

Louis Legendre :

I am Louis Legendre, the Deputy Scientific Director of EUR-OCEANS. In order to address the questions just described by Pr. Treguer, we created the European Network of Excellence, EUR-OCEANS. EUR-OCEANS consists of 66 research organisations, from 25 different countries. In these organisations, we have chosen 160 principal investigators who are researchers of very high calibre, who in fact act as ambassadors of the network in their research organisations, so that we have about a thousand researchers from the organisations and graduate students who participate in EUR-OCEANS. Being a network of excellence, EUR-OCEANS has 2 types of objectives: some are about science, and other ones are about creating a network.

The overall scientific objective of the network is to develop models for assessing and forecasting the impact of climate and anthropogenic forcings on the dynamics of the foodweb in pelagic ecosystems - by pelagic we mean ecosystems that are in the water column, in which we find plankton, fish, etc. On the other hand, we also have networking objectives and in general what we wish is to achieve lasting integration of European research organisations on global change and pelagic marine ecosystems. Our approach toward this is as follows. Before 2005 we had in Europe a large number of research organisations working more or less independently. 66 of them came together from 25 different countries, and did an initial step of integration by creating EUR-OCEANS. And this is what we are doing now, from 2005 until 2008. At the end of 2008, the network will end, and we wish to have at this stage a lasting integration of research organisations in Europe called the EUR-OCEANS Institute.

Our approach in creating the network was to start from the programs of member organisations that existed, funded by different countries, and also general scientific questions like those raised by Professor Treguer. We used them as the bases of the network, and together we have different types of activities. Some are integrating activities, like sharing facilities, communicating within the network, etc ; integrating data that exists on marine ecosystems all over the place and must be brought together and also integrate models of different types that exist also that must be organised together in order to answer our scientific questions. An other of our aspects is to spread excellence, that is we train future researchers and other key staff, we transfer our knowledge to socio-economic users in Europe and also we transfer our knowledge to the general public. And finally, and in fact it comes firstly in a sense, we execute a research together and these research programs are conducted in 7 geographic systems: this is the Arctic and Nordic seas, the Baltic sea, the Mediterranean sea, the North Atlantic Ocean in general, and also more specifically on the north Atlantic shelves of Europe, in the Southern Ocean (this is the Antarctic Ocean) and finally, in what we call the Eastern Boundary Upwelling System.