Report

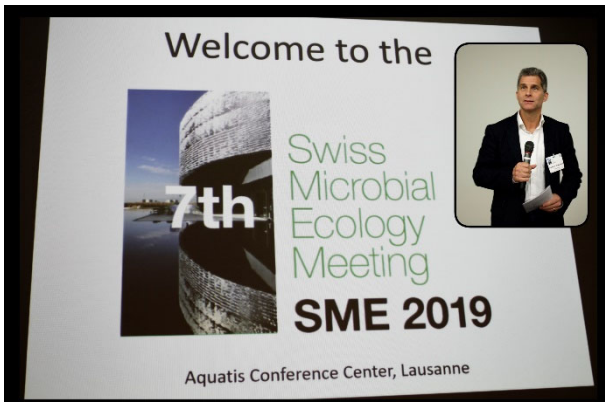
SME 2019 – 7th Swiss Microbial Ecology Meeting

30 January -1 February 2019 at Aquatic Conference Center, Lausanne, Switzerland

An initiative of the SGM-SSM, the Swiss Microbial Ecology meetings are regular gatherings of the Swiss Microbial Ecology community. The meetings bring together senior scientist and early career researchers working in Switzerland. We focus on giving young researchers in this field an opportunity to present their work, discuss it with colleagues, and to extend their network among the Swiss Microbial Ecologists and beyond. It is a key event to foster contacts between the different groups that are active in this field in Switzerland. Invited speakers provide in-depth looks at cutting edge research projects and bring new ideas and different perspectives to each meeting.

The seventh edition, enabled by generous contributions of EPFL, ISME, SCNAT, SGM-SSM, and SNSF, took place end of January 2019 at the Aquatis Conference Center in Lausanne. The total number of attendants of SME 2019 was 102, including 9 invited speakers. We obtained a good gender balance (47% female) among participants and a good participation of PhD students (50%). Among the Swiss participants we had representatives of all language regions (D: 40; F: 47; I: 7) and 13 research institutions with in total 30 research groups.

The motto of SME 2019 was “the incredible diversity of microbial ecology research” which was well represented in the scientific program. It consisted of 9 invited keynote lectures and 29 contributed talks organized into 6 sessions. A total of 40 posters were presented in two poster sessions. The renowned invited speakers were Karsten Zengler, UC San Diego, USA; Nicole Dubilier, MPI Bremen, Germany; Alfons Stams, University of Wageningen, The Netherlands; Shinichi Sunagawa, ETH Zürich, Switzerland; Paul Hoskisson, University of Strathclyde, Great Britain; Tania Bosak, MIT Cambridge, USA; Frank Oliver Glöckner, MPI Bremen, Germany; Jean-Marc Ghigo, Institut Pasteur, Paris, France; Soren Molin, DTU Copenhagen, Denmark. A poster prize (sponsored through the ISME ambassador program) was awarded after review of the posters by a panel of three senior scientists. The prize for the winning Poster *“Unveiling biofilm architectural differentiation in sedimentary environments”* by David Scheidweiler, Hannes Peter, Pietro de Anna, and Tom Battin, was awarded at the conclusion of the conference.

The meeting provided a great overview at the vibrant microbial ecology research carried out in Switzerland, and a great opportunity to meet leading national and international scientists in a very personal setting. The scientific discussions were intense and social exchange at joint coffee breaks, meals, and drinks allowed to make new contacts and launch new collaborative research.

Impressions from SME 2019: