside Cold Helium Droplets”, and to G. Pani for the poster “Human Monocyte Microtubular Recovery in Simulated Low Gravity after Nocodazole Exposure”. The book awards were donated by the publishers Springer and Cambridge University Press, which is highly appreciated. Thanks to the generous sponsorship by the European Space Agency we were able to provide travel grants to 25 students and young scientists coming from 11 different countries. EANA’09 was also supported by the following Belgian organizations:

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The next annual meeting of EANA, the 10th European Workshop on Astrobiology, will be held on September 6-8, 2010 in Pushchino, Moscow Region, Russia.

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