

September 18, 2017

Dear DoLS team,

I was awarded a DoLS travel award that allowed me to attend the 2017 Congress of the European Society for Evolutionary Biology in Groningen, the Netherlands between the 20th and 25th of August 2017.

This conference takes place every two years and is a unique forum for interdisciplinary evolutionary biology, as it attracts participants from a wide range of subfields, spanning the continuum from genomic evolution to eco-evolutionary dynamics. The number of participants for this year was around 1500, whereas up to 8 parallel symposia were being held at any given time. Some of those include "Adaptation to global climate change", "Phylogenetics in the genomic era", "Eco-evolutionary dynamics", and "Modern quantitative genetics and the study of adaptation". Many of the talks in these symposia were of interest and relevance to my PhD research, as they introduced new algorithms or presented theoretical and experimental work with a focus on understanding how species adapt to changing environments.

I gave an oral presentation with the title "*Niche convergence in the macroevolution of thermal sensitivity of phytoplankton growth rate*" in the "Adaptation to global climate change" symposium. In this project – which is a key part of my PhD – I have been investigating how the thermal sensitivity of growth rate evolves among phytoplankton. In particular, I have been testing a number of different competing hypotheses by fitting models of trait macroevolution on a global physiological dataset which was collated from the literature.

Presenting this project to an audience of evolutionary biologists gave me the opportunity to increase my visibility in the field of evolutionary thermal biology, establish connections, and obtain feedback on my research from leading experts in the field. I am thus grateful to the DoLS judging panel for supporting me with this travel award.

Yours sincerely,



Dimitrios - Georgios Kontopoulos