



Programme

19–23 July 2026, Sofia, Bulgaria

Welcome to the 21st Eurasian Grassland Conference

Dear colleagues and friends,

On behalf of the Organising Committee, we are delighted to welcome you to the 21st Eurasian Grassland Conference in Sofia, Bulgaria, held under the theme “Connecting science and conservation for grassland sustainability.”

The Organising Committee

About the venue

The venue of the conference will be Hemus Hotel ([Sofia 1421, 25 Cherni vrah Blvd](#)). Both the Welcome drink and the Social dinner will take place at this location. Here are some instructions to get there:

Directions from Sofia International Airport (Terminal 2)

1. Exit the airport building and turn left. Walk for 1–2 minutes until you reach Sofia Airport Metro Station.
2. Enter the station and pay €0.82 by tapping your bank card at the entrance gates or by purchasing a ticket from the vending machines.
3. Take the Metro in the direction of Slivnitsa Station.
4. Travel for approximately 28 minutes (12 stops) and get off at Serdika Station.
5. Get off the train and look for signs leading you to where you change Metro lines and change to the blue M2 line in Vitosha direction.
6. Then travel for 4 minutes (2 stops) and get off European Union (Evropeyski Sayuz) Metro Station.
7. The hotel is across the street from the Metro station, 90 m away.

Directions from the Central Railway Station

8. Exit the railway station and walk straight through the underpass.
9. Follow the signs to the Central Railway Metro Station
10. Get on the M2 blue line in Vitosha direction and travel for 8 mins (4 stops) until you get to European Union Metro Station.
11. Get off the Metro and exit the Station. The Hemus hotel is right across the street, 90 m. away.

Sunday, 19 July

19:00–21:00 Welcome drink at Hemus hotel

Monday, 20 July

08:30–09:00 Registration

09:00–09:30 Opening ceremony

Session 1: Patterns, Classification, and Biogeography of Palearctic Grasslands

Chair: Nikolay Velez

09:30–10:00 Plenary Speaker — Iwona Dembicz: *Ecological scaling laws in Palearctic grasslands*

10:00–10:15 Dariia Borovyk: *Drivers of multi-facet plant diversity across spatial scales in Ukrainian grasslands*

10:15–10:30 Martti Olavi Rajamäki: *Factors determining the occurrence of Alchemilla species on Finnish and Bulgarian Meadows*

10:30–11:00 *Coffee break*

Session 2: Grasslands of the Balkan Peninsula

Chair: Iva Apostolova

11:00–11:30 Plenary Speaker — Renata Čušterevska: *Grassland syntaxonomy and ecological patterns in the Central Balkans*

11:30–11:45 Beloslava Genova: *High-rank syntaxa off the non-forest vegetation on the territory of the Plovdiv and Rhodopean foothills geobotanical regions*

11:45–12:00 Instructions for lunch and getting to the starting point for the Sofia tour

12:00–13:00 *Lunch*

Session 3: Animals in Palaearctic Grasslands

Chair: Stephen Venn

13:00–13:30 Plenary Speaker — Ljiljana Tomović: *Distribution and conservation of reptiles in steppe, semi-arid and high-mountain pastures in Serbia and North Macedonia*

13:30–13:45 Ana Nahirnić-Beshkova: *Using typical pollinators in monitoring of NATURA 2000 habitats*

13:45–14:00 Stephen Venn: *The role of grasslands in the conservation of Insect Biodiversity*

14:00–14:15 Grace Bond: *Rare Grassland Pollinators: A Species Action Plan for Teasel Plant-Specialised Bees*

14:15–14:45 *Coffee break*

Poster Session 1 (14:45–16:30)

1. Dariia Borovyk — *Biodiversity and ecosystem service monitoring in urban grasslands: the “Blühender Campus” project in Berlin, Germany*
2. Azamat Sultamuratov — *Vegetation assembly on the dried Aral Sea bed follows multiple pathways rather than a single successional route*
3. Ewelina Klichowska — *Evolutionary history of feathergrasses mirrors climate-driven upslope and downslope shifts of the Central Asian steppes and their vulnerability to future climate change*
4. Marcin Nobis — *Phylogenomic insights into the origin and diversification of Eurasian feathergrass steppe ecosystems*
5. Mardari Constantin — *Floristic, ecological characteristics and distribution of forest fringe and related tall-herb rich thermophilous vegetation in Bulgaria and Romania*
6. Nadiia Kapets — *Terricolous Lichens of Rare Petrophytic Grasslands of the Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast (Ukraine)*
7. Oksana Tyshchenko — *Urban lawn–grassland mosaics along a local disturbance gradient: a teaching-based case study from the campus of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv*
8. Yullia Rozenblit — *Topological vegetation differentiation of the Dniester Canyon (Ukraine)*
9. Mardari Constantin — *Phytosociological diversity of high-altitude grasslands within the class Juncetea trifidi Hadač 1946 in Southeastern Carpathians*
10. Ana Nahirnić-Beshkova — *Dry rocky grasslands as a main driver of hotspot of butterflies and moths (Lepidoptera) diversity: case study NATURA 2000 area Dragoman*
11. Birsan Ciprian — *Diversity of macromycetes species in the xerophilous and meso-xerophilous grasslands from North-Eastern Romania*
12. Marija Chobanova — *Land use-driven habitat heterogeneity shapes grasshopper (Orthoptera) and bee (Hymenoptera: Apiformes) assemblages in dry grasslands of southeastern Bulgaria*
13. Naim Berisha — *Syntaxonomic diversity of alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands in the Sharri Mountains (Kosovo)*

