

of the European Dry Grassland Group



Introduction

The summer is over and the autumn time is an opportunity to look back as well as to make some new plans for the future. We hope to help you in this with this Bulletin issue! We invite you to take part in the 9th European Dry Grassland Meeting in Prespa in June 2012, for which all the details can be found in the first circular. We would also like to report back on the EDGG expedition in Bulgaria that took place in August 2011. A lot of news concerns the official issues connected to EDGG – the new Bylaws have been approved and the voting of EDGG chairs is in preparation. The Special Policy Committee will also inform you about its activities. The rapid development regarding the prepared special issues of Special Features in scientific journals is also mentioned. As usual, information on the forthcoming events is included. We hope you will find something interesting!

Monika Janišová & members of EDGG Executive Committee

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Photo left: Crocus sp. flowering in autumn on dry pastures in Picos de Europa, Asturias, Spain. Photo: M. Janišová.

October 2012

EDGG homepage: <http://www.edgg.org>

European Dry Grassland Group

The European Dry Grassland Group (EDGG) is a network of dry grassland researchers and conservationists in Europe. EDGG is a Working Group of the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS). EDGG is supported by the Floristisch-soziologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft.

The basic aims of the EDGG are:

- ♠ To compile and to distribute information on research and conservation in dry grasslands beyond national borders;
- ♠ to stimulate active cooperation among dry grassland scientists (exchanging data, common data standards, joint projects).

To achieve its aims, EDGG provides seven facilities for the information exchange among dry grassland researchers and conservationists:

- ♠ **the Bulletin of the EDGG** (published quarterly);
- ♠ **the EDGG homepage** (www.edgg.org);
- ♠ e-mails via our **mailing list** on urgent issues;
- ♠ **the European Dry Grassland Meetings**, organized annually in different places throughout Europe.
- ♠ **EDGG research expeditions** to sample baseline data of underrepresented regions of Europe
- ♠ **EDGG vegetation databases**
- ♠ **Special Features** on dry grassland-related topics in various peer-reviewed journals

The EDGG covers all aspects related to dry grasslands, in particular: plants - animals - fungi - microbia - soils - taxonomy - phylogeography - ecophysiology - population biology - species' interactions - vegetation ecology - syntaxonomy - landscape ecology - biodiversity - land use history - agriculture - nature conservation - restoration - environmental legislation - environmental education.

Executive Committee

Jürgen Dengler

dengler@botanik.uni-hamburg.de: membership administration, book review editor, representative in the IAVS Council, coordinator for EDGG Expeditions, coordinator for EDGG Special Features

Monika Janišová

monika.janisova@savba.sk: editorship of the EDGG Bulletin.

Solvita Rūsiņa

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Stephen Venn

Stephen.Venn@Helsinki.Fi: development of networking and cooperation with zoologists and conservation biologists.

Michael Vrahnakis mvrahnak@teilar.gr: coordinator of EDGG conferences, science-policy coordinator, Med-DG subgroup.

Everybody can join EDGG without any fee or other obligation. To become a member of the European dry grassland Group or its subordinate units write an e-mail to Jürgen Dengler including your complete address and specifying which of the groups you want to join. The detailed information you can find at: http://www.edgg.org/about_us.htm.

Membership development

As of 14 October 2011, EDGG had 650 members from 49 countries. As for the subgroups, the German Arbeitsgruppe Trockenrasen had 192 members, the Working Group on Dry Grasslands in the Nordic and Baltic region 77, the South-East European subgroup (SEEDGG) 183, and the Mediterranean subgroup (Med-DG) 155.

International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS)

IAVS Journals

Recently, two relevant Special Features have been published in the journals of our mother organisation, and both have “free access” for everybody:

Special Feature “**Ecoinformatics and global change**” of Journal of Vegetation Science, guest-edited by J. Dengler, J. Ewald, I. Kühn & R.K. Peet (15 articles): <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jvs.2011.22.issue-4/issuetoc>

Special Feature “**Vegetation survey**” of Applied Vegetation Science, guest-edited by M. Chytrý, J.H.J. Schaminée & A. Schwabe (9 articles): <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/avsc.2011.14.issue-4/issuetoc>

The 9th European Dry Grassland Meeting

19-23 May 2012

Prespa, Greece



First circular

Organizers:

European Dry Grassland Group (EDGG) (www.edgg.org) was established in August 2008. It is as an official group of International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS, www.iavs.org). Its basic aims are to compile and to distribute information on research and conservation in dry grasslands beyond national borders, and to stimulate active cooperation among dry scientists NGO's and all who work with or are interested in dry grasslands.

Hellenic Range and Pasture Society (HERPAS) (www.elet.gr) was established in December 1992. It is a member of the European Grassland Federation (EGF, www.europeangrassland.org). Its basic aims are to broaden, disseminate and apply knowledge related to the conservation of rangelands and pastures, to promote the research and education for rangelands and pastures, and to establish partnership and cooperation with similar societies both within Greece and elsewhere.

Supporting organisations and institutions:

International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS), (www.iavs.org); the original precursor of this organisation was the International Phytosociological Society (IPS) which was founded in 1939. IAVS is a worldwide union of scientists and others interested in theoretical and practical studies of all aspects of vegetation. The main goals of the IAVS are to facilitate personal contacts among vegetation scientists all over the world and to promote research in all aspects of vegetation science and its applications.

Municipality of Prespa (www.prespes.gr) is the major state's administration unit in the area of Prespa, Greece. Recently (June of 2010), it took its current form by expanding its geographical scope to the area of Krystalopygi. The municipality's main goal is the prosperity and well being of the citizens (16 villages, 1570 inh.) who live in its state (504 km²).

Society for the Protection of Prespa (www.spp.gr) was established in Prespa, Greece in 1990; its members are ten national and international environmental NGOs. The SPP's mission is to safeguard the natural and cultural heritage of the Prespa basin as a whole, for the benefit of all its inhabitants both today and in the future.

Prespa National Forest Management Body (www.fdedp.gr) was established in Prespa, Greece in 2002. Its main purpose is to protect and conserve biological diversity in the area of Prespa having always driven sustainable development and management of the region, while focus on protecting and guarding the area to information - awareness and environmental education of citizens through organizing conferences, workshops, exhibitions and general promotional activities.

John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (<http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/>) was founded in 1807. It aspires to be a valued and respected provider of products and services that make important contributions to advances in knowledge and understanding, a role that is essential to progress in a healthy and prosperous society. Wiley's mission is to provide must-have content and services to professionals, scientists, educators, students, lifelong learners, and consumers worldwide.

Floristisch-soziologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft (FlorSoz) (<http://www.tuexenia.de/>) is a German-speaking association of specialists and enthusiasts interested in the floristic structure of spontaneous vegetation, phytosociology and vegetation ecology. The association is a non-profit organization and will be pleased to welcome everyone who is interested.

Main topic of the meeting:

Dry Grasslands of Europe: Grazing and Ecosystem Services

Subtopics: a) grazing impacts on the biotic environment (impacts on plants, vegetation units, fauna, etc.), b) grazing impacts on the abiotic environment (impacts on soil and water resources, desertification, climate change and dry grasslands, etc.), c) ecology and management of dry grasslands (all types of biotic interactions, succession, biodiversity, restoration and conservation of dry grasslands, etc.), d) dry grasslands and rural societies (grasslands of high nature value, CAP reform, permanent pastures, science-based policy, etc.).

All other topics related to dry grassland ecosystems are also welcome.

Preliminary time schedule:

18.05 (Friday): arrival in Prespa, registration, accommodation

19.05 (Saturday): registration, opening ceremony, lectures, poster session, HERPAS General Assembly

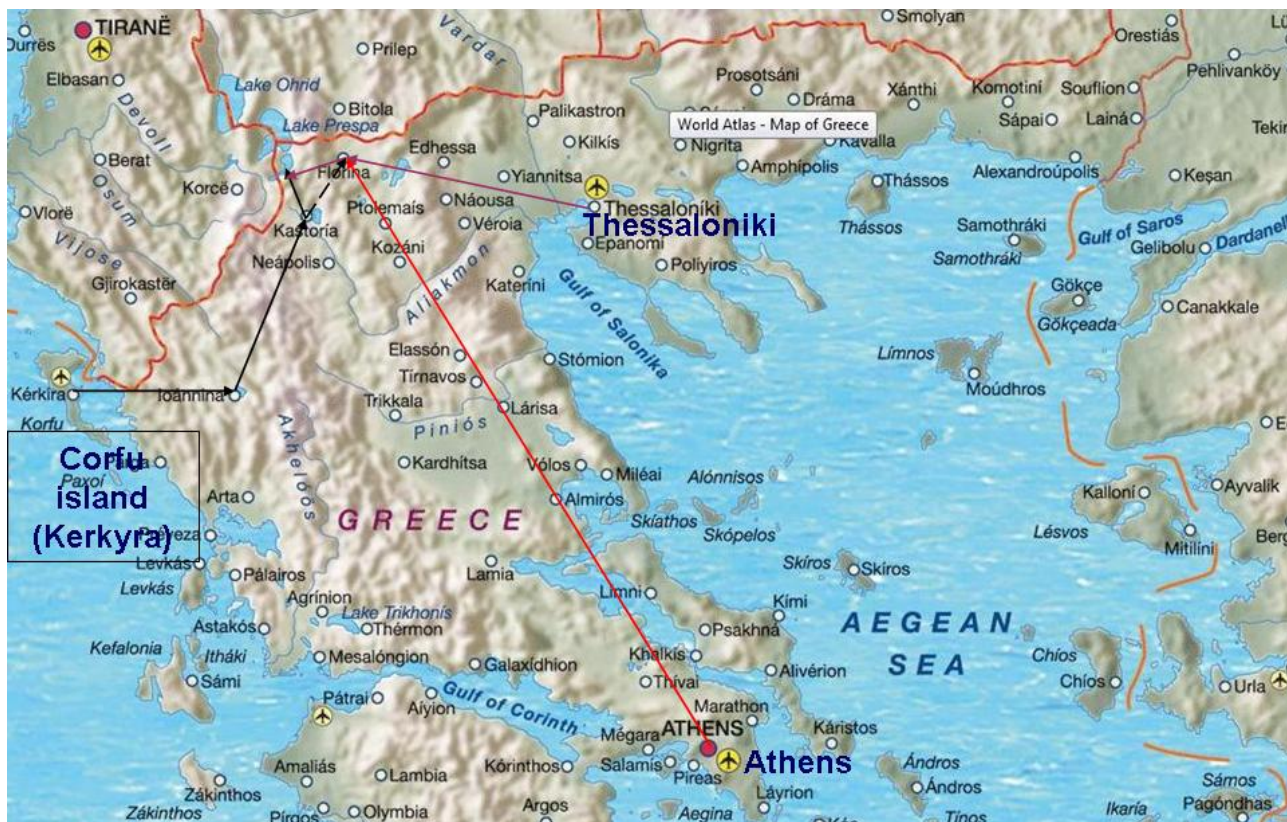
20.05 (Sunday): excursion to Mt. Devas, boat trip to Macro Prespa Lake, grassland party

21.05 (Monday): lectures, poster session, EDGG General Assembly

22.05 (Tuesday): excursion to Mt. Varnous, visit to Agios Achillios island, meeting with local herders

23.05 (Wednesday): excursion to Mt. Sfika

Location: The meeting will be held in the Information Center run by the Prespa National Forest Management Body near the village of Pyli, in the area of Prespa (northwestern Greece). Prespa is located at about 200 km from Thessaloniki, 560 km from Athens, 45 km and 54 km from the cities of Florina (capital of the prefecture, 15,000 inh.) and Kastoria (20,000 inh.), respectively. The landscape is dominated by the water bodies of Macro and Micro Prespa Lakes, forming a basin of 1600 km². The Macro Prespa Lake is divided between Albania (38.8 km² surface area), Greece (84.8 km² surface area) and F.Y.R.o.M. (190 km² surface area). The Micro Prespa Lake is shared only between Greece (138 km² drainage area; 43.5 km² surface area) and Albania (51 km² drain-



By bus/car

A. Thessaloniki – Florina – Prespa villages

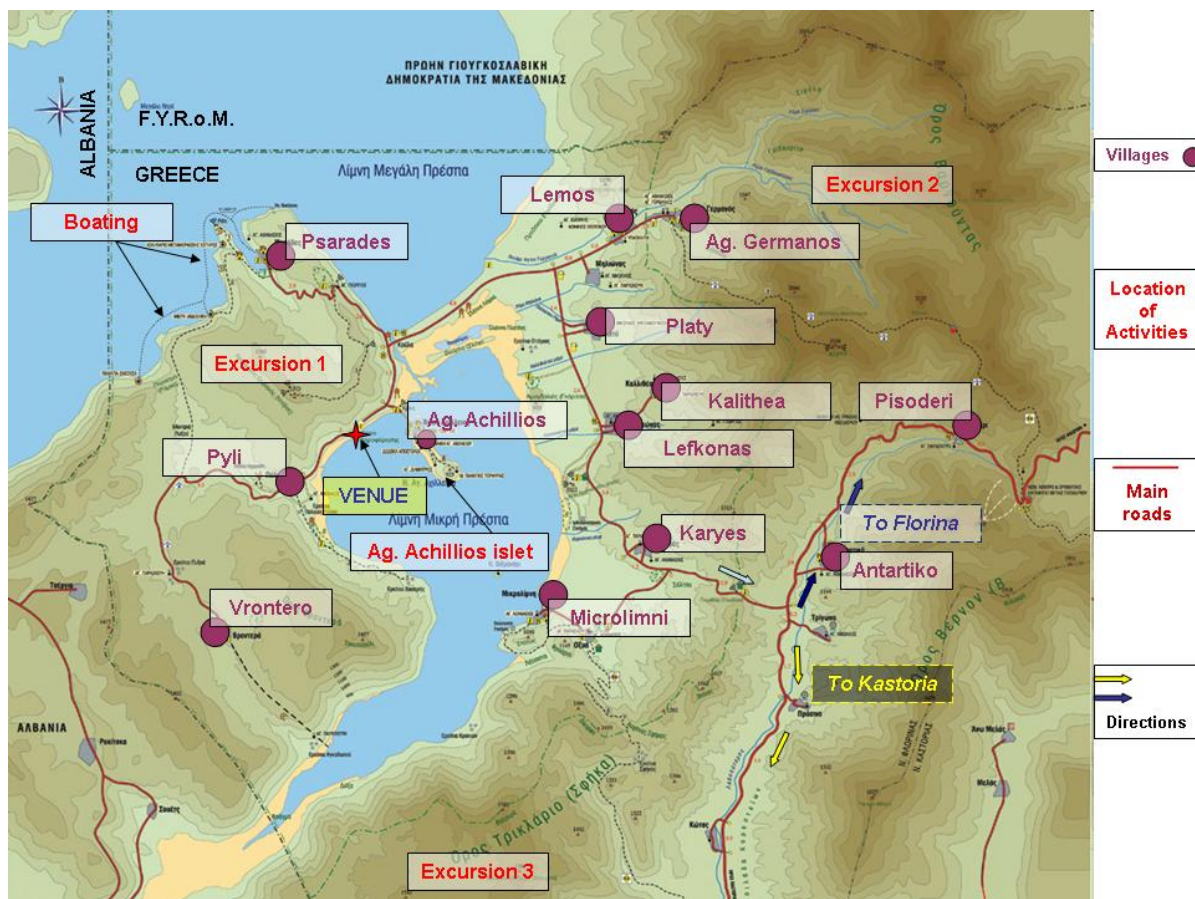
B. Athens – Florina – Prespa villages

C. Corfu (Kerkyra) – Ioannina – Kastoria – (Florina) – Prespa villages

The 9th European Dry Grassland Meeting

19-23 May 2012
Prespa, Greece

age area; 3.9 km² surface area). They are the highest tectonic lakes in the Balkans, located at an altitude of 853 m and surrounded by the Mts. of Devas (1373 m), Sfika (1776 m) and Varnous (2334 m). The region was established as a National Park in 1974, and is the largest park in Greece covering an area of 256 km². The Transboundary Prespa Park was established in 2000. Over 270 bird, 60 mammal, 22 reptile and amphibian species as well as a large number of fish and invertebrate species exist in Prespa. Micro Prespa Lakes hosts the most important breeding colony of Dalmatian Pelicans in the world (nesting with White Pelicans) and other rare birds such as Herons and Pygmy Cormorants, a fact that makes this area one of the most important wetlands in Europe.



Due to intensively changing topography, the determining role of the water bodies, and the petrographic combination (a limestone-dominated western sector and a granite-dominated eastern sector), several vegetation types alternate, thus creating a diverse mosaic-type landscape. At least 194 plant species are of global, European and national importance since they are mentioned in Red Data Books or are Greek endemics. Some of them have been recorded in a few mountains, or found in their southern limit of their distribution in Europe, or are of national importance since they are restricted in the wider area of Prespa, or included in the Annexes II and V of the Directive 92/43/EEC. According to the European Habitats Directive 92/43, the National Park of Prespa includes the Natura 2000 sites “*ETHNIKOS DRYMOS PRESPON (National Park of Prespa)*” (GR 1340001) and “*ORI VARNOUNTA (Mount Varnous)*” (GR 1340003) which cover the whole of the Prespa Lakes basin in its Greek part. The first site is characterized by 25 habitat types, 14 of them being habitat types of the Natura 2000 network, with 4 of them being priority habitat types (*6210 *Semi-natural dry grasslands on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia)*, *6220 *Pseudosteppe with grasses and annuals (Thero-Brachypodietea)*, *6230 *Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)*, and *9562 *Grecian juniper woods*). The second site is characterized by 15 habitat types of the Natura 2000 network, with 7 of them being habitat types mentioned in the Directive 92/43/EEC, while 1 is European priority habitat types (*6230).

Language: English

Accommodation is available in single, double, three- or four-bed rooms, or in apartments. The approximate price is 20-30 € per night per person. A list of available hotels will be given in the second circular. Participants may choose between guesthouses in several villages (see map). Small buses, free of charge, will be available to carry participants from and to the Meeting Center at specific hours according to the meeting programme and the needs of participants.

Conference publications:

- All participants will receive a **Book of Abstracts**, which will be also published online on the EDGG homepage.
- **IMPORTANT: Depending on the quality of the submitted full papers and the positive opinion of the writers, the HERPAS intends to publish a book (in English) with selected contributions. The book will have the title of the meeting. Detailed information concerning full paper submission will be provided in the second circular.**
- As in previous years, we together with our supporting organisation FlorSoz offer the opportunity to publish suitable conference contributions in the annual **Dry Grassland Special Feature in *Tuexenia* 33 (2013)**, guest-edited by scientists from the EDGG. *Tuexenia* is a highly attractive publication as it is one of the few journals that still offer the publication of oversize vegetation tables, and it appears both as full colour print volume and free access online. Most importantly, *Tuexenia* is included both in the *Web of Science* and in *SCOPUS* from 2011 onwards. Suitable topics are (a) ecology, population biology, taxonomy, chorology, and conservation/management of flora and vegetation in Central Europe and (b) syntaxonomic studies of good quality throughout Europe.
- If some of the conference participants wish, they should feel encouraged to organise **additional Special Features in ISI journals**, such as *Plant Biosystems*, *Biodiversity & Conservation*, *Journal for Nature Conservation*, or *Journal of Biological Research*. If you feel inclined, please contact the conference organisers.

Prizes: As in previous years, prizes will be given to young scientists who excellently present their researches (orally or in poster). For these purposes, young scientists (less than 35 years old) will be asked at the registration desk if they want to participate in the contest.

Registration will be open from 20th of October at the Conference homepage: www.edgg.org/edgg_meeting.html

Important dates:

Deadline for registration: 28 February 2012

Deadline for abstract submission (to consider for publication in the Book or Special Features): 30 November 2011

Deadline for abstract submission (to include only in the Book of Abstracts): 28 February 2012

Fees: A charge of 100 € per person (70 € for non-graduate, M.Sc. and Ph.D. students) will cover

- a) mid-session snacks and soft refreshments,
- b) tickets for two lunches (1st and 3rd day),
- c) ticket to grassland party,
- d) participants pack (book of abstracts included),
- e) boat tour from Psarades bay along the southwest coast of Lake Macro Prespa to visit Christian hermitages (sketes) from Byzantine eras,
- f) snacks and soft drinks for the first excursion (second day of the Meeting), and
- g) the book published by HERPAS (it will be sent as soon as it is ready)

An additional cost of 10 €/day will be charged optionally for those who take part in the second (4th day) and third (5th day) excursion. The amount covers sandwiches and soft refreshments.

All fees will be paid in the registration desk in the first day.

Contact persons:

Michael Vrahnakis, Department of Forestry and Management of Natural Environment, Technological Educational Institute of Larissa, Terma Mavromihali, GR-43100, Karditsa, Greece, mvrahnak@teilar.gr (for requests regarding scientific programme, deadlines, fees, and other organizational matters).

Yiannis Kazoglou, Municipality of Prespa, GR-53007, Lemos, Prespa, Greece, ykazoglou@gmail.com (for requests regarding accommodation and other specific information concerning Prespa).

Excursion 1: The species-rich Mt. Devas

Although Devas is a mountain of relatively low altitude (1373 m), compared to the other mountains of the area, it preserves remarkable floristic diversity, mostly due to its limestone parent material. There are over 500 plant species; among them you may find important species like *Phelypaea boissieri*, *Lilium chalconicum*, *L. candidum*, *Cynoglossis barrelieri* ssp. *serpentinicola*. Together with this extra-ordinary floristic diversity (1/7 of the total Greek flora) there are several vegetation units with dominant the one of *Juniperus excelsa* and *J. foetidissima* woodlands. Several vegetation gaps appeared inside the juniper and oak (mainly *Quercus trojana*) forests and shrublands of *Buxus sempervirens*. The gaps represent dry grasslands of *Festuco-Brometea*, with an exceptionally high numbers of orchids, iris, etc. In addition, the area is characterized by the remarkable chasmophytic vegetation of rocky shores, dominated by *Campanula versicolor*.



Excursion 2: Dry grasslands of Mt. Varnous

Mt Varnous is characterized by the rugged terrain, the geologic bedrock (granite), the high altitude (2000 m) and the high levels of humidity, even during summer months. Given this unusual abiotic settings for Greece, very specific floristic elements and vegetation types occur. The vegetation is characterized by extended beech and fir forests, and grasslands that are kept thanks to the intense livestock grazing activity. The grasslands of the high altitudes are dominated by *Nardus stricta*, and *Juniperus communis* ssp. *nana*, while in low elevations dwarf shrub species like *Chamaecytisus* spp. The vegetation along to the banks of streams is characterized by vegetation units of *Mulgedio-Aconitetea*. Major threat for the grasslands of Mt. Varnous is the changing of the species of grazing animals, as sheep and goats that were the main users of the plant resources for decades are gradually replaced by cattle. There have been recorded over of 700 plant taxa in the broad area of Mt. Varnous, with some of them being quite important, like *Galanthus nivalis* (near threatened), *Ramonda serbica* (vulnerable), *Dianthus myrtinervius* ssp. *myrtinervius* (endemic of the broader area), *Lilium carniolicum* ssp. *albanicum*, etc.



Excursion 3: Dry grasslands of Mt. Sfika

The calcareous massif of Mt. Sfika (or Triklario) is characterized by rich vegetation, occupied by extensive forest in its northern slopes (*Fagus sylvatica*, *Quercus pubescens*, *Q. cerris*, *Q. frainetto*, *Q. trojana*, *Carpinus orientalis*, etc.), while southern slopes are dominated by large grasslands, intensively used by sheep and goats. Grasslands up to 1500 m belong to the *Festuco-Brometea* (*Stipo-Morinion*). These grasslands sustain a remarkable variety of plant taxa, mainly of Mediterranean origin. Grasslands over 1500 m are dominated by caespitose dwarf shrubs, forming dense tussocks, and belong to the Greek endemic class of *Daphno-Festucetea*.



Bulgarian dry grasslands

Report from the 3rd EDGG Research Expedition
14 – 24 August 2011



Vrachanski Balkan, view to the valley of Vratsata. Photo: M. Janišová.



After a dry summer sampling of dry grasslands in the Sredna Gora Mts. became a difficult task, Photo: M. Janišová..

During ten hot summer days between the 14th and the 24th of August 2011, the third EDDG Expedition took place in two Bulgarian mountain ranges: Vrachanski Balkan Nature Park and Sredna Gora Mts. The aim of the expedition was to sample various dry grassland types and provide the data for both an analysis of biodiversity patterns and large-scale vegetation classifications. To sample the biodiversity plots, we used a nested-plot design with areas ranging from 0.0001 m² to 100 m². Beside the vascular plants, bryophytes and lichens were recorded at each scale as well. For phytosociological sampling, relevés of 16 m² were recorded. Soil samples were collected for both types of plots for estimation of basic soil parameters.

Altogether, nine botanists took part in the expedition. In each of the two localities, the group of five foreign participants (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Iran, and Germany) was accompanied by two local organizers. Two cars were sufficient to cover the needs of transportation. The organizers had arranged two nice places to stay: Ledenika hut above the town of Vratsa and a 19th century house in Koprivshitsa. At each place, we spent five nights. We are grateful to the Förderkreis Angewandte Naturkunde Biologie - FAN(B) (see <http://www.fan-b.de/html/index.html>), who generously supported the research expedition with a grant that allowed us to cover nearly all costs (accommodation, food, petrol) within Bulgaria.

Just to get an impression how a day was organized during the expedition, here is a sample of our program: Waking up regularly at 7 am was followed by the breakfast. In Ledenika we had breakfast in the nearby restaurant. Here, they prepared also the lunch packages for us. In Koprivshitsa, we prepared both the breakfast and lunch packages together in the common dining room using the food that we had bought in the local market. We left for field work between 8:30 and 9:00 am. After a short introduction to the visited habitats by the local organizers we divided into several 2-3-member working teams which worked more or less independently during the whole day. The team members changed from day to day so that each of us could work with different people and thus the knowledge could be shared more efficiently. As the groups usually worked close to each other, the lunch break was organized at the same place and time. Although nobody was too eager to leave the nice shadow place of our midday rest, we continued sampling also in the afternoon. After several hours of sampling we came back to the place of our residence usually between 6 and 8 pm. In Koprivshitsa, one of the teams usually returned earlier and prepared the dinner for the rest of the group. In Ledenika, we had dinner at the restaurant. The evening work started at about 9 or 10 pm when we met in a

common room for plant determination and editing of the recorded data. Here we had an opportunity to share our experience with different species we collected during the given day. To check our opinion we used mainly the five volumes of Flora Europaea (Tutin et al. 1968-1993) and 10 volumes of Bulgarian flora (Jordanov 1963-1979, Velchev 1982-1989, Kožuharov 1995). As the sampled dry grasslands were relatively species-rich (average: 37.5 species on 10 m², with a range of 15–60 species according to our preliminary data), we usually spent many hours for species determination and went to bed very late (often not earlier than the next day).

As a result of our intensive working program, during our ten-days stay we collected a set of 83 phytosociological relevés and 15 biodiversity plots. Mostly all plots fell into vegetation included in the *Festuco-Brometea* class. The most frequently recorded vegetation represented communities of the *Saturejon montani* and *Festucion valesiacae*, stands dominated by *Sesleria latifolia*, *S. rigida*, *Chrysopogon gryllus* and *Festuca* spp. The collected data will be processed, and we hope that in the near future they will be subject of scientific publication. Inter alia, we plan to use them for a comparative study of scale-dependent diversity patterns and species-area relationships in European dry grasslands and they will be included in a consistent classification of the dry grasslands in the Northern Balkan Peninsula (for the Virtual Special Feature of AVS on large-scale grassland classification)

Apart from the scientific value of our stay, we enjoyed common discussions on very many topics, and experiencing the Bulgarian way of life including the architecture, food, dances, traditions. For many of us, Bulgaria is now much more familiar and much more beautiful country than before.

Iva Apostolova, Sofia, Bulgaria
Jürgen Dengler, Hamburg, Germany,
Monika Janišová, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia
Salza Todorova, Sofia, Bulgaria
Kiril Vasilev, Sofia, Bulgaria





Participants of the Expedition:
Salza Todorova
Kiril Vassilev
Iva Apostolova
Jürgen Dengler
Monika Janišová
Nikolay Velev
Aslan Ünal
Mousa Akhbarlou
Hristo Pedashenko





During the expedition the sun was permanently accompanying us. The raincoats remained untouched in the backpacks. Photo: M. Janišová.



Wonderful house from the 19th century was like a living museum. During five days we experienced the old-times-atmosphere in combination with recent scientific activities (two upper pictures). During the visit of the Nature Park Centrum in Vratsa we were accompanied by local experts (upper right picture). After-sampling discussion in the Sredna Gora Mts. (picture down). Photos: M. Janišová, J. Dengler and N. Velev.



News from policy activities of SPC-EDGG

Let's join SPC-EDGG

There was an announcement in the previous EDGG Bulletin (issue 11, page 18) about the establishment of a policy forum, namely Special Policy Committee (SPC), within EDGG, and asking for the active participation of new members. Of course, most of us readers are purely and bravely dry-grasslanders; almost all are totally devoted to botany, zoology, phytosociology, etc., and we are rather far from mixing political activities in our scientific work. Nevertheless, by joining scientific knowledge and some basic political thoughts, beliefs or/and expectations the SPC surely believes that we may manage to **forever have what we want and need to work: dry grassland resources!** The Smolenice Grassland Declaration showed to all of us where we are, what we may lose, and what must we do to protect European dry grasslands. So, let's vote for dry grassland resources! So, let's vote for plants (Figure 1a), animals (Figure 1b), dry grasslands (Figure 2) per se. So, please, do join us in the SPC-EDGG! Send a message (mvrahnak@teilar.gr) and ... participate.

Ilya Smelansky joins SPC-EDGG

We are glad to say that SPC-EDGG is further supported by the contributions of its second member, Ilya Smelansky, from NGO Siberian Environmental Center, Novosibirsk, Russia (SibEcoCenter). Ilya also works as a main technical consultant in UNDP/GEF Project "Improving the Coverage and Management Efficiency of Protected Areas in the Steppe Biome of Russia". He is a founder and an editor of the Steppe Bulletin (SB), the only one Russian-speaking international periodical spe-

cially devoted to conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of steppic grasslands in the Eurasian countries. The SB is published by SibEcoCenter from 1998 in both paper and on-line versions (<http://savesteppe.org/en/sb>). His lifework is conservation study and protection of steppe ecosystems (Figures 3-5) with special emphasis on plants (and vegetation), and raptors. He had the luck to work in many steppes throughout Russia and Kazakhstan doing dozens of projects on steppe protected areas, important bird areas and important plant areas, high nature value farmland sites, on "umbrella" species of steppe ecosystems (Steppe Eagle and Pallas Cat for example), etc. Having Ilya, the Group gains further power in the promotion of dry grasslands not only in European but in International level as well. Ilya, the SPC-EDGG welcomes you!

