WS2.3: Thermal Physiology and Comfort.
Chairs: Wouter van Marken Lichtenbelt and Ken Parsons

Thermal comfort and thermal physiology are linked to each other. In the last decennia much new information has been gained on thermal physiology. In the past ergonomic studies mainly focused on extreme temperatures. Gradually more information is being gathered on the effect of moderate temperature variations on our physiology, thermal sensation and comfort experiences. However, there remains a dearth of information on temperature drifts and temporal switches in ambient temperature. Another aspect that deserves attention is health as very little is known about the long-term effects of ambient temperature on our health. Are comfortable temperatures healthy? It is becoming apparent that excursions outside the thermal comfort zone can be beneficial. Cold or warm acclimated subjects are better able to cope with heat and cold waves and it has been shown that mild cold is beneficial with respect to the metabolic syndrome. The workshop intends to explore where we are in relation to such issues and discuss new directions for research on the link between thermal comfort and physiology and related health issues.