

# The 10th European Dry Grassland Meeting in Zamosc, Poland (24-31 May 2013)



*Participants of the meeting on the main square of the Zamość. Photo: P. Chmielewski*

On 24-31 May, the 10th European Dry Grassland Meeting took place in Zamość, Poland. Previous meetings were organized in Germany (Lüneburg, Münster, Freising, Kiel, Halle), Slovak Republic (Smolenice), Ukraine (Uman') and Greece (Prespa). The conference was organized within the framework of EU LIFE project LIFE08NAT/PL/000513 “**Conservation and restoration of xerothermic grasslands in Poland – theory and practice**” project implemented by the Naturalists' Club and Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Lublin, financed by European Union funding instrument LIFE+ and National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management.

The venue for the 10th EDGM was the Mercure Hotel, located in the beautiful 17th century Great Market Square in the old town of Zamość (UNESCO world heritage site). The conference was preceded on 24-26 May by an excursion to some interesting sandy grassland localities

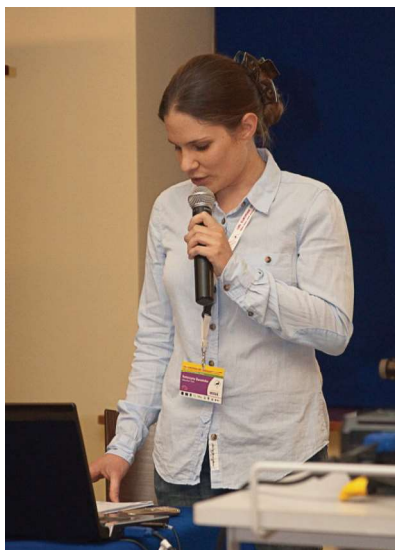
in eastern Poland, which was guided by Łukasz Kozub and Iwona Dembicz from the University of Warsaw. Eighty two (82) EDGG members from 16 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine) and Asia (Israel and South Korea) took part in the meeting.

The conference focused on theoretical and practical aspects of dry grassland protection. Conservation means are crucial, since the area of dry grasslands in Poland is decreasing rapidly due to the changes in land uses.

The participants were welcomed by Monika Janišová and Jürgen Dengler of the EDGG Executive Committee and Katarzyna Barańska of the Naturalists' Club on a rainy morning. In total, 21 talks and 56 posters were presented during the oral and poster sessions. There was also a short slideshow presented on 27 May. The poster and oral sessions were led by members of the EDGG Executive







*Katarzyna Barańska, Piotr Chmielewski and Anna Cwener organizing the meeting to the tiniest details. Photo: J. Dengler*



*Plenary lecture of Simona Bacchereti. Photo: P. Chmielewski*



*Plenary lecture of Péter Török. Photo: J. Dengler*



*Jürgen Dengler during the discussion. Photo: P. Chmielewski*



*Elena Volkova during the discussion. Photo: J. Dengler*



*Elena Volkova presenting the planned meeting in Tula. J. Dengler*



*Michał Żmihorski and Katarzyna Barańska. Photo: J. Dengler*

Committee (Jürgen Dengler, Péter Török, Michael Vrahnakis, Monika Janišová) and representatives of the Naturalists' Club (Anna Cwener and Michał Żmihorski). The contributions dealt with dry grassland management measures (grazing, burning, examples and best practices), dry grassland restoration (deliberate and spontaneous) and various theoretical issues. During the lunch and coffee breaks, the participants had an opportunity to enjoy the exhibition entitled "Natura 2000/Lubelskie/PL" provided by the Society for Man and Nature from Lublin.

The sessions ended on 28th of May with the award ceremony for the Young Investigator Prizes and the EDGG General Assembly. The Young Investigator Prizes were handed to the best oral and poster contributors (below 34 years in age). The prizes consisted of books, photo albums, book vouchers from Wiley-Blackwell and boxes of chocolates from a local manufacturer. The winners were as follows:

#### Best oral presentation contributors

I. Rocco Labadessa (Italy) for "*Orthoptera life forms as indicators of grassland quality*" – R. Labadessa, M. Benedita Campochiaro, G. Antolino, L. Forte, P. Mairota.

II. Philipp Sengl (Austria) for "*Investigations on the migration of target species from semi dry grassland (Cirsio-pannonici-Brometum) to former cultivated fields in Sankt Anna am Aigen (SE Austria)*" – P. Sengl, M. Magnes.

III. Verena Rösch (Germany) for "*Agricultural intensification and fragmentation interactively affect insect communities of calcareous grasslands*" – V. Rosch, T. Tscharnatke, C. Scherber, P. Batary.