What about Smolenice Grassland Declaration - SGD

Smolenice Grassland Declaration stands at the core of the SPC-EDGG. Up to now more than 300 persons from more than 20 countries all over the world have voted for it. Recently, the SGD text was translated in Russian and published in the last issue of the Steppe Bulletin (Stepnoy Bulletin #32, Summer 2011 <http://savesteppe.org/ru/archives/6164> in Russian). Then the text about the thoughts for future steps (issue 11, pages 16-18) was also translated and will be published in the Bulletin as well. The main audience of the Bulletin is in Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Mongolia where steppe ecosystems are still very much alive and important. Publishing SGD in Russian is a way to promote this European initiative in the Russian-speaking conservation

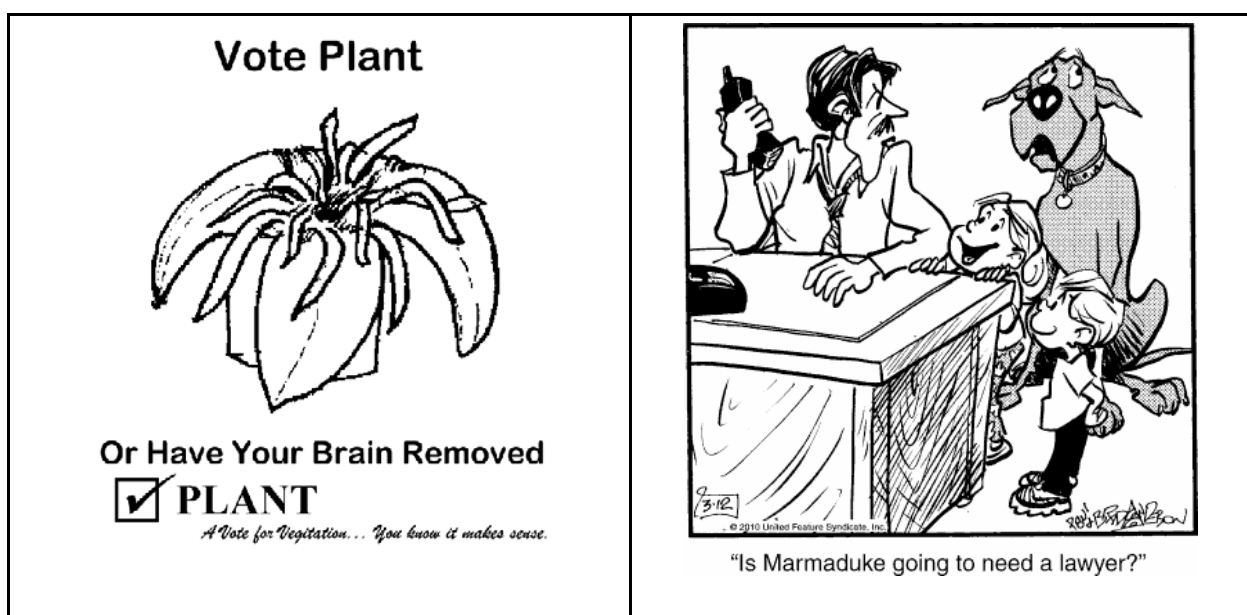


Figure 1. (left) *Vote for plant!* From the *Transition Culture Companion*: <http://transitionculture.org/2006/03/30/making-powerdown-electable/>) - (right) *Marmaduke* From the Comics *Curmudgeon* (<http://joshreads.com/?p=5750>)

community. Ilya Smelansky believes the Convention on Grassland Conservation in Europe could be very useful for all important steppe countries whether it is European or not because it could become a unique international policy instrument to push national conservation and agricultural policies toward more effective grasslands conservation. In addition support from conservation community of the post-Soviet countries may increase political weight of the SGD initiative in the Pan-European area.

The Steppe Appeal!

During the Uman' meeting, a policy initiative was started thanks to Anna Kuzemko, Peter Torok, Olexiy Burkovsky, Olexij Vasiljuk, Ilya Smelansky, and other EDGG members. The initiative set as its major goal to promote the protection, restoration and sustainable development of Ukrainian steppes. EDGG, through its SPC, supports this effort by providing its legitimacy cover, and the means to publicize relevant requests. In addition a political formula was created, codified as the Steppe Appeal, and adopted by the Executive Committee of the EDGG (Figure 6). The Appeal focused on the cessation of afforestation of Ukrainian steppes. As the next step, it was decided to send the Steppe Appeal to Ukrainian authorities (Ukrainian President, Prime Minister, Forest Agency, etc.) as a mean to press for political decisions



Figure 2. From: <http://www.jacketflap.com/megablog/index.asp?tagid=4193&tag=Farm>

and actions towards the halt of afforestation. The letters were sent on 5th of September, and we all hope to hear good news for Ukrainian steppes.



Figure 3. Daurian meadow steppe - Margintui Mts in Nerchinsk Ridge - Dauria (Transbaikal Territory). Photo: A. Barashkova.



Figure 4. *Stipa zalesskii* rich-forbs genuine steppe - Altai piedmonts - Altai Territory , June 2009. Photo: I. Smelansky.



Figure 5. *Stipa capillata* dry hemihalophytic steppe with *Galatella villosa* in blossom - Samara, Mulin Dol natural monument ,August 2011. Photo: I. Smelansky.

SPC-EDGG sub-page within EDGG web

A new web sub-page for SPC-EDGG is expected to be available soon within EDGG web, in the framework of main page modifications. The sub-page is still in the planning stage and any good idea is welcomed! The sub-page will be a step for communication of science-based

policy, let's say, thoughts about dry grassland resources (e.g. about Smolenice Grassland Declaration, grasslands of high nature value, steppes, interesting links, etc.).

*Michael Vrahnakis, Karditsa, Greece
Ilya Smelansky, Novosibirsk, Russia*



European Dry Grassland Group
www.edgg.org



International Association for Vegetation Science
www.iavs.org

Appeal of Executive Committee of the European Dry Grassland Group of the International Association for Vegetation Science

to stop afforestation of Ukrainian steppes

Ukrainian steppes are a unique and indispensable part of European natural heritage. Steppe ecosystems are of high biodiversity and have a high potential for carbon storage in below ground biomass and humus content of the soil. Thus, Ukrainian steppes have a crucial importance in biodiversity conservation and climate protection.

Environmental problems are beyond the state borders. The authorities of every state have to contribute to their solution. In recognition of this fact, Ukraine has signed and ratified several international conventions on the protection of biological diversity, e.g. the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention).

We therefore are troubled by information on large scale afforestation of Ukrainian steppes by the Ukrainian State Agency of Forest Resources. Even though steppes are termed "low-yielding, degraded and eroding land" in the course of these activities, photos and other evidence presented at scientific conferences and on the internet prove otherwise. At the same time regions more proper for forest growth, i.e. Carpathians and Polesye, suffer from deforestation.

The above-mentioned international conventions forbid the destruction of natural habitats such as steppes and dry grasslands. Moreover, conversion natural steppes into forest have no significant contribution to climate protection. Artificially created forests plantations in the steppe zone may fail international certification when satellite data show their low quality. Ploughing of steppe in order to prepare afforestation may even stimulate decomposition of below ground biomass and humus, thus causing significant carbon dioxide emission in the first place.

We, Executive Committee of the European Dry Grassland Group, representing a European society of more than 600 scientists whose interests are associated with the protection, conservation and restoration of natural and semi-natural grasslands and in accordance with the spirit of Smolenice Grassland Declaration (Smolenice, Slovakia, June 2010) address this appeal to the Ukrainian authorities to change their strategy of climate protection by

- **conserving natural steppes and recover further steppe grasslands on abandoned agricultural lands in the steppe and forest steppe zones;**
- **terminating afforestation to the forest and forest steppe zones and excluding alien tree species from afforestation programmes;**
- **generally avoiding afforestation of grassland.**

Figure 6. The Steppe Appeal (approved by the EC of EDGG).

Bylaws of the European Dry Grassland Group

Dear members,

it is well established that EDGG is a lively and active group of IAVS. Currently, we are 650 members from 49 countries, running 4 regional subgroups and 1 Special Committee (for policy matters), we are planning our 9th EDGG meeting (Greece), and our 4th research expedition (Italy). Clearly, these figures indicate in parallel an increasing complexity in our organization and to underpin the need to develop specific organizational rules. From the end of March 2011, we five chairs have been engaging in building the EDGG Bylaws. We announced our effort at Uman', and subsequently made several alterations. Finally, the text of Bylaws was exposed to your judgement and vote on the 1st of September. After four weeks of voting, there were 44 votes cast in the ballot and they were all yes votes. Two voters suggested minor corrections, and at least one of those was, in principle, accepted. Thus the Bylaws (shown below) have been approved by all the votes from the EDGG members and from now on will govern activities and procedures in EDGG.

Executive Committee of EDGG

Article 1. Name, Affiliation

1. This Group shall be known as the European Dry Grassland Group (hereafter EDGG).

2. EDGG is a Working Group of the International Association for Vegetation Science (hereafter IAVS), thus its Bylaws are subsidiary to the Statutes and Bylaws of IAVS.

Article 2. Objectives, Activities, Facilities

1. The objectives of the EDGG shall be to: a. develop and advance research on any aspect (vegetation, flora, fauna, soils, etc.) of western Palearctic dry grasslands and steppes, b. promote education on dry grasslands, c. promote the publication of research results on dry grasslands, d. facilitate scientific and personal communication among scientists who are interested in Palearctic dry grasslands, e. promote appropriate application of dry grassland research for the good of society, particularly in environmental management and public decision making, and f. promote policies and legislation towards protection, proper management, and restoration of high nature value grasslands in general.

2. These objectives may be achieved by the following activities: a. organization, promotion and administration of scientific meetings, research expeditions, and field trips, b. establishment of Regional or Topical Subgroups, or Special Committees, c. publication, editing and distribution of journals, special features, articles, books, data resources, and other media dealing with dry grasslands, d. encouragement and facilitation of communication between grassland scientists and policymakers at all levels of government, as well as with private and public organizations, e. provision of awards, grants, scholarships and other financial assistance to charitable organizations, societies, associations, companies or persons that advance the objectives of the EDGG, and f. other mechanisms, provided they are consistent with the stated objectives of the EDGG.

3. To achieve its aims, the EDGG provides four major facilities for information exchange among dry grassland researchers and conservationists: a. the Bulletin of the EDGG, b. the EDGG mailing list, c. the EDGG homepage, d. the European Dry Grassland Meetings, organised annually in different places throughout Europe.

Article 3. Membership and Fees

1. Membership of the EDGG is open to all natural persons who are interested in dry grasslands and who are willing to support the objectives of EDGG.

2. Membership of the EDGG is free of charge, and membership of the IAVS is optional.

3. Membership is obtained by a. written application to the EDGG Membership Administrator, b. registration for participation in a conference, expedition or fieldtrip of the EDGG, or c. authorship in an EDGG-edited publication or Special Feature.

4. Membership can be terminated by any member and at any time by means of a written request addressed to the Membership Administrator.

Article 4. Executive Committee

1. Responsibilities. a. The Executive Committee shall be the primary governing body of the EDGG. b. The Executive Committee represents the EDGG and shall be in charge of the daily affairs of the EDGG. c. The Executive Committee exerts authority in any matter not allocated to other organs by the Bylaws. The Executive Committee will have the following main responsibilities: Publication of the Bulletin of the EDGG; Maintenance of the EDGG homepage; Organisation of the European Dry Grassland Meetings in cooperation with the Local Organising Committees; Organisation of General Assemblies and of elections to the Executive Committee as well as conducting electronic ballots among the General Membership as required; Internal communication with

members and Subgroups and coordination of all EDGG activities; External communication with IAVS, other organisations, institutions and individuals

2. Election a. The Executive Committee shall consist of three to seven members. b. The members of the Executive Committee shall be elected for terms of two years. Membership automatically terminates at the time of the General Assembly, which is held in uneven years. Members of the Executive Committee may be re-elected. The new Executive Committee takes over its duties before the General Assembly. c. Prior to the election, the General Membership shall be invited to provide nominations of candidates for the Executive Committee. Any EDGG member may be nominated as a candidate for the Executive Committee by any member of the EDGG, including himself/herself. d. Only those nominees who agree to take the seat if elected will be accepted and listed as candidates. e. The elections will be conducted via electronic forms among all members. The duration of the election period will be four weeks. In the election, each member can vote for up to seven candidates. Those three candidates with the highest number of votes are elected. Additionally, the candidates with the fourth to seventh highest numbers of votes are elected, provided they were voted for by at least half of the voters. In the case of a tie, all candidates with the same number of votes are elected.

3. Termination of Membership a. A Member of the Executive Committee can resign from his/her position at any time. b. A Member of the Executive Committee can be dismissed by a majority vote of a Qualified General Assembly (i.e. an Assembly of 40 EDGG members from at least 10 different countries) or in an electronic ballot among the General Membership. c. In case of resignation or dismissal, the remaining Executive Committee members may appoint a replacement to fill any such vacant positions until the following General Assembly.

4. Assignment of Responsibilities a. The Executive Committee designates from its membership one Officer for each of the six required functions: IAVS Representative, who represents the EDGG in the IAVS, and should therefore also be a member of the IAVS. Membership Administrator, who maintains the membership list and is responsible for general communication with the members. Secretary-General, who prepares and archives all official documents of the EDGG, such as the Bylaws and minutes of meetings of the General Assembly and Executive Committee, as well as the results of elections and ballots and make these available to the general membership. Editor-in-Chief of the Bulletin of the EDGG, who is in charge of the everyday business of the Bulletin of the EDGG. Editor-in-Chief of the EDGG homepage, who is in charge of the everyday business of the EDGG homepage. Meetings Coordinator, who collects ideas for future venues of European Dry Grassland Meetings, communicates with potential meeting hosts, and supports the Local Organising Committees as the representative of the

Executive Committee. b. The Executive Committee may also designate Deputy Officers for each of the six required functions, as well as Officers for other responsibilities. c. A member of the Executive Committee may hold more than one of the named functions. d. The Executive Committee will keep the membership informed regarding the responsibilities of its Officers. The Executive Committee may reorganize the arrangement of these responsibilities at any time.

5. Representation and Decisions a. Each member of the Executive Committee is entitled to publicize activities of the EDGG to members and non-members. At the IAVS, the EDGG is represented by the IAVS Representative or his/her Deputy. b. All decisions of the Executive Committee are taken by the whole Executive Committee unless they belong to the specific responsibilities of a certain Officer. Also fundamental decisions regarding the Bulletin of the EDGG, the EDGG homepage and the European Dry Grassland Meetings are to be made by the whole Executive Committee. The majority of the Executive Committee can overrule any individual decision of one of its Officers. c. Decisions by the Executive Committee are made by a simple majority of its members (not votes), except in issues which require a two-thirds majority in accordance with these Bylaws. d. Meetings of the Executive Committee may be held in person, by remote communication or by a combination of these.

6. Reporting a. Each year during the General Assembly, the Executive Committee shall present a report of its activities since the previous General Assembly and of activities planned for the period prior to and including the following European Dry Grassland Meeting.

Article 5. General Assembly

1. The Executive Committee shall organize General Assemblies on an annual basis, to be held in conjunction with the European Dry Grassland Meetings.

2. During the General Assembly, the membership shall receive the annual reports of the Executive Committee.

3. Any member of the EDGG may raise an issue or appeal a Decision of the Executive Committee by proposing the matter for consideration by the General Assembly. Members may, by submission of a petition signed by at least ten members of the EDGG, request that an item proposed by a member of the EDGG during the General Assembly meeting be voted on by the General Assembly.

4. If at least 40 EDGG members from at least 10 different countries are represented in a General Assembly (Qualified General Assembly), its decisions are binding over the Executive Committee; otherwise they are recommendations that can be overruled by the majority of the Executive Committee.

5. The Executive Committee shall approve the minutes, and the Secretary-General distributes them in the Bulletin of the EDGG.

Article 6. Decisions by General Membership

1. If required by either the General Assembly or the Executive Committee, final decisions on important issues can be delegated for resolution by an electronic ballot of the General Membership of EDGG.

Article 7. Regional or Topical Subgroups and Special Committees

1. Members of the EDGG may organize Regional or Topical Subgroups. The establishment, reorganisation and renaming of such Subgroups needs to be approved either by the Executive Committee, General Assembly or by an electronic ballot of the General Membership

2. Subgroups can be dissolved by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee or by a simple majority of either a Qualified General Assembly or an electronic ballot of the General Membership.

3. The Executive Committee can appoint Special Committees that support its work within specific fields. Special Committees consist of one or more members from the Executive Committee and any number of ordinary EDGG members. Their terms of duty terminate with that of the Executive Committee that appointed them or by dissolution through the Executive Committee.

4. The Executive Committee shall appoint Teams of Editors for EDGG Special Features in scientific journals and for other publications, jointly with the respective Editor (s)-in-Chief.

Article 8. European Dry Grassland Meetings

1. Each potential future European Dry Grassland Meeting (venue, date, topic, excursions) has to be presented and discussed in at least one General Assembly prior to a decision. After such a presentation, a Qualified General Assembly can decide (a) to accept the proposal; (b) to delegate the decision to the Executive Committee; or (c) if the presentation is at least two years prior to the proposed meeting, postpone the decision to the subsequent General Assembly

2. All fundamental issues not decided by the General Assembly after such a presentation (because the General Assembly was not qualified, because it delegated them or left them open) are decided by a majority decision of the Executive Committee.

3. For each European Dry Grassland Meeting, the Executive Committee shall appoint a Local Organising Committee consisting of one or more persons proposed by the

meetings host(s) plus the Meetings Coordinator or his/her Deputy.

4. All fundamental decisions regarding a European Dry Grassland Meeting are made by the Local Organising Committee jointly with the Executive Committee. This particularly applies to financial issues such as fees, applications for financial support and the use of financial surpluses.

Article 9. Modification of the Bylaws

1. The Bylaws can be modified by a. a majority vote of the General Membership in an electronic ballot, or b. a majority vote of a Qualified General Assembly, or c. through a vote by two thirds of all Executive Committee members.

Article 10. Relationship to IAVS

1. The status of being a Working Group of the IAVS can be terminated at any time by a a. two-third vote of a Qualified General Assembly or a majority vote of an electronic ballot among the EDGG General Membership, or b. decision of the IAVS bodies that are in charge of such decisions according to the Statutes and Bylaws of the IAVS.

Article 11. General Prohibitions

1. EDGG is a non-profit making organization.

2. No officer of the EDGG shall be liable for damages resulting from the exercise of his/her judgement or discretion in the course of undertaking the duties or responsibilities of his/her office, except when in contravention of the applicable national legislation.

Article 12. Dissolution

1. A decision on the dissolution of the EDGG can only be made by a majority of votes in an electronic ballot among the General Membership.

2. In the event of dissolution or final liquidation, the assets will be transferred to the IAVS. The financial settlement shall be carried out by the Executive Committee.

Elections for the Executive Committee of the EDGG

Dear members of the EDGG,

As you are probably aware, our organization is currently administered by five chairs (Jürgen, Monika, Solvita, Mike and Steve). Far from your opinions of a successful or not administration and management of a rather complicated organization made by the five of us all these years, we believe that we are only five individual members from a membership of 650 individuals. This is because the EDGG warmly believes in representativeness and equality. That is why there is a provision in the recently approved EDGG Bylaws (describing matters concerning the Executive Committee (EC)) and its renewal (article 4.2, page 19, this issue).

According to Article 4.2.c of our Bylaws “c. *Prior to the election, the General Membership shall be invited to provide nominations of candidates for the Executive Committee. Any EDGG member may be nominated as a candidate for the Executive Committee by any member of the EDGG, including himself/herself*”.

So, this is an open call for all those who are interested in actively participating in the governance of the EDGG and thus to stand for the election to the Executive Council of up to 7 chairs of the EDGG.

The **deadline for nominations is 28th October 2011**. So, please, feel encouraged to submit your nominations of potential candidates for election to the Executive Committee of the EDGG. Please note that it is also permitted, and even encouraged, to submit self-nominations. Nominations should include a short biosketch, including preferred fields of activities within the EDGG Executive Committee. You can see some biosketches already prepared on: http://www.edgg.org/about_us.htm. All submitted biosketches will be posted on our web page. Please send the material to Steve (stephen.venn@helsinki.fi) before the deadline of 28th October.

EDGG is seeking a team of motivated chairs who reflect the full variety of EDGG members in terms of geography, professional interests and administrative competences, and up to seven seats can be filled.

The Executive Committee of the EDGG



Allium flavum, Nemahegy, Hungary. Photo: P. Chmielewski.

