

TRANS-NATIONAL ACCESS TO BRCs WITH EMbaRC: A USER-ORIENTED APPROACH TO FOSTER RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

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The European Consortium of Microbial Resource Centres (EMbaRC) is a Research Infrastructure project gathering 8 major microbial Biological Resource Centres (BRCs) in Europe. It aims at improving, coordinating and validating microbial resource delivery to European and international researchers from public and private sectors. A major action in EMbaRC is to set up a Training and Outreach Programme, providing European research teams with physical access not only to microbial BRCs holding bacteria, yeasts, filamentous fungi and plasmids, but also to associated installations and expertise. Through EU-funded study visits for 1 to 6 weeks, European scientists performed experiments in various fields of microbiology. Researchers used advanced techniques for identification and typing of micro-organisms: molecular biology (16S rDNA sequencing, DNA-DNA hybridization, AFLP, PFGE, RAPD, FISH) and chemotaxonomy (MALDI-TOF, FTIR, FAME, enzyme activity high throughput screening). Phenotypic characterisation of isolates (bacteriocin or enzyme production) was also carried out, in some cases to develop polyphasic approaches for identification. Access to microscopic facilities (confocal and epifluorescence microscopes) was also provided, notably to biofilm-related projects. In most of the cases, access provision was also an opportunity to disseminate good practices in collection and database management, including preservation techniques and appropriate use of public sequence databases, fostering the operation of European microbial collections according to appropriate standards and methods. This action also impacts on students thanks to the access given to academic users.

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