

Spotlight on science

This summer, EMBL's sites have welcomed a large number of high-profile visits from journalists, students and other important guests



Media under the microscope

In July, science communicators from across Europe were given a taste of life at EMBL as part of a three-day visit to Heidelberg organised jointly by EMBL and the German Cancer Research Centre (DKFZ). Scientists from both institutions gave lectures and participants, who are all members of the European Union of Science Journalists' Associations, toured laboratories and Core Facilities and took part in evening networking events. Collaborative projects connecting basic science and medicine between EMBL and DKFZ were a key focus during the visit of 22 journalists from 11 countries.

Marta Palomo, a science communicator from Barcelona said: "The research that both institutions are performing is really at an amazing level and the scientists have an extraordinary capacity for synthesis and communication." Gorm Palmgren, a Danish journalist who contributes to *Science Illustrated* magazine, added: "We heard research scientist Mani Arumugam talking about gut flora, and I expect to write a big article on this subject."

Summer of science

High-school students swapped bucket and spade for pipette and ice bath at summer schools organised at EMBL Heidelberg and EMBL Monterotondo. Participants took part in workshops, featuring a mix of seminars, experiments and tours of laboratories and Core Facilities. A key emphasis was placed on interdisciplinary research, and groups of students were given a number tasks, including making presentations at a level appropriate to both scientists and the public on research such as model organisms and advanced light microscopy. In Heidelberg, a highlight for visitors was a careers panel consisting of pre- and postdocs and staff scientists who matched the nationalities represented in the group and shared their experiences of working in the sciences. In Monterotondo, the emphasis on hands-on experience gave participants the opportunity to work in research groups at EMBL and partner institutions CNR and University La Sapienza.



Learning about research

A large number of other visits took place across EMBL sites during the action-packed summer months. EMBL-EBI hosted a visit of the London International Youth Science Forum, with over 300 of the world's leading young scientists travelling to Hinxton to learn more about the centre of excellence for bioinformatics research. Meanwhile, EMBL Heidelberg hosted visits from several groups, including 40 of the most talented students in Spain as part of the Becas Europa initiative – a three-week tour of some of Europe's most important universities and institutions. Other visits included students from the US, Canada and the UK, visiting as part of the Research Internships in Science and Engineering (RISE) programme, which provides opportunities for undergraduate students to work with leading research groups across Germany and two winners of the EMBL prize from the European Union Contest for Young Scientists, Kristina Aare (2009) and Raghd Rostom (2010) both completed internships at EMBL Heidelberg (see page 8).