



## Report of the 8th European Workshop on Astrobiology, EANA'08 in Neuchâtel

The last annual meeting of the European Astrobiology Network association EANA (<http://www.astrobiologia.pl/eana/>), the 8<sup>th</sup> European Workshop on Astrobiology, took place September 1-3, 2008 in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, hosted by the Space Exploration Institute. About 100 participants attended the workshop.

The programme of the workshop was mainly aligned to the European activities in astrobiology, with emphasis on the ongoing and planned space experiments and missions, such as the exposure experiments onboard of the International Space Station and the Earth orbiting satellite Foton, the ExoMars mission to our neighbour planet Mars now scheduled for 2016, and Marco Polo, a near Earth object sample return mission, as well as missions to the Jupiter and Saturn systems. The following sessions included oral as well as poster presentations:

1. Steps to life: Astrobiology experiments in space
2. Early biospheres: Environmental conditions and habitability
3. Early biospheres and Panspermia
4. Life at the limits
5. Astrobiology aspects of the solar system: ExoMars
6. Search for signatures of life in the solar system: how to detect?
7. Astrobiology aspects of the solar system: Asteroids and outer planets
8. Astrobiology beyond the solar system
9. Education and outreach

Abstracts will be published in the journal *Origins of Life and Evolution of Biospheres*.

Keynote lectures were given by R. Plason on “Emergence of protometabolisms and the self-organization of non-equilibrium reaction networks”, by G. Feulner on “New insights into the causes of mass extinction”, H. Stan-Lotter on “Extremely halophilic archaea from ancient salt sediments and microbial survival in halite fluid inclusions” and by E. Szuskiewicz on “Time for Super-Earths”. In addition a panel on “Astrobiology worldwide” was organized with statements by S. Ramirez-Jiménez on “Astrobiology in Mexico”, by K. Kobayashi on “Astrobiology in Japan”, by D. Gilichinsky on “Astrobiology in Russia”, by Y. Zhao on “Astrobiology in China”, by C. Pilcher on “Astrobiology at NAI”, and M. Zell on “Astrobiology at ESA” (the latter presented by G. Horneck).

For the first time, 2 poster awards were given after careful evaluation by members of the Scientific Organizing Committee. The recipients were P. Dalai of the Institute of Chemistry, University of Hohenheim, Stuttgart, Germany for the poster “The influence of clay mineral on the behaviour of glycine at 200 degrees Celsius” and P. Vitek of the Institute of Geochemistry, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic for the poster “Identification of  $\beta$ -carotene in an evaporitic matrix by Raman micro-spectroscopy: implications for astrobiological research on Mars.” As price, they received the book “Complete course in astrobiology” edited by G. Horneck and P. Rettberg, that is based on the Astrobiology Lecture

Course Network, a real-time European video lecturing program connecting up to 10 universities and was technically managed by ESA. The lectures are available under <http://streamiss.spaceflight.esa.int>. Thanks to general sponsorship by ESA, travel grants were given to 22 students or young scientists. The workshop hosted also an art exhibition with paintings by M. Welzel and a book exhibition by Cambridge University Press. The workshop was further sponsored by the city and the county of Neuchâtel, which is greatly appreciated. We are especially grateful to Jean-Luc Josset and his skilful team that gave us a warm and heartily welcome and provided all means for an efficient workshop. We still remember the excellent cookies served for the coffee breaks and the wonderful dinner at the Lake of Neuchâtel.

The next meeting, the 9<sup>th</sup> European Workshop on Astrobiology, will be held on October 12-14, 2009 in Brussels.

Gerda Horneck

President of EANA