



CEMOCOast – Citizen Science between environmental education and monitoring of coralligenous reefs in areas affected by changing coastal uses

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CEMOCOast aims to investigate the potential of the Citizen Science (CS) in the assessment of the environmental status of Mediterranean coralligenous reefs. Endemic bioherms built by calcifying Rhodophytes under dim-light conditions, coralligenous reefs sustain several ecosystem services, with high ecological, socio-economic and cultural value. Favourite diving spots in the Mediterranean Sea, they recently became the object of a specific CS initiative : CIGESMED for divers (<http://cs.cigesmed.eu>). Through the application of a specific observational protocol, CIGESMED for divers provides the collection of data about general features, specific composition and potential threats of coralligenous reefs. The first aim of this project is to investigate whether there is a relationship between the data obtained by CS observations and the ecological status of coralligenous reefs. Once identified the descriptors that better respond to the variation of the health state of the habitat, we aim to develop simplified tools (indicators/indices) to assess coralligenous ecological status on the basis of CS observations. The degradation of coralligenous reefs may have significant consequences from the ecological, socioeconomic and cultural points of view. Therefore, an accurate monitoring is necessary for the sustainable management of the coastal areas, especially in highly anthropized zones. With this project, we intend to provide the knowledge and the methodological bases necessary to implement a CS-based monitoring network in areas (Marseille and Balagne) affected by changing coastal uses and policies.