IV. Eleonora Giarrizzo (Italy) for "*Environmental and management drivers of vascular plant diversity in semi-natural dry grasslands in relation to vegetation dynamics*" – E. Giarrizzo, S. Burrascano, L. Zavattero, C. Blasi.

#### Best poster presentation contributors

I. Orsolya Valkó (Hungary) for "*Large scale grassland restoration by filling of drainage canals – Effects of the surroundings and environmental variables on alkali grassland recovery*" – O. Valkó, T. Migléc, B. Deák, G. Szabó, S. Szabó, A. Kelemen, I. Kapocsi, S. Gori, P. Török, B. Tóthmeresz.

II. Milan Zajac (Slovak Republic) for "*Classification of mesic grasslands in the northern Carpathians – preliminary results*" – M. Zajac, Z. Kącki, J. Korzeniak, W. Wilner, M. Janišová.

After the ceremony, the General Assembly (GA) of the EDGG chaired by the five present EDGG Executive Committee members. Details are found later in this issue.

The GA was followed by the grassland party in the "Muzealna" restaurant, built in the second half of the 17th century and decorated with reliefs representing John the Baptist, Jesus, John the Evangelist and Thomas the Apostle (the patron saint of Zamość). The building, which was originally presented to the Armenian merchants by the founder of Zamość, Jan Zamoyski, is one of the most beautiful houses in the city.

On the following 3 days, to the relief of the participants - the weather took a turn for the better and the post-conference excursions could proceed undisturbed by rain.

On the first excursion day (29 May), the EDGG members had the opportunity to visit one of the largest Polish colonies of an endangered mammal, the spotted ground squirrel *Spermophilus suslicus*, located on a 50-ha pasture near the Popówka village, with some grassland plant species growing mostly on its verges. The second site visited on this day was a loessy grassland near the Czumów village located on a steep slope of the Bug river valley, on the Polish-Ukrainian border. Here, the participants could find many endangered plant species, like *Echium russicum*, *Gypsophila paniculata* and *Orchis militaris*. There were also some cocoons of a rare arachnid, *Atypus muralis*, to be found on the ground. In a shed located nearby, a small treat consisting of local dishes and drinks was prepared for the conference attendants. Next, the "Skarpa Dobużańska" nature reserve was visited. The reserve is located on limestone slopes of the Huczwa river valley and numerous *Orobancha lutea* individuals could be found there. Later on during the day this trip was followed by a guided tour of the Zamość Old Town.

On the second excursion day (30 May), the group travelled to the "Żmudź" nature reserve which protects a 6-ha limestone slope overgrown mostly with the *Juniperus communis* scrub with some rare and protected orchid species, like *Cypripedium calceolus*, *Orchis militaris*, *Platanthera chlorantha* and *Cephalanthera damasonium*. Next, the steep slope called "Horodysko" in the vicinity of the Hłowiec village was visited. Here, the EDGG members could encounter the largest patch of the *Prunetum fruticosae* scrub in this part of Poland. Finally, the group had the chance to see a population of a sub-endemic species, *Carlina onopordifolia*, in the "Machnowska Góra" reserve.

On the final excursion day (31 May), the group travelled 140 Km to the Vistula river valley to see the *Inuletum ensifoliae* vegetation on the limestone slopes of "Albrechtówka" hill near the Męcierz village. After the excursion, the participants were taken to the city of Lublin from where they could return to their homes.

The Local Organizing Committee would like to thank the participants for their presence and contributions, all the sponsors, the EDGG Executive Committee, and many others who made this conference happen.

Piotr Chmielewski  
On behalf of the Local Organizing Committee





*Winners of the Young Investigator Prizes: Rocco Labadessa (Italy, upper left picture), Philipp Sengl (Austria, upper right picture), Verena Roschi (Germany, middle left picture), Eleonora Giarizzo (Italy, middle right picture), Orsolya Valko (lower left picture) and Milan Zajac (lower right picture). Photos: J. Dengler*



## Minutes of the EDGG General Assembly 2013

The General Assembly (GA) of the EDGG was held on 28 May 2013 at the conference hall of Hotel Mercure, Zamość, in conjunction with the 10th European Dry Grassland Meeting. The General Assembly was chaired by Jürgen Dengler and the minutes were recorded by Péter Török. The GA was attended by 59 scientists from 16 countries, which satisfies the requirements of a qualified majority (i.e. at least 40 EDGG members representing at least 10 different countries) as stated in the Bylaws of the EDGG.