4th EDGG Research Expedition in 2012

Note that the 4th EDGG Research Expedition (with a similar sampling design) is already planned. It will cover the various types of dry grasslands on the Italian island of Sicily and take place end of March or early April 2012. If you are interested, please contact Riccardo Guarino (guarintoro@hotmail.com) and Jürgen Dengler (dengler@botanik.uni-hamburg.de) for further information.



Silene armeria, Sredna Gora, Bulgaria. Photo: J. Dengler.

Special Feature in Plant Biosystems 2011 published

Our first Special Feature in a journal listed in the Web of Science (Impact factor = 0.829) has finally been published in mid-September 2011. Under the topic “Succession, management and restoration of dry grasslands”, we published nine articles + one editorial:

Janišová, M., Bartha, S., Kiehl, K., Dengler, J. (2011): Advances in the conservation of dry grasslands – Introduction to contributions from the 7th European Dry Grassland Meeting. *Plant Biosystems* 145: 507–513. [[get a pdf from dengler@botanik.uni-hamburg.de](#)]

Sudnik-Wójcikowska, B., Moysiyenko, I., Zachwatowicz, M., Jabłońska, E. (2011): The value and need for protection of kurgan flora in the anthropogenic landscape of steppe zone in Ukraine. *Plant Biosystems* 145: 638–653. [[get a pdf from barbara.sudnik@uw.edu.pl](#)]

Vassilev, K., Pedashenko, H., Nikolov, S. C., Apostolova, I., Dengler, J. (2011): Effect of land abandonment on the vegetation of upland semi-natural grasslands in the Western Balkan Mts., Bulgaria. *Plant Biosystems* 145: 654–65. [[get a pdf from kiril5914@abv.bg](#)]

Hegedúšová, K., Senko, D. (2011): Successional changes of dry grasslands in southwestern Slovakia after 46 years of abandonment. *Plant Biosystems* 145: 666–687. [[get a pdf from katarina.hegedusova@savba.sk](#)]

Kaligarič, M., Meister, M., Škornik, S., Šajna, N., Kramberger, B., Bolhár-Nordenkamp, H. R. (2011): Grassland succession is mediated by umbelliferous colonizers showing allelopathic potential. *Plant Biosystems*

145: 688–698. [[get a pdf from mitja.kaligarič@uni-mb.si](#)]

Házi, J., Bartha, S., Szentes, S., Wichmann, B., Penksza, K. (2011): SeminatURAL grassland management by mowing of *Calamagrostis epigejos* in Hungary. *Plant Biosystems* 145: 699–707. [[get a pdf from hazjudit246@gmail.com](#)]

Henkin Z., Seligman NG. 2011. The role of management on the rate of succession in restored Mediterranean grassland after fire. *Plant Biosystems* 145: 708–714. [[get a pdf from henkinz@volcani.agri.gov.il](#)]

Csecserits, A., Czúcz, B., Halassy, M., Kröel-Dulay, G., Rédei, T., Szabó, R., Szitár, K., Török, K. (2011): Regeneration of sandy old-fields in the forest steppe region of Hungary. *Plant Biosystems* 145: 715–729. [[get a pdf from aniko@botanika.hu](#)]

Deák, B., Valkó, O., Kelemen, A., Török, P., Miglécz, T., Ölvedi, T., Lengyel, S., Tóthmérész, B. (2011): Litter and graminoid biomass accumulation suppresses weedy forbs in grassland restoration. *Plant Biosystems* 145: 730–737. [[get a pdf from molinia@gmail.com](#)]

Madrugá-Andreu, C., Plaixats, J., López-i-Gelats, F., Bartolomé, J. (2011): Medium-term success of revegetation methods for high-mountain grassland reclamation in the Montseny *Plant Biosystems* 145. DOI: 738–749. [[get a pdf from mariacristina.madruga@uab.cat](#)]

Unfortunately, we cannot make these interesting articles freely available, but feel encouraged to ask the corresponding authors (provided in brackets above) for a pdf of their article. It would be beneficial for EDGG if these articles are read and cited frequently.



Sampling during the Bulgarian Expedition. Sredna Gora Mts., August 2011. Photo: M. Janišová.

New Special Features – submissions still possible!

After the successful production of our first Special Feature in an ISI journal, we are presently preparing three new Special Features for good ISI journals. The deadlines have slightly been extended, thus, contributions are still possible, and we strongly encourage them if you have good stuff. Below we give a brief overview only; if you wish more detailed information, contact Jürgen Dengler (dengler@botanik.uni-hamburg.de), who in all cases is the chair of the guest editors.

Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment

Topic: Grassland diversity

The planned Special Feature for *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment* (AGEE; Impact factor = 2.790) has the working title “**Diversity patterns in European grasslands under the joint influence of agriculture and nature**” and will be guest edited by J. Dengler, M. Janišová, P. Török, M. Wiezik & C. Wellstein. A brief outline of this Special Feature reads as follows:

The collection of contributions in this Special Feature shall address the biodiversity of European grasslands comprehensively, including the underlying causes and potential consequences. We invite manuscripts addressing biodiversity patterns of grassland flora and fauna of any spatial or temporal scale. Both correlative and experimental studies are possible, as well as are reviews and synthesis papers. While we welcome well-designed case studies on specific aspects, comparative studies across regions, taxa, scales, or dimensions of biodiversity would be particularly suitable. Papers addressing aspects of biodiversity conservation in high nature value grasslands are also invited.

In this Special Feature, we apply the term “grasslands” in a wide sense, including both natural climax communities (steppes, alpine grasslands, coastal grasslands) and grasslands of zoo-anthropogenic origin, and ranging from dry through mesic to wet. As for the comprehension of the patterns in the zoo-anthropogenic grasslands of Europe, the knowledge of the natural grassland vegetation of the steppes in the whole Palaearctic realm is crucial, we also welcome contributions from North Africa, West and Central Asia.

We strongly encourage all authors to present and discuss their results in a way that contributes to the overall understanding of grassland diversity in the Palaearctic realm.

If you wish to contribute to this Special Feature, please submit an **abstract** of the intended contribution to

dengler@botanik.uni-hamburg.de until **30 November 2011 (extended deadline)**. Already 35 contributions have been announced, but as we want to combine in this issues high quality works from the leading European grassland ecologists that together present the present state of knowledge about diversity of/in European grasslands, we are encouraging further proposals. Moreover, one issue of AGEE can comprise up to 350 pages. In December, the guest editors together with the chief editor will then select the most promising proposals based on scientific quality and novelty as well as their contribution to the overall topic. Those **articles** that receive an invitation can then be submitted until **approx. mid-2012**.

Applied Vegetation Science

Topic: Grassland classification

A joint Special Feature of the 8th European Dry Grassland Meeting 2011 in Uman’ and the 21st Workshop of the European Vegetation Survey (EVS) 2012 in Vienna will be devoted to large-scale classification of all types of grasslands in Europe with modern methodology. It shall appear as a Virtual Special Feature (VSF) distributed over several issues of *Applied Vegetation Science* (AVS; impact factor = 1.802 at present, but increasing fast). Working title is “**Towards a consistent classification of European grasslands**” and the guest editors are J. Dengler, W. Willner & M. Chytrý. A brief outline of this Special Feature reads as follows:

Therefore, we invite contributions that provide comprehensive large-scale classifications of major grassland types, that develop (and test) methodological tools to overcome the problems that until now limited the development of such consistent supra-national treatments, or a combination of both. The focus is on the widespread grassland classes Molinio-Arrhenatheretea, Festuco-Brometea, and Koelerio-Coryneporetea, but we are also open to studies of Mediterranean grasslands (e.g. Thero-Brachypodietea), alpine grasslands (e.g. Elyno-Seslerietea, Juncetea trifidi), coastal grasslands (e.g. Ammophiletea arenariae, Juncetea maritimi), grassland-woodland transitions (Trifolio-Geranietea, Mulgedio-Aconitetea), and even of extremely human-influenced grasslands such as the Polygono-Poetea.

If you wish to contribute to this Special Feature, please submit an **abstract** of the intended contribution to dengler@botanik.uni-hamburg.de until **31 December 2011 (extended deadline)**. Already nine classification papers (from various grassland classes and chiefly from Central, Eastern, Southeastern and Northern Europe) and some methodological case studies have been announced.

However, as it requires some time to set up the international teams of authors needed for most of the contributions and we would like to receive some articles also from Southern and Western Europe, we have extended the original deadline (31 October) by two months. In January 2012, the guest editors together with the chief editors will then select the most promising proposals based on scientific quality and novelty as well as their contribution to the overall topic. Those **articles** that receive an invitation can then be submitted until **approx. mid-2013** and they will be published (after review process and acceptance) successively in the years 2012 to 2014. Note that there will be a second possibility for abstract submission after the EVS conference in Vienna (30 June 2012), but the number of good articles suggested until end of 2011 will be decisive for the question whether the VSF is started at all.

If you are considering writing a paper for this Grassland classification VSF, please contact the guest editors immediately, i.e. before you do even the first step of collecting or analysing the data, and not only at abstract submission!!!

Only when we are informed, can we coordinate the different teams of authors and help to avoid overlaps in their works. By chance, we have just detected one case where obviously three teams of authors worked on a largely overlapping classification paper without knowing from each other, but only one had informed us. Such a lack of communication could lead to an enormous double- or triple work. It is obvious that in such a situation we either have to ask the author teams of overlapping topics to join each other, or we could only invite the contribution from the one team that had informed us first!

Also only those authors who have informed us about their plans in advance, will receive some potentially highly relevant information from us, such as modifications in deadlines and procedures, changes in the formal or methodological requirements for papers or the possible availability of preliminary versions of the EuroSL, the planned electronic standard checklist of all European plants with cross-walks to national Turboveg lists, to be used for such supranational vegetation studies.

Tuexenia

Annual Dry Grassland Special Feature

We will continue our traditional annual Dry Grassland Special Feature in *Tuexenia*. The attractiveness of *Tuexenia* will tremendously increase in the future, as ***Tuexenia* is now covered both by SCOPUS and by the ISI Web of Science** (i.e. from 2011 onwards all articles will be presented and counted in these two leading literature databases) and because since 2010 *Tuexenia* in addition to the print version is available open access online (see

http://www.tuexenia.de/index.php?id=14&no_cache=1), which increases the visibility and citation rates of your articles significantly. Further, unlike most other journals, *Tuexenia* provides the possibility and even encourages to present oversize vegetation tables in print. Therefore: use *Tuexenia* for your good regional geobotanical and phytosociological works!

