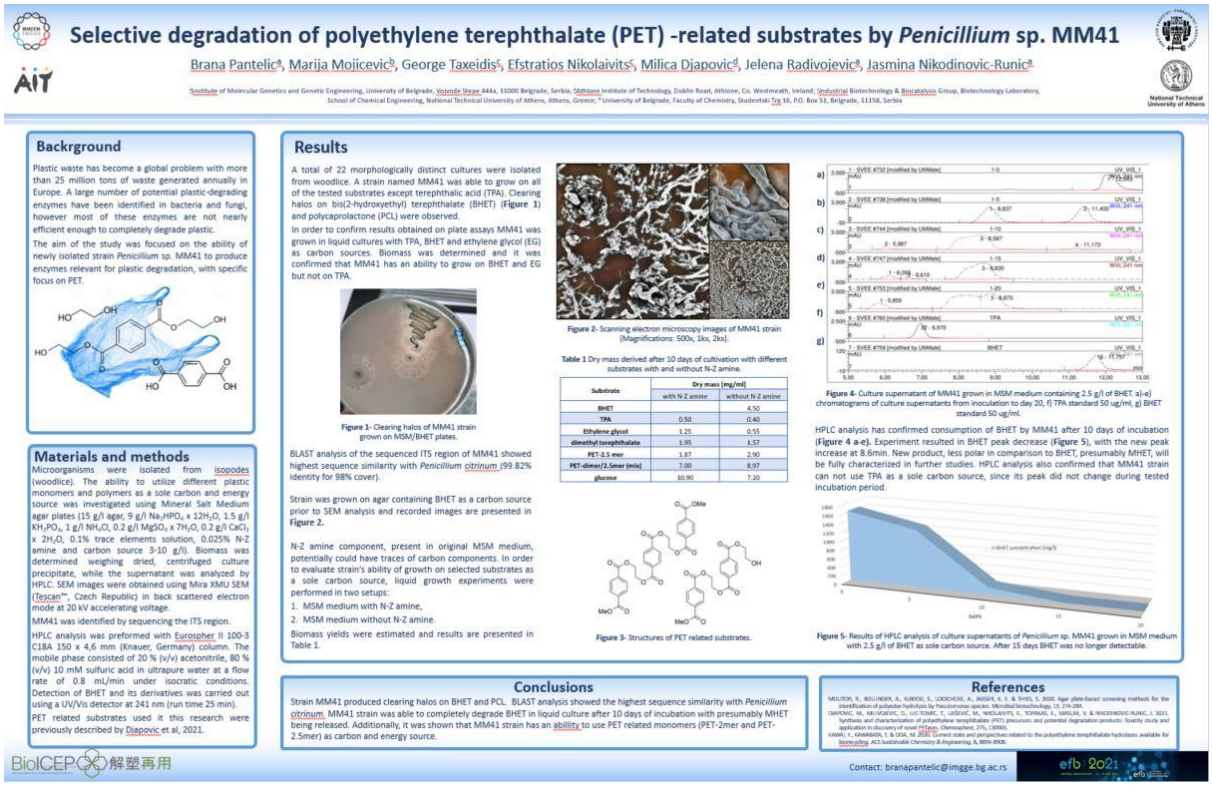
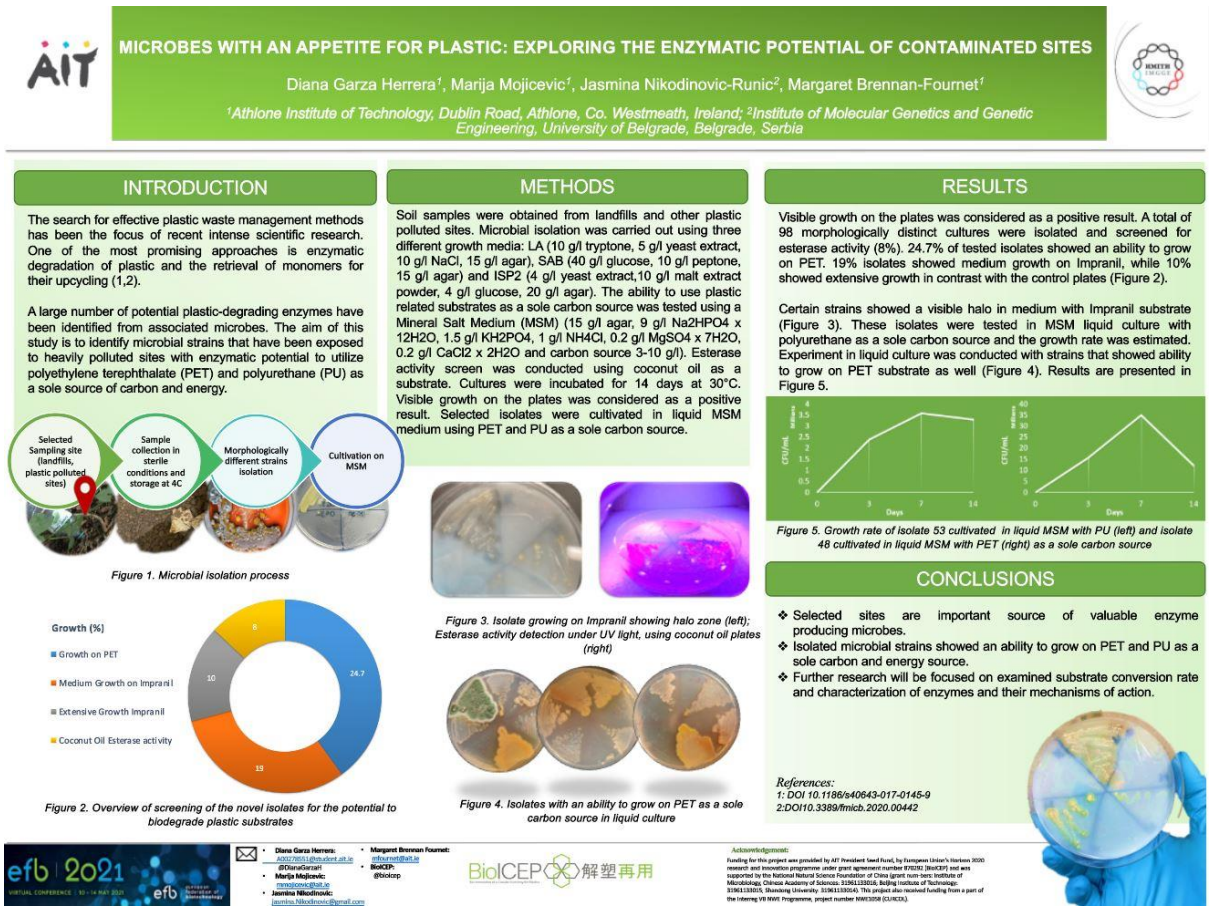
PhD students involved in BioICEP project have presented their work at EFB2021 virtual conference. EFB2021 is the major scientific conference organised by the European Federation of Biotechnology (EFB) with 81 speaker and 206 poster presentations. EFB is Europe's non-profit federation of National Biotechnology Associations, Learned Societies, Universities, Scientific Institutes, Biotech Companies and individual biotechnologists working to promote biotechnology throughout Europe and beyond. As the independent "Voice of Biotechnology in Europe", EFB promotes the safe, sustainable and beneficial use of fundamental research and innovation in life sciences, while providing a forum for interdisciplinary and international cooperation.

Brana Pantelic, Junior Researcher from Institute of Molecular Genetics and Genetic Engineering, presented his work on selected degradation of PET-related substrates by *Penicillium* sp. MM41 strain isolated from woodlice. This strain was able to completely degrade BHET in liquid culture after 10 days of incubation with MHET release. Additionally, it was shown that MM41 strain has an abillity to use PET related monomers (PET-2mer and PET-2.5mer) as a sole carbon and energy source.



Diana Garza, PhD student at Athlone Institute of Technology presented her research on enzymatic potential of microbes isolated from polluted sites. Selected sites proved to be good sources of potential PET degrading enzyme producer. Isolated strains showed an ability to use plastic related substrates as a sole carbon source. Further research will be focused on conversion rate of tested substrates in liquid culture.



Eduardo Lanzagorta Garcia, PhD student at Athlone Institute of Technology presented his work on the enhancement of bacterial cellulose (BC) antimicrobial properties. Supplemented curcumin was easily absorbed by BC during its production. Results showed increased yield of produced BC in the presence of curcumin. Effective antimicrobial activity was observed as a result of curcumin supplementation. Addition of TSNP provided further increase to antimicrobial activity, against Gram-positive and Gram-negative evaluated strains. Further analysis will be performed for optimization of supplemented production and evaluation against a wider variety of bacterial strains.