EUROPEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Dr Ed Urban
Executive Director of the Scientific Committee
on Oceanic Research (SCOR)
College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment
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Strasbourg, April 14th, 2010

Dear Dr. Urban,

I am writing you regarding the recently launched European Science Foundation (ESF) European Trans-Atlantic Coral Ecosystem Study (EuroTRACES) research funding Programme, which aims to create a network of European researchers collaborating on the fields of research already developed by the U.S. Programme Trans-Atlantic Coral Ecosystem Study (TRACES).

The last ten years have seen great advances in our understanding of cold-water corals as significant ecological "engineers" on the continental shelf, offshore banks, seamounts and canyons. Cold-water corals can develop large deep-water reef frameworks, providing complex three-dimensional habitat for diverse associated fauna or long-lasting habitat, notably on seamounts and mid-ocean ridges.

EuroTRACES aims to attract the wider marine science community, including many who have not previously worked with cold-water corals. In terms of ocean climate studies, records of palaeo-productivity and palaeo-ocean circulation represent vital contributions to our basic understanding of the drivers of deep-sea biota at ecological timescales. Particularly exciting opportunities exist to use geochemical tracers identified in both deep-sea sediments and coral habitats, rich in associated species, and dynamic in terms of local sedimentary regimes. Recent research shows that over the last 200,000 years, cold-water corals thrive in certain periods but are absent during others, often correlating with numerous periods of rapid climate change over the past 25,000 years and more, offering thus tremendous potential for broad, interdisciplinary deep-sea research.

EuroTRACES, as the European counterpart of TRACES, provides a bridge between marine biology, geology, physics, palaeoceanography and maritime policy: it generates a comprehensive study of

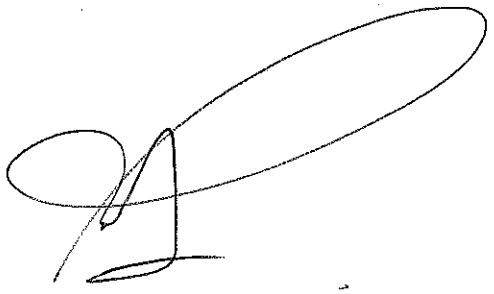
Atlantic cold-water coral ecosystems and of the related climate records, providing data needed for their long-term conservation.

In this framework, the proposal for a working SCOR group entitled 'Global Analysis of cold-water Coral Ecosystems' (GLACES), aiming to further develop TRACES to a global study of cold-water corals, will play a crucial role in bridging the TRACES and EuroTRACES activities, promoting a comprehensive and international approach to the study of deep corals.

I would like to express my full support towards the working SCOR group GLACES and I hope that you would consider this proposal for funding.

I am also looking forward to further explore with you future common grounds of activities between SCOR and ESF, which will promote excellence in collaborative worldwide research.

Sincerely,



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