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Proceedings of the International Congress on *Ostreopsis* Development (ICOD, April 2011, France)

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In the last decade a large attention have been paid on the blooming of the several species belonging to the genus *Ostreopsis* (benthic dinoflagellates), which have become quite common in temperate seas. Species belonging to this genus have been reported all around the Mediterranean Sea and their bloom dynamics have been studied in different areas, showing a large range of variability in terms of intensity, time of occurrence, environmental drivers. So far, *Ostreopsis* blooms along the Mediterranean coasts have caused periodic relevant alterations in water quality, as well as death of benthic invertebrates, and before when particularly intense, blooms have been accompanied by many cases of severe human intoxications, most possibly caused by marine aerosol. A wide research effort has been developed in the last years in some countries (*e.g.*, Italy, France and Spain), through the networking of many groups active in the area with distinct, but complementary, scientific and technical expertise. They have initiated several research projects devoted to specific issues related to marine biotoxins and toxic algae physiology, biogeography and ecology.

From all the above, it is quite evident that the occurrence of *Ostreopsis* blooms has a wide range of implications, from human health to economy, and ecosystem management. In order to gather most of the scientists around the Mediterranean and from other temperate areas affected by *Ostreopsis* blooms, "The International Conference on *Ostreopsis* Development (ICOD)" took place in Villefranche-sur-Mer, France, on 6-8 April 2011. The aim of this conference was to synthesize the knowledge and enhance comprehensive and collaborative studies in the fields of 1) ecological, chemical and toxicological aspects of *Ostreopsis* species as well as 2) assessing the different methods for monitoring the ecologic and economic impact of *Ostreopsis* (including public health management).

The overarching aim of the conference was to favor the exchange between scientists, policy makers and managers of Mediterranean and other temperate countries, in order to optimize the knowledge transfer and reduce the

risks linked to the development of *Ostreopsis*. The event was realized in the activities of the French Phycological Society, whose 2011 meeting was held in the previous days.

The meeting was a success (welcoming over 70 scientists and policy makers) with 4 plenary lectures given by Nick Shears (New-Zeland), Antonella Penna (Italy), Takeshi Yasumoto (Japan) and Rosella Bertolotto (Italy), more than 25 talks and over 20 poster presentations, addressing ecology, biogeography and impacts on coastal ecosystems, secondary metabolites and toxicity, environmental, health and economic management.

The conference was organized by the invited editors of this special issue in Cryptogamie-Algologie (Rodolphe Lemée, Mariachiara Chiantore and Luisa Mangialajo), with the help of the Scientific committee, made up of 16 people, beyond the Organizing committee:

Aligizaki Katerina, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece,
Amzil Zouher, Ifremer, Centre de Nantes, France,
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During the meeting two round tables were organized. The first round table focused on "Secondary metabolites and toxicity of *Ostreopsis*", and the second on "Environmental, health and economic management: state of the art and perspectives". The output of both round tables was summarized in this volume.