



**ECCO XXIV**  
**Annual general Meeting**  
**of the**  
**European Culture Collections' organization**

**EUROPEAN CULTURE COLLECTIONS:**  
**RESOURCES FOR BIOLOGY AND**  
**BIOTECHNOLOGY**

**Organized by**  
**Microbial Strain Collection of Latvia**  
**University of Latvia**  
**RIGA, LATVIA**  
**May 25-27, 2005**

## ***Erasmus Mundus* MSc in Preservation and Management of Microbial Diversity**

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The European Parliament has established the *Erasmus Mundus* programme for the (i) enhancement of quality in higher education and (ii) promotion of the intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries. This programme is being implemented by 4 actions: (i) *Erasmus Mundus* master (MSc) courses which must involve a minimum of 3 higher education institutions (HEI) in 3 Member States with a study programme including a period of study in at least 2 of the 3 HEI. The MSc must have mechanisms for the recognition of periods of study at partner institutions and must result in the awarding of joint, double or multiple degrees by the participating HEI which are recognised or approved by the Member States. A minimum number of places for third-country students and transparent admission conditions are compulsory; (ii) Scholarships to support third-country graduate students and researchers attending MSc must be available; (iii) Partnerships with third-country HEI are eligible to promote the mobility between countries; (iv) Promotional activities to enhance the attractiveness of Europe as a venue for study are considered. The programme is open to the 25 Member States of the Community, the countries of the European Economic Area/European Free Trade Association (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway), the candidate countries for accession to the EU (Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey), and all the other countries of the world ("third-countries").

Given that the European Culture Collections' Organisation (ECCO) stated in article 3 of its mission the (i) encouragement of the study of procedures for the isolation, culture, characterisation, conservation, and distribution of microorganisms and to publish those procedures and (ii) promotion of the training of personnel in the operation of culture collections, these two objectives fit well with the aims of the *Erasmus Mundus* programme. Additionally, ECCO, as a European platform of excellence in **Preservation and Management of Microbial Diversity**, is in an excellent position to organise an *Erasmus Mundus* MSc. A well organised and attractive MSc proposal, covering the most relevant issues in **Preservation and Management of Microbial Diversity**, will (i) underpin the ECCO liaisons with HEI, (ii) foster and expand the ECCO to multilateral cooperation with EU and third-countries; (iii) educate young students while allowing mobility and exchange of new ideas; and (iv) create excellent research programmes leading to a MSc degrees.

The general framework of the *Erasmus Mundus* programme and how the ECCO members can embrace the project will be presented.

For further information see the official website of *Erasmus Mundus* programme:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/mundus/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html)