For our Dry Grassland Special Features, we search for the following types of papers:

Studies on vegetation, flora, ecology and conservation of dry grasslands in Central Europe (here defined as DE, CH, AT, NL, BE, LU, PL, CZ, SK, HU, SI)

Well-conducted phytosociological/syntaxonomical studies from the rest of Europe (and even beyond), provided their results are discussed also in relation to central Europe.

In the Dry Grassland Special Features, all articles will be in English (while the rest of *Tuexenia* also has some German-language articles), but abstracts and captions will be bilingual (if you are not capable of providing the German versions, the editors will do this for you). For all contributions, we presently offer to have the English language be checked by an experienced language editor before publication (to be paid by FlorSoz), but of course you need to provide a reasonably well written English manuscript.

Articles will be handled upon submission and be published once they are accepted and ready, but you should be aware that there is only one issue per year. For *Tuexenia* 32 (2012), which will appear in May 2012, we (the guest-editor team for 2012 is T. Becker, D. Galvanek & J. Dengler) have so far only received three articles, and one or two more are announced. There would be space for more, and it is still possible to get into this volume, provided you submit your contribution soon and you are able to make the required revisions fast. The chances to have your article read for volume 32 (2012) are high for submissions of full articles until **end of October or early November 2011**.



Ephippiger sp. Photo: J. Dengler

News from the Floristisch-Soziologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft (FlorSoz)

There is good news from *Tuexenia*, the journal of our long-term supporter FlorSoz. *Tuexenia* has recently been accepted for inclusion in both the ISI Web of Science (Science Citation Index Expanded, SCIE) and the SCOPUS article database, i.e. all articles from *Tuexenia* 31 (2011) onwards will be indexed and bibliometrically evaluated in both major databases. Further, the FlorSoz Executive Committee has decided to make all new articles in *Tuexenia* from 2010 onwards free access on the journal homepage (http://www.tuexenia.de/index.php?id=14&no_cache=1), where for all the older articles the author, keywords and abstracts were already available. Please cite recent *Tuexenia* articles wherever appropriate (see e.g. the freely available Dry Grassland Special Features since 2005 at http://www.edgg.org/edgg_publications.htm), in order to help *Tuexenia* to get a good first impact factor 2013!

Further, the FlorSoz Executive Committee has decided to continue the Dry Grassland Special Features in *Tuexenia*, guest-edited by EDGG scientists. Submissions to this now even more attractive publication venue are possible at any time to dengler@botanik.uni-hamburg.de, but please read the Instructions for Authors (<http://www.tuexenia.de/index.php?id=13&L=4>) first and follow them carefully.

We also would like to invite those EDGG members from Central Europe who are interested in plants and vegetation to join FlorSoz. The membership fees are rather low (40 € regular; 15 € for persons with low income, like students, unemployed persons or colleagues from low-income countries) but connected with various benefits such as:

- ♣ Only members receive the printed version of *Tuexenia*, which is a real benefit over the online pdf's particularly for the oversize supplement tables, but it is also much nicer to have the full colour articles in a bound volume.
- ♣ Only members receive the two additional book series of the FlorSoz, namely the *Synopsis der Pflanzengesellschaften Deutschlands* and the *Beihefte/Exkursionsführer zu den Jahrestagungen*
- ♣ Only members can participate in the very attractive excursions during the annual conferences.

More information about FlorSoz membership can be found here: <http://www.tuexenia.de/index.php?id=9>. Note that there is also a book prize (30 €) if one member canvasses a new member.



Field lunch break, during the 3rd EDGG Expedition in Sredna Gora Mts., Bulgaria, Photo: J. Dengler.

EDGG corporate membership of the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism - EFNCP

In late July 2011 the EDGG established corporation with the EFNCP. Below is an outline of their aims, activities and publications, adapted from their website (www.efncp.org), where you can find much more information and also download their quarterly newsletter.



The European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP, <http://www.efncp.org/>) is a Europe-wide network which raises awareness of the importance of **low-intensity farming for nature conservation** and aims to improve the way public policies respond to the needs of these farming systems. More specifically, the **aims of the EFNCP** are to:

- ♣ increase understanding that certain European farming systems are of high nature conservation and cultural value;
- ♣ ensure the availability, dissemination and exchange of supporting information combining research and practical expertise;
- ♣ bring together ecologists, nature conservation managers, farmers and policy makers to consider problems faced by these systems and potential solutions;
- ♣ develop and promote policy options which ensure the ecological maintenance and development of these farming systems and cultural landscapes.

The EFNCP organises regular [European conferences](#) on issues affecting pastoralism and nature conservation. Each conference takes place in an area where traditional farming is still widespread (i.e. [Montpellier 2003 \(FRA\)](#), [Pamporovo 2005 \(BUL\)](#), [Uppsala 2007 \(SWE\)](#), [Paris 2009 \(FRA\)](#), Sibiu 2010 (RO)). Learning from field visits to working farms is a central part of these events. The Forum also holds [policy seminars](#), usually in Brussels, on specific aspects of EU policy.

The work of the EFNCP is publicised through its website and through the production of the newsletter *La Cañada* started in 1994, which is widely distributed within Europe (free on-line access, <http://www.efncp.org/publications/la-canada/>). Future editions of *La Cañada* may be sent as a pdf file. To help EFNCP keep the mailing list up to date, please send your current e-mail address to Gwyn Jones gwyn@efncp.org. Conference proceedings and other occasional publications are also available.

Team members of EFNCP: <http://www.efncp.org/forum/about/staff/>

The newsletter of EFNCP is available directly from the website at <http://www.efncp.org/publications/la-canada/>

The Executive Committee of the EDGG

Recent publications of our members

Piowarczyk R., Chmielewski P., Cwener A. (2011): The distribution and habitat requirements of the genus *Orobanche* L. (Orobanchaceae) in SE Poland. *Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae* 80 (1): 37-48.

Becker T., Voss N., Durka W. (2011): Pollen limitation and inbreeding depression in an "old rare" bumblebee-pollinated grassland herb. *Plant Biology* 13: 857-864,

Becker T., Andres C., Dierschke H. (2011): Junge und alte Steppenrasen im NSG „Badraer Lehde-Großer Eller“ im Kyffhäusergebirge. *Tuexenia* 31: 173-210. Open access: <http://www.tuexenia.de/>

Becker T. (2010): Explaining rarity of the dry grassland perennial *Astragalus exscapus*. *Folia Geobotanica* 45: 303-321. Open access: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/j021760001086516/fulltext.pdf>

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Thomas Becker: thomas.becker@biologie.uni-goettingen.de



Trifolium striatum, Sredna Gora, Bulgaria. Photo: J.

Forthcoming events

International Congress on Conservation Biology

29 Nov.–2 December 2011, Christchurch, New Zealand

6th Annual Meeting of the Specialist Group on Macroecology of the Ecological Society of Germany, Austria and Switzerland (GfÖ)

29 February–2 March 2012, Frankfurt (Main), German

Deadline for registration and abstract submission: 2 December 2011

Details: http://www.bik-f.de/root/index.php?page_id=362&cms_veranstaltung_id=162

2The 9th European Dry Grassland Meeting

19–23 May 2012, Prespa, Greece

Details: www.edgg.org/edgg_meeting.html

(see separate contribution in this Bulletin issue, pp. 3-9)

1st Workshop of the European Vegetation Survey (EVS)

24–27 May 2012, Vienna, Austria

(Joint meeting with the 11th Meeting on Vegetation Databases)

Topics:

Vegetation databases and large-scale classification.

Biogeographical patterns in vegetation; vegetation and global change.

During the excursions, various types of dry and semi-dry grasslands will be visited.

Details: <http://evs2012.vinca.at>

The first circular will be distributed in October. registration will be possible from end of October until February 28.

55th Symposium of the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS)

23–28 July 2012, Mokpo City, South Korea

Details: <http://www.iavs.org/uploads/IAVS-2012.pdf>

XIV Meeting of the FAO-CIHEAM Subnetwork on Mediterranean Pastures and Fodder Crops

3-6 October 2012, Samsun, Turkey

Contact: Ignacio Romagosa, E-mail: iamz@iamz.ciheam.org

Details: <http://www.iamz.ciheam.org>



Silene roemerii. Photo: J. Dengler



Photo: J. Dengler

Book reviews

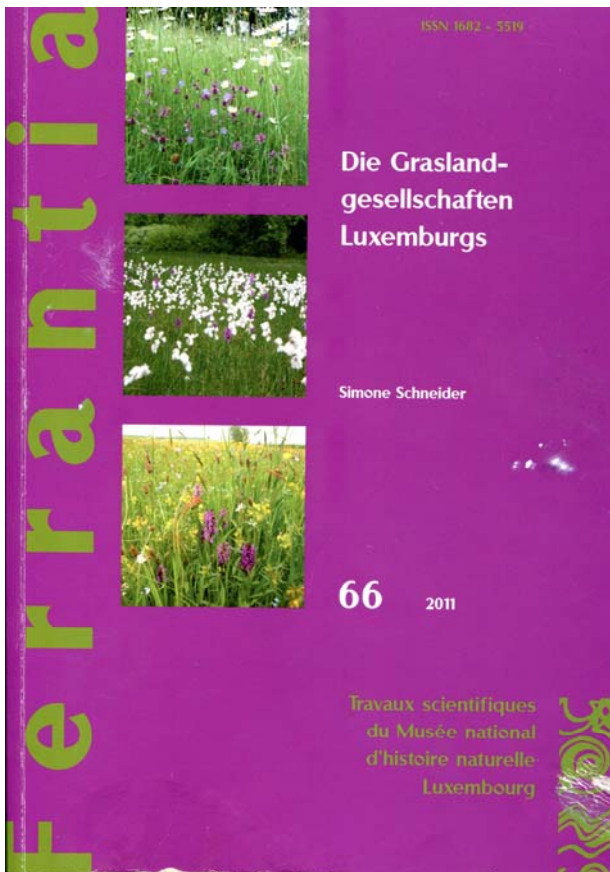
In this section, we will publish reviews of recent books relevant for dry grassland research and conservation. Apart from titles particularly dealing with dry grasslands, also more general titles can be included, as for example phytosociological overviews, floras/faunas and field guides of relevant taxa, or text books on methodology, ecology, and conservation/restoration. Jürgen Dengler (dengler@botanik.uni-hamburg.de) serves as coordinator for this section (book review editor). Thus, if you are an author, editor or publisher of a book and want to have it reviewed in the Bulletin of the EDGG, please, contact Jürgen. The same applies to EDGG members who want to review a specific new title.

