The Research Group of Plant Ecological Genomics (http://plantgenomics.univie.ac.at) of the Department for Botany and Biodiversity Research at the University of Vienna, Austria is recruiting a

MSc student in Plant Evolutionary Biology (m/f)

Plant adaptation along altitude is an evolutionary and ecologically interesting process, and offers a highly relevant model to understand plant responses to climatic changes. The ecological parameters that differ along altitude may include apart from average temperatures, also distinct day-night temperature amplitudes, light and moisture regimes, together with a different biotic environment. Plant responses to such wide-ranging ecological difference will comprise plastic, epigenetic and genetic components, but their extent and ecological relevance are still not well understood.

An MSc project is immediately available in our group, focusing on a young ecological divergence between mountain and alpine ecotypes of *Heliosperma pusillum* (Caryophyllaceae) in SE Alps. Specifically, to complement ongoing analyses on the nature of extant molecular diversity between these ecotypes, we will interrogate the adaptive significance of this ecological divergence within reciprocal transplantation experiments that have already been started but need final evaluation. We will focus on the environmental sensitivity of gene expression (with RNAseq and smRNAseq) and the fitness differences between the native and alternative ecotypes across the mountain and alpine environments. Field work in SE Alps will be undertaken in during late spring - summer. Our multinational team will provide the necessary support with both bioinformatics and wet-lab training.

The candidate should have

- a BSC degree and interest in experimental or computational fields, such as molecular ecology, ecological/functional genetics, bioinformatics, experimental population genetics, or similar;
- high motivation and enthusiasm;
- computer literacy, ideally Unix and/or R knowledge (e.g., from a course);
- excellent organization and communication skills;
- the ability to work in an international team;
- fluency in English (NB German knowledge is not essential);
- preferred: experience with RNA wet-lab work (e.g., from a course);
- preferred: driving license class B (for field work).

You will be integrated in an international, interdisciplinary team with English as the working language. We offer ample opportunities for training/career development. Possibilities for a stipend exist, depending on involvement and output. Your weekly expected input can be flexible, but will average to ca 16 hours a week for up to one year. See also http://master-program-botany.univie.ac.at/

To be considered please send your application as a single pdf file to ovidiu.paun@univie.ac.at, including a motivation letter with a statement of research interests (max. 1 page), your CV and if applicable publication list, university certificates including grades, and the names and contacts of three referees. Please note: Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Screening of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled.