



Climate change and oceans ecosystems : More than 1000 European school pupils express their voices

EUR-OCEANS, April 22nd 2008 - The impact of climate change and human activities on oceans ecosystems is one major challenge for the future of the planet. This scientific, economic and social issue, is the "raison d'être" of the EUR-OCEANS Network of Excellence. These issues have received significant attention in the popular media, sometimes being dramatised or even wrongly interpreted.

If the youngest generations are more and more sensitive to this topic, how are they affected by this kind of information? How do they see the future of oceans ecosystems and of the planet? EUR-OCEANS is trying to answer those questions, by giving free reign to the imagination and creativity of more than 1000 pupils of European schools to produce short films on the subject.

Scientists and young generations facing climate change

EUR-OCEANS has set up a complete education program for European schools allowing the teachers and pupils to have access to high quality scientific information. Willing to go further in the communication between both scientific and schools communities concerned by climate change and oceans ecosystems, EUR-OCEANS has organised an ambitious European schools film contest.

European film contest : Think, act and communicate

The main objective of this film competition was to show, especially to the scientific community, how this issue is perceived by children from different European countries but also to encourage pupils to think about the issues and raise awareness through action. The scripts had to reflect the school's children point of view and their capacity to objectively use scientific information to create a fictional or documentary style film.

First step : the script contest

More than 1000 pupils from 53 classes of all levels (primary and secondary) over 8 countries (France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, United-Kingdom and The Netherlands) have participated to the national selections of the contest. Aged from 6 to 18 years old, the children had to imagine, write and develop a scenario then build a script for a 4 to 6 minutes film relating to "*Climate change and human activities impact on oceans ecosystems*". The scripts have been evaluated by EUR-OCEANS juries including specialists in the science, education and media world following criteria such as originality of the scenario, writing quality, content and scientific accuracy.

Humour and science-fiction to communicate real and common fears

In participating countries, children are very concerned, and worked very hard. It has been a difficult process for the EUR-OCEANS juries to select one script among all the good ones received. Science-fiction and humour are the preferred styles to express the messages - which are deliberately alarmists. Children, future citizens of the planet, are more than ever conscious of communicating to the general public the importance of scientific research, exchange between communities. After this first step, 8 schools have won the chance to produce their films with the help of EUR-OCEANS teams.

Pupils invited at the European Commission for the award ceremony of the contest!

The next step of the competition, representatives of pupils of the 8 classes and their teachers will be invited to the European Commission, in Brussels (Belgium) on June 5th 2008, during the "Green Week" to present and defend their films at the European final of the contest.

Mr. Joe Borg (http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/borg/index_en.htm), European commissioner for fisheries and maritime affairs and Honorary Chairman of the contest will hand out the prize of 5000€ worth in educational tools to the winning class.

EUR-OCEANS will be present at "Green Week". Come visit us at Stand 21, 1st Floor of the Charlemagne building, Rue de la Loi 170, Brussels (Belgium) (more information on <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/greenweek/home.html>).

About EUR-OCEANS and the Public Outreach team

EUR-OCEANS (European Network of Excellence for Ocean Ecosystems Analysis) is a network of excellence co-funded by the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development of the European Communities (FP6).

.The network gathers more than 500 researchers from 60 research institutes and universities from 25 countries. Its activities started in January 2005, running for 4 years until December 2008. The specificity of the Networks of Excellence is that they are not simply an additional research programme. Their purpose is to structure/federate European research in an area of excellence.

Apart from willing to stimulate exchange and cooperation in the scientific field, a last but not least fundamental issue for EUR-OCEANS is communication towards the society. EUR-OCEANS makes strong efforts to strengthen the link with the European public and the socio-economic groups directly concerned by the results of the undertaken research programmes.

As this goal can only be achieved if an effective use and transfer of the information is ensured, a network of European Aquaria (EUR-OCEANS Outreach Team) has been created to be the interface between the scientific research and the general public.

This network comprises 10 aquaria and/or scientific centres as well as the European Union of Aquarium Curators.

More info on <http://www.eur-oceans.info>

Contact EUR-OCEANS Public Outreach:

Marine CRENN - EUR-OCEANS Public Outreach
Océanopolis - Port de Plaisance du Moulin Blanc
29200 Brest - France
Tel: +33 (0) 2 98 34 40 63
www.eur-oceans.info
www.eur-oceans.eu