

The “Educational Network on Soil and Plant Ecology and Management” (EduSaPMan)

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A very important dimension of allelopathic interactions is the substrate. Plant secondary metabolites can for example accumulate in soil and influence the growth of other organisms in the surrounding environment. Abiotic factors like water supply and soil properties can influence the production and distribution of secondary metabolites. Therefore it is essential to fully understand soil and water ecology when investigating allelopathic effects via soil substrates.

In this context, we created the Strategic Partnership (ERASMUS+). The project has the aim to specialise students in the important field of soil and water ecology and management, providing a European scope. It is built up of researchers from four different universities covering a European north-south transect, namely the Ulm University in Germany, the University of South Bohemia in Czech Republic, the Aix-Marseille University in France and the Estonian University of Life Sciences. The network emphasises biological interactions with soils, and soil related processes. We merge the versatile expertise from different geographical and climatic regions. Such international education activity in this interdisciplinary science is a novelty at the European level.

An important activity of the network is the international Summer School “Soil & Water”. Researchers from all partner institutions participate with lectures. Students gain profound and advanced, local and global knowledge, as well as practical skills in soil and plant ecology. The involved researchers provide added value through their diverse and complementary expert knowledge.

Further, the networking of the participating researchers in the field of soil-related sciences and soil management is promoted, as to stimulate the forming of research collaborations across Europe.