MOMARnet: MOnitoring deep sea floor hydrothermal environments on the Mid Atlantic Ridge: A Marie Curie Research Training Network funded by the European Commission

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The MOMARnet Marie Curie Research Training Network aims at strengthening the European approach to deep seafloor observatory science and technology, by reinforcing the links between 14 laboratories in 8 european countries, by training a multidiciplinary group of young researchers, and by producing new science and preparing for new seagoing cruises and seafloor experiments. The young researchers hired by the network are mostly of pre-doc level. Their training plan aims at providing them with a solid awareness of the scientific issues and specific operational needs of the other disciplines involved in deep-seafloor monitoring research.

MOMARnet science contributes to the implementation of the MOMAR (« MOnitoring the Mid-Atlantic Ridge ») international project of setting up a multidiciplinary

sea-floor observatory for monitoring hydrothermal vent environments along the Mid-Atlantic ridge close to the Azores archipelago. MOMARnet is funded for 4 years (starting from sept 2004) and has two broad research targets:

- Understanding the dynamics of slow-spreading ridge hydrothermal vents and their plumbing system (depth of seawater circulation, heat sources, feedback between volcanic, hydrothermal and seismic events)

- Understanding deep-seafloor hydrothermal ecosystems, including their distribution, role and variety of organisms, life cycles, effects of changes in the hydrothermal outflow (temperature, flowrate, chemistry, etc.)

This research directly addresses the geological, chemical and biological processes active in deep-sea chemosynthetic environments, at scales ranging from regional (a few hundred kilometers along the ridge axis), to the scale of vent organisms (centimeter-scale and beyond).

Please check the MoMARnet web site (http://www.momarnet.org) for further information about this research, the network's participants, and the description and schedule of MoMARnet training courses.