

École de Technologie Supérieure (ETS) du Québec wins SAUC-Europe '12

École de Technologie Supérieure (ETS) du Québec, Canada, triumphed over 14 other teams to win the SAUC-E 2012, the 7th Student Autonomous Underwater Challenge - Europe. The team's AUV named "SONIA" obtained the highest score, successfully completing a number of mission tasks. The second prize went to University of Luebeck from Germany (2011 Champion) with its AUV "Hanse", while ENSTA Bretagne team Saucisse and Sardine from France took home the third prize, closely followed by team AVALON from University of Bremen who entered the final phase as "best qualifier".

The other prizes were awarded to the University of Florence team that won the "Rockie of the Year Award", the University of Luebeck with team SMART-E that won the "Design & Innovation Award", Cambridge University that won the "Engineering Award", the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria that won the "Impress the Judges Award", the ESIEA Paris with Aquatis that won the "Best Use of Resources Award", the ESIEA Paris with team Ryujin that won the "Affordability Award", the University of West England that won the "Smart Technology Award", Heriot-Watt University that won the "Multinational Award".

The competition was hosted for the third time, from 6 to 13 July 2012, by the Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation (CMRE), formerly known as the NATO Undersea Research Centre (NURC) at its waterfront, in La Spezia, Italy. Each year SAUC-E challenges multidisciplinary University teams (consisting at least of 75% student members) to design and build Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) capable of performing realistic missions. The student AUVs must perform a series of tasks autonomously in a sheltered sea harbour, with no control, guidance or communication from a person or from any off-board computer including GPS systems. The competition encourages students to think about underwater technology and related applications while fostering innovation and technology in cooperation within the NATO countries; SAUC-E was in fact identified as an event that matched CMRE's mission to use AUVs as a new way of thinking and in the spirit of Smart Defence.

The 2012 edition saw the debut of the new NATO Engineering Support Team (NEST) for Student Autonomous Underwater Challenge - Europe and of the new SAUC-E Collaborative Platform, both aimed at strengthening scientific knowledge and engineering competences in the spirit of Smart Defence. This year's SAUC-E event also partnered with the Marine Robotic System of Self-Organizing, Logically Linked Physical Nodes (MORPH) European Project summer school, with top international researchers giving lessons to students.

The first three winners' prizes for the main competition are 3000, 2,500 and 2,000 Euros to be used by the team to improve their equipment for future competitions. Special awards have been released also to École Polytechnique and ENSTA Bretagne with team CISSAU that impressed the judges with their creativity, as well as University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. All the other teams received 750 Euros each to encourage their work.