

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/
Conference Title:** EMPSEB20 (20th European Meeting of PhD students in Evolutionary
Biology)

Travel Dates: 1-6. September 2014.
La Roche en-Ardene, Belgium

Location: Nikola Petkovic

Group member(s):

Aims: Give an oral presentation, practicing communication in English,
connecting with other students and researchers

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

I am very grateful to James Rennie Bequest for providing me travel funding, which helped me attend the EMSEB20 conference.

This conference annually assembles European PhD students in various fields of Evolutionary Biology. This year, there were 70 attendees, from 17 different countries and 3 continents. This was my debut at conferences and my main objective was to get the first experience in oral presentation. I consider this as a very important step in developing my academic skills. Furthermore, this was an excellent opportunity to meet other PhD students, introduce myself with their work and expand my knowledge.

Giving a talk was a very good experience. I generally received good comments and many people were willing to discuss my work after the presentation. I received useful advices and suggestions regarding the future work. Each participant received the feedback in a written form, which I considered very practical. Plenary speakers covered various topics, and one was particularly inspiring for me given that it was related to my project: "Genomic evidence for ameiotic evolution and adaptation without sex in a bdelloid rotifer lineage". Many talks were not related to my field of research, but still I enjoyed, given that I was poorly informed about the subject (for instance, genetic background of evolutionary innovations). Presentations of students were run in two parallel sessions, and each student gave a brief, but informative 20-minute talk. I was impressed by some speakers, and this was a great opportunity for me to learn what it takes to give a convincing talk. I have made new friendships and created a network of potential collaborators. I have also learned a lot about country I have visited for the first time.

Overall, I very appreciate this new and exciting experience, which helped me make one further step in developing my scientific career. After the conference, I felt inspired for work and more confident in my oral skills.