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Automated in vivo approaches for characterizing HAB in coastal waters: the JERICO-Next European Research Infrastructure.

Luis Felipe Artigas[*] [1], Bengt Karlson[2], Mike Brosnahan[3], Pascal Claquin[4], Véronique Créach[5], Reinhoud De Blok[6], Elisabeth Debusschere[7], Klaas Deneudt[7], Fernando Gómez[1], Gérald Grégori[8], Pierre-Alexandre Hébert[9], Jacco Kromkamp[10], Alain Lefebvre[11], Sirpa Lehtinen[12], Fabrice Lizon[1], Arnaud Louchart[1], Klas Möller[13], Emilie Poisson-Caillault[9], Machteld Rijkeboer[14], Melilotus Thyssen[8], Jukka Seppälä[12], Lars Stemmann[15], Arnold Veen[14], Guillaume Wacquet[1]

[1]Laboratory of Oceanology and Geosciences (LOG), CNRS-ULCO-UDL, Wimereux, France, [2]Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI), Norrköping, Sweden, [3]Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, United States, [4]Biologie des Organismes et Ecosystèmes Aquatiques (BOREA), CNRS-University of Caen, Caen, France, [5] Center for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), Lowestoft, United Kingdom, [6]Protistology and Aquatic Ecology, Ghent University, Ghent, [7]Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee (VLIZ), Ostende, Belgium, [8]Institut Méditerranéen d'Océanologie, CNRS-AMU, Marseille, [9]Laboratoire d'Informatique Signal et Image de la Côte d'Opale (LISIC), ULCO, Calais, France, [10]Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ), Yerseke, Netherlands, [11] Laboratoire Environnement Ressources, IFREMER, Boulogne sur Mer, France, [12]SYKE Finnish Environmental Institute, Helsinki, Finland, [13]Institute for Coastal Research, Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht (HZG), Geesthacht, Germany, [14] Centre for Water Management - Laboratory for hydrobiological analysis, Waterdienst - RWS, Lelystad, Netherlands, [15] Laboratoire d'Océanographie de Villefranche, Sorbonne Universités, Villefranche sur Mer, France

*Presenting author

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Abstract: In order to better understand phytoplankton temporal and spatial distribution in coastal systems, automated *in vivo* approaches are being deployed since the last decade. These innovative techniques provide new insights into the detection of phytoplankton community changes affecting growth rates, size structure, taxonomic and/or pigmentary composition, which can occur at different time and spatial scales, evidencing rapid as well as long-term changes in environmental conditions. When implemented in automated environmental monitoring platforms, as fixed stations, moorings, research vessels and/or ships of opportunity, these techniques can represent valuable early-warning systems of community changes, as the occurrence of blooms and, in particular, of harmful algal blooms (HAB), which can lead to disruption of marine food webs and mass mortalities of marine organisms and which are of special interest in areas of fishing, aquaculture and tourism. Therefore, there is an urgent need to improve the discrimination and operability of automated techniques addressing phytoplankton diversity (at nearly taxonomical and/or functional levels) and productivity in order to provide early warning platforms for the occurrence, duration and spatial extent of phytopankton blooms and, by extent, of noxious episodes. The Joint European Research Infrastructure network for Coastal Observatories – Novel Expertise for coastal observatories (JERICO-Next – H2020, 2015-2019), scientists inter compare, work on technical and analytical improvements and apply a combination of phytoplankton automated observation approaches, based on single cell/particle or bulk optical characteristics, in several European coastal systems ranging from oligotrophic (West Mediterranean) to mesotrophic (southern Bay of Biscay, Celtic seas) and eutrophic systems (eastern Channel, southern North Sea, Skagerrak/Kattegat, Baltic Sea), characterised by different types of potential HABs developments (dinoflagellates, diatoms, haptophytes, cyanobactetria). Three main groups of techniques, image in-flow or *in situ* acquisition and analysis, pulse shape-recording automated flow cytometry, as well as multispectral and variable fluorometry and spectrophotometry, are being critically explored and implemented in different sites and platforms. A summary of the main results gathered by a combination of these techniques is presented. Moreover, recommendations on future applications of these techniques and remaining challenges are discussed in the frame of their implementation in operational marine observing systems.