

ESF Network

Retrotransposons: their impact on organisms, genomes and biodiversity

Second Annual Report, June 2002.

Second ESF workshop

The second workshop of the network "Retrotransposons: Their impact on Organisms, the Genome and Biodiversity" was held in Helsinki (Finland) on June 14-17, 2002, together with the third meeting of the network Coordination Committee. It took place at Vuoranta, a secluded conference center, on the shore of the Baltic sea, and was locally organized by Dr Alan Schulman from the University of Helsinki, who is also Chairman of this ESF Network.

There were 58 participants:

- 34 ESF members, including the Coordination Committee
- 5 invited speakers from the USA and Japan.
- The ESF representative, Ms Marianne Minkowski
- 5 members of Dr Schulman's laboratory that attended the meeting and helped with the practical organization, but did not stay at Vuoranta
- 14 additional persons (mostly Russian or USA) that attended the meeting but paid for their stay.

The financial report of this workshop will be submitted separately. The travel fares of the invited speakers were mostly covered by a grant from the Finnish Academy of Science (see Annex I). A technical problem was encountered concerning paying participants, as some have not yet paid at the time of the meeting, and it is not easy to find traces of each individual payment on the University accounts. Seven travel grants were awarded for travel to participate in the workshop: 3 participants from Russia, 3 from Europe and one from the USA (1/2 flight price). The travel grant budget thus amounted to 2012 € in total for the Helsinki 2002 workshop. The persons and the amounts assigned individually to them is as follows:

- 1) Drs. Isabelle Busseau and Christophe Terzian from IGH-CNRS, Montpellier (France): 535 €
- 2) Dr. Amar Kumar from the Scottish Research Institute, Dundee (UK): 403 €.
- 3) Ms. Elizaveta Y. Mitrenina from Tomsk State University, Tomsk (Russia): 389 €.
- 4) Dr. Yuri B. Lebedev from Shemyakin Institute-Russ.Acad.Sci., Moscow (Russia): 259 €.
- 5) Dr. Michael B. Evgenev from Engelhardt Institute-Russ.Acad.Sci., Moscow (Russia): 216 €.
- 6) Dr. Elena Casacuberta, from MIT, Cambridge-MA (USA): 210 €.

As was the previous workshop in Carry-Le-Rouet, the meeting was very exciting and successful, and allowed the retrotransposon community to discuss new collaborations and to set the direction for future research in Europe.

Third Network Coordination Committee Meeting

The third meeting of the coordination committee was held on June 14, 2002, the first day of the workshop. All members of the committee attended with the exception of Dr. Dusan Kordis, who could not arrive before June 15th, and was replaced by two persons of his lab, Nika Lovsin and Vera Zupunski. Dr Dusan Kordis is the organizer of the next workshop of the network, to be held in Slovenia in 2003.

? Mobility grants 2002

No grants was awarded on the 2002 budget as no application was received. A new call for mobility will be issued for 2003 on the network website.

? Publication and Dissemination

The abstracts for the Carry-le-Rouet 2001 Workshop have been placed on the network website, as well as pictures taken during the meeting. The Helsinki 2002 abstracts will be placed on it very soon. Several persons seem to have encountered difficulties in accessing to the network web page and to the 2001 abstracts. Since these difficulties are not generalized, it is assumed that they are due to problems with software versions.

The Carry-le-Rouet Workshop was publicized in a review article for Trends in Genetics (Flavell A., 2001, Retrotransposons rule in Carry-le-Rouet, TIGS 17, pp 489-490). Andy Flavell will contact TIGS to see if they are interested in a new article on the Helsinki 2002 meeting. If not, Alan Schulman will contact Genome Letters.

Concerning the network Newsletter, the possibility to issue flyers about the results of the Helsinki meeting was discussed, but it was been decided that the website functions de-facto as the Newsletter. The Helsinki meeting has been announced by Christian Biéumont on the different levels (French, European, and International) of the Ted (Transposable Elements Directory) network maintained at CNRS, Gif-sur-Yvette, France. The same procedure will be used to publicize the forthcoming third Workshop.

? Third Workshop

Preliminary planning has begun for the 3rd workshop, to be organized by Dr Dusan Kordis in Slovenia in 2003. The problems of timing conflicts with other meetings, such as the annual Evolution meeting organized by Dr Bernardi in Napoli (Italia) (that was the reason for the late arrival of Dr Dusan Kordis late arrival) was discussed. Dr Nicolaj Junakovic will contact Dr Bernardi, in order to prevent any possible overlap next year. Other meetings to be considered in 2003 are the Retrotransposon meeting organized in April in Russia (which is however *Drosophila*-oriented), the Evolutionary Biology organized each June in Marseille (France) and the Plant Molecular Biology Symposium in Barcelona (Spain) at the end of June. Considering these possible conflicts and also the various national holidays, May 23-26 were chosen as the most convenient dates for the Slovenia meeting.

A meeting place has been found in Lubjana, close to the airport and not far from to the city center. As in the two previous workshops, the scientific meeting and the accommodations will be at the same place. At the time of this committee meeting, the cost of accommodations (including full board) is evaluated as 55 euro a day, so that would amount to 9000 euro for ca 54 participants/three days. According to ESF rules, it will be possible to collect fees from participants for social events. The Committee also recommended to the organization team to preset a fixed amount of reimbursement for the flights of invited speakers, as some Helsinki guest clearly did not try to find cheap flights.

Concerning the meeting content, it was agreed to modify the categories of sessions, as they appeared to somewhat overlap in Helsinki. The Helsinki abstract book will be used to redefine new categories of topics and set up a better organization.