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Kastoria 14-21 September, 2014



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**17th Workshop of the International Association of
Phytoplankton Taxonomy and Ecology (IAP)
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SCHEDULE

AND

BOOK OF ABSTRACT

Lake Tovel, an ecological research station within the LTER and NETLAKE perspective

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Lake Tovel is a LTER research site (IT09-005-A) within the larger *Mountain Lakes* parent site (IT-009-000-A). It is also part of NETLAKE (EU Cost Action ES 1201) that aims to build a network of sites and individuals to support the development and deployment of sensor-based systems in lakes, and promote their use to address water issues in Europe. Long-term ecological datasets collected in a consistent way over time offer the opportunity to study the response of an ecosystem to environmental stressors. Mountain lakes, because of their sensitivity to environmental changes, can be used as early warning systems for climate change and are ideal study sites to investigate ecological processes at the whole-ecosystem level. Furthermore, their phytoplankton communities are frequently made up of difficult to identify small flagellates, often limiting the taxonomic resolution achieved.

Despite the strategic importance of our environment, citizens often have a poor understanding of environmental issues, even though they make the management decisions that will affect ecosystems. Lake Tovel provided the ideal setting for addressing these different topics – phytoplankton taxonomy and citizens' education.

NETLAKE supported a Short-Term Scientific Mission for a trained phycologist who provided a more refined taxonomic definition of Tovel phytoplankton, thereby strengthening the basis for future studies on phytoplankton communities. A further objective of NETLAKE was to raise citizen awareness of local lakes and build a network of LakePals within Europe. These objectives were achieved by increasing lake visibility to the public by setting up a dedicated website and positioning a webcam, donated by the local bank *Cassa Rurale Tuenno*. In addition, the local middle school, along with other European classes, participated in the WaterPals initiative geared to inform children about their environmental heritage regarding Lake Tovel. This is particularly important because these children will be the decision makers of tomorrow.