Schneider, S. (2011): Die Graslandgesellschaften Luxemburgs. – Ferrantia 66: 303 pp. + tables, Musée national d'histoire naturelle Luxembourg, Luxembourg. ISSN 1682-5518. Price: 10.00 € (available from diffusion@mnhn.lu).

This publication is the PhD thesis of the EDGG member Simone Schneider, completed at the University of Trier (Germany). It covers the vegetation of grasslands in Luxembourg, with only 2,500 km² a small country adjacent to the west of Germany. The included vegetation types are semi-natural grasslands mainly of the class *Molinio-Arrhenatheretea* (74%), but to some extent also *Phragmito-Magnocaricetea* (*Magnocaricion elatae*, 8%), *Scheuchzerio-Caricetea* (*Caricion nigrae*, 5%), *Festuco-Brometea* (*Bromion erecti*, 10%), and *Calluno-Ulicetea* (*Violion caninae*, 3%). The analyses are based on 1,206 relevés, of which 793 originate from the literature and 413 were done by the author (the latter mostly on plots of 25 m²).

After a short Introduction and an extremely short Methods part, the main section of the book is devoted to the description of the 31 plant communities (associations, rankless communities and basal communities of higher syntaxa), with a total of more than 170 pages. The community descriptions are very detailed, always structured into the sections *Aspekt und Struktur* (appearance and structure), *Syntaxonomie* (syntaxonomy), *Artenzusammensetzung und Untergliederung* (species composition), *Ökologie* (ecology), *Verbreitung* (distribution) and *Aspekte des Naturschutzes* (aspects of conservation). The part on the dry grasslands (*Festuco-Brometea*) comprises 10 pages, and all stands from Luxembourg are included in a vegetation type called “*Bromion-Verbandsgesellschaft*”. The final parts of the book are an again very brief Discussion, a Summary (both in German and in English), the reference list, and a long Appendix with figures and tables (70 pages in total). Here, one finds some maps of the abiotic environment in Luxembourg as well as distribution maps of the communities, the header data of the author's own relevés and the bibliographic data of the relevés derived from literature. Finally, three huge supplements contain the relevé tables of all associations. The whole book is extensively illustrated with nice colour photographs that illuminate the variety of Luxembourg's grasslands.

Unfortunately, the author did not sample any environmental data (except slope and aspect), so that she is restricted in her interpretations to calculated mean Ellenberg values, and otherwise derives the rather lengthy descriptions more or less from her field impressions or transfers them from other studies. Statistical analyses are completely absent from the PhD thesis. Also the classification is merely an approach to assign the relevés to syntaxonomic systems established elsewhere. Neither the delimitation of the syntaxa, nor the diagnostic value of species is tested with the own dataset. Moreover, the comparison with the literature is mostly restricted to certain authors who worked in southern and western Germany. From France only some quite old treatments are



cited, the excellent databased classification of the grasslands in the neighbour country Netherlands (Schaminée et al. 1996) is completely ignored, as are some more modern German works that objectively tested the diagnostic value of species (e.g. Berg et al. 2004) or the recent high-quality studies in the Czech Republic (Chytrý 2007) or Slovakia (Janišová 2007).

In conclusion, the author has provided a detailed and colourful description of the still existing nice grasslands in Luxembourg. It would be thus desirable if she could make this wealth of data available to supra-national analyses with modern statistical methods by registering her database in GIVD (www.givd.info), where Luxembourg still is the only Central European country without any relevé (Jansen et al. 2011).

References

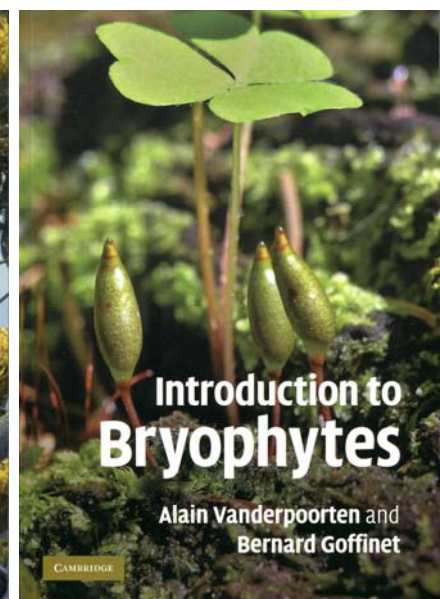
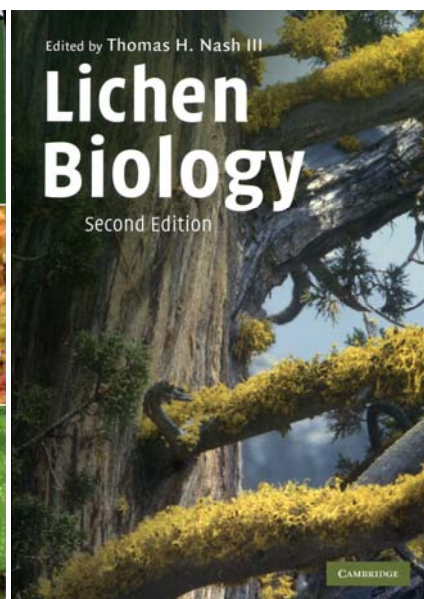
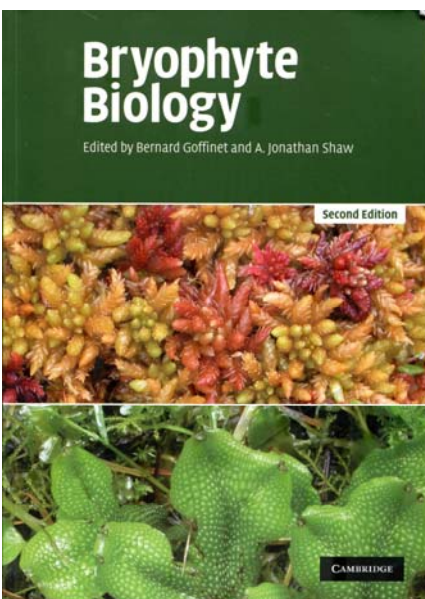
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Goffinet, B., Shaw, A. J. (2008) [„2009“] [Eds.]: Bryophyte biology. 2nd ed. – XIV + 565 pp., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. ISBN 978-0-521-69322-6.

Nash, T. H., III (2008) [Ed.]: Lichen biology. 2nd ed. – IX + 486 pp., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. ISBN 978-0-521-69216-8.

Vanderpoorten, A., Goffinet, B. (2009): Introduction to bryophytes. – VIII + 303 pp., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. ISBN 978-0-521-70073-3. Price: 24.99 GBP.



Bryophytes and lichens are important components in many plant communities, but particularly in dry grasslands (see e.g. Dengler 2005, Löbel & Dengler 2008). Despite the relevance of these non-vascular plant groups in terms of diversity, biomass, function and diagnostic value, many dry grassland researchers still ignore them, probably mostly because they had not treated these groups when they studied at university. Luckily, there are now excellent introductions to these groups available.

Here I present three such books from Cambridge University Press. Nash (2008) and Goffinet & Shaw (2008) are edited collections of individual articles written by specialists in the respective field, and both are already in the second edition. By contrast, Vanderpoorten & Goffinet (2009) is a new monographic textbook written by these two bryologists.

“Lichen biology” is organised in 17 chapters, written by a total of 21 authors from around the world, complemented by an Appendix on “Culture methods for lichens” and a very extensive reference list of nearly 100 pages. The chapters start with the two constituents that make up the lichen symbiosis, photobionts (green algae or cyanobacteria) and mycobionts (fungi), morphology, reproduction, biochemistry and physiology. The chapters 9–16 and thus the majority of the book is on ecological topics s.l. ranging from ecophysiology, through population ecology, the environmental role of lichens, their biogeography to their use as bioindicators for air pollution. The final chapter 17 presents an up-to-date view on the placement of lichenized taxa within the modern phylogenetic system of fungi. The book is well written, but with only relatively few and only black-and-white pictures.

“Bryophyte biology” is similarly organised, with 12 chapters from 20 authors. Here three chapters make the start that elucidate the present-day knowledge of morphology, anatomy, and morphology of the three major taxa that constitute what we used to call bryophytes: the liverworts (*Marchantiophyta*), the mosses (*Bryophyta*), and the hornworts (*Anthocerothophyta*). The following three chapters are on phylogenomics, molecular biology, and physiology. After that, ecological aspects are treated such as drought tolerance of bryophytes (relevant for dry grasslands!), substratum ecology, ecology of bryophyte-dominated peatlands, and finally population and community ecology of this plant group. The final two chapters are on “species and speciation” in bryophytes and conservation. Like the lichen pendant, the book is well written but mostly consists of text; the references this time are also extensive but provided chapter by chapter instead of a long list at the end.

While the first two books, from their content and form of presentation thus clearly address botanists who already have a strong background in lichenology or bryology, the “Introduction to bryophytes”, while not lacking depth

and timeliness, is more accessible to “newcomers”. This is achieved by much more figures, including 16 colour plates, as well as boxes (illustrating certain important aspects and case studies) and a helpful glossary at the end. While with half of the length of Goffinet & Shaw (2008), this book might lack some fine details, the overall picture appears to be even more complete and coherent due to the fact that this is an authored book and not a collection of “independent” articles. For example, in Vanderpoorten & Goffinet (2009) one could find on page 13 four recent suggestions of the phylogenetic position of the three groups summarized under “bryophyte” within the green plants, three of which would suggest that bryophytes are actually not monophyletic and thus should not be considered as one taxonomic group any longer. By contrast, in Goffinet & Shaw (2008), while there is a specific chapter on early land plant evolution, one misses such an instructive presentation, obviously because the chapter authors assumed that the readers are already familiar with that.

In conclusion, “Introduction to bryophytes” is a highly recommendable book both for self study and as companion reading for classes in bryology, and it would be great to have a similar textbook for lichenology, too. The two “Biology” titles are much more of reference handbooks for specialists, e.g. only there one could find such important things like complete taxonomic overviews of all these taxa down to the genera based on the latest phylogenetic studies.

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*Sredna Gora Mts.
Photo: J. Dengler.*

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Important dates: *The deadline for Bulletin 13 is 30 November 2011*

Bulletin 13 to appear: December 2011

Bulletin 14 to appear: March 2012