Jürgen Dengler opened the GA at 18:00 and presented the agenda proposed by the Executive Committee (EC). As there were no wishes for modifications, the GA proceeded as proposed.

Reports of the EDGG activities since the last GA were given by the responsible members of the EDGG Executive Committee (EC). Jürgen Dengler summarised the relatively low activities of the five subgroups, and Mike Vrahnakis presented the work of the Special Policy Committee (SPC). Solvita Rūsiņa introduced the EDGG homepage and called for further ideas for improvement. Monika Janišová reported about the EDGG Bulletin and made a call for high quality photos, publications and further contributions to the forthcoming issues. Jürgen Dengler reported from former EDGG Research Expeditions and made a call for suggestions for future expeditions. Hereafter, Jürgen Dengler introduced the Special Features edited by the members and Chairs of EDGG during recent years and announced a forthcoming special feature. He also introduced the EDGG research fellowships and their recent recipients. Jürgen Dengler announced also that the EDGG has become an official working group of the IAVS, which means also regular

financial support from the mother organisation. Mike Vrahnakis announced that the Book of Proceedings from the previous EDGM in Prespa, Greece, is now in print and paperback bound copies will be distributed in about a month.

A preliminary report was given of the EDGG Elections and it was announced that, on the basis of these, all five chairs will continue to serve for the next two year period.

Elena Volkova presented the formal proposal and preliminary program and schedule of next EDGM 2014 in Tula, Russia. Jürgen Dengler (in the name of Ute and Thomas Becker) presented some information about the proposed EDGM 2015 in Mainz. After their presentation, the General Assembly accepted the proposal that the EDGM in 2015 will be held in Mainz, Germany. A call was announced for the EDGM in 2016, and Péter Török made a preliminary suggestion that the meeting could be organised in Hungary. This was applauded by the audience, though the formal decision was postponed until the next General Assembly.

Jürgen Dengler introduced the forthcoming special features in 2014 (*Tuexenia*, *Hacquetia*) and announced that the EDGG members can participate at discount prices in the forthcoming Open Landscapes Conference in Hildesheim (further details in this Bulletin).

Then the awards ceremony for the best young poster and oral presentations took place (see report above). Finally, the chairperson, Jürgen Dengler closed the General Assembly at 19:50.

*Péter Török, Deputy Secretary-General  
Jürgen Dengler, Chairman of the General Assembly*

### EDGG election 2013

Despite our call for the nomination of additional candidates to stand for election to the Executive Committee published in Bulletin 18, none were forthcoming, so the candidates for the 2013 election were the six serving chairs, Jürgen Dengler, Monika Janišová, Solvita Rūsiņa, Péter Török, Stephen Venn and Michael Vrahnakis. The election was conducted electronically, as previously, and the election period ran from 2nd-30th May. Voters were allowed to cast up to seven votes. A total of 87 votes were cast in the election, which is a slight increase from the 71 votes cast in the 2011 election.

The distribution of the votes was as follows:

Candidate	Votes	Proportion of votes
Jürgen Dengler	74	85%
Monika Janišová	77	89%
Solvita Rūsiņa	64	74%
Péter Török	69	79%
Stephen Venn	69	79%
Michael Vrahnakis	74	85%

This means that all six candidates received in excess of 50% of the votes cast, and are thereby elected, in accordance with bylaw 2e. Their term of duty commenced immediately after the election and will continue until the 2015 General Assembly in Mainz. At the beginning of this term the newly elected Executive Committee reviewed its allocation of tasks. The only modification to these is that Monika Janišová is now the official representative of the EDGG to the IAVS.

*Stephen Venn, Secretary General*





Presymposium excursion: Iwona Dembicz and Łukasz Kozub (the organizers) and participants during the wet and cold spring days. Flowers on the right side (from up to down: *Armeria maritima* subsp. *elongata*, *Astragalus arenarius*, *Saxifraga granulata*, *Chamaecytisus ruthenicus*, *Verbascum phoeniceum*, *Tragopogon dubius*. Photos: J. Dengler





*Participants of excursion to Popówka site. Photo: P. Chmielewski*



*Excursion to Popówka. Photo: J. Dengler*



*Dobuzek site excursion. Photo: P. Chmielewski*



*Cow grazing in Dobuzek site. Photo: M. Janišová*



*Refreshment in the vicinity of village Czumów. Photo: J. Dengler*



*Team of cooks and eaters. Photo: D. Krstonošić*



*Guided tour through Zamość Old Town (left) and the decoration of Armenian merchant houses (above).  
Photos: M. Janišová and P. Chmielewski*