18:30–20:00 Evening Tour in Sofia

Tuesday, 21 July

Session 4: Innovative Methods, Experimental Approaches, and Open Science in Grassland Research

Chair: Anna Kuzemko

09:00–09:30 Plenary Speaker — Balázs Deák: *Vanishing agrobiodiversity and the growing importance of small grassland fragments: the potential of Eurasian burial mounds in EU-level conservation and restoration policies*

09:30–09:45 Denys Vynokurov: *cocktail: fast and reproducible Cocktail clustering for vegetation classification*

09:45–10:00 Ģirts Baranovskis: *Co-designing Results-Based Grassland Conservation with Landowners: Management Choices and Monitoring Insights from Latvia*

10:00–10:15 Iva Boyadzhieva: *At the forefront of FAIR publishing for biodiversity and conservation research*

10:15–10:30 Elias Kapitany: *Local-scale increase masks landscape-scale loss of species richness in managed Pannonian grasslands*

10:30–11:00 *Coffee break*

Session 5: Global Change, Conservation, Restoration, and Management of Palearctic Grasslands

Chair: Denys Vynokurov

11:00–11:30 Plenary Speaker — Jürgen Dengler: *Global change in European grasslands: insights from local to continental studies*

11:30–11:45 Sara Nigro: *Climate and management changes drive semi-natural grassland community assembly over twenty years*

11:45–12:00 Iryna Rabyk: *Monitoring the spatial structure of mountain meadow habitats to support diversity conservation in the context of recreational infrastructure development*

12:00–13:00 *Lunch*

Session 5 (continued): Global Change, Conservation, Restoration, and Management of Palearctic Grasslands

13:00–13:15 Anna Kuzemko: *Impact of military actions on the steppe ecosystems of Ukraine*

13:15–13:30 Orsolya Valkó: *Complementary ecosystem engineering by shrubs and wild boars structures above- and belowground vegetation in abandoned temperate grasslands*

13:30–13:45 Rocco Labadessa: *Integrating dry grasslands into woody crops: opportunities for large-scale grassland restoration in Mediterranean agroecosystems*

13:45–14:00 Michal Jakiel: *Protection and Conservation of Grasslands in the Carpathians: Spatial Extent, Management Practices, and Current Challenges*

14:00–14:15 Szandra Sárszegi-Pék: *Relationships between biomass and species richness in abandoned sand mines*

14:15–14:45 *Coffee break*

14:45–15:00 *Instructions for the Grassland party*

Poster Session 2 (15:00–17:00)

14. Balázs Deák — *Out-of-production sites designated on ancient burial mounds provide safe-haven for rare weeds in agricultural landscapes*
15. Iryna Rabyk — *Spatial structure of mountain meadows and its importance for biodiversity conservation under recreational infrastructure development*
16. Airi Asada — *Common habitat preferences of endangered grassland species as a mirror of lost pristine grassland environments*
17. András István Csathó — *High-density grass seeding limits regeneration in a loess meadow steppic grassland: A 13-year annual timeline of post-restoration community assembly*
18. Arkadiusz Nowak — *On the verge of change: low occurrence of alien species in endemic-rich grasslands of the mountains of Central Asia – global biodiversity hotspot*
19. Atushi Ushimaru — *Both intensification and abandonment of paddy terraces degrade native pollination services through distinct network generalization*
20. Károly Penksza — *Morphological variability of Festuca taxa in the central dry grassland area of the Carpathian Basin*
21. Nina Polchaninova — *Dry grasslands should be prioritized for conservation based on the principle ‘Save the weakest first’*
22. Viktor Tsymbal — *Providing favorable conditions for the restoration and eutrophication of wetlands for the cultivation of rare species of mosses and lichens in the context of climate change*
23. Patar Sinaga — *Climate driven niche dynamics of hybridizing Stipa species in Central Asia*

19:00 Grassland Party at Hemus hotel

Wednesday, 22 July

Midconference excursion

Thursday, 23 July

Session 5 (continued): Global Change, Conservation, Restoration and Management of Palearctic Grasslands

Chair: Kiril Vassilev

09:00–09:30 Plenary Speaker — Borys Assyov

09:30–09:45 Sara Sánchez-Carmona: *From grassland to shrubland: bryophytes as sentinels of woody encroachment in subMediterranean calcareous grasslands*

09:45–10:00 Zsófia Eszter Guller: *Successional dynamics of clonal growth in two perennial forb species: a 14-year tracking of individual colonies*

10:00–10:15 Abdubakir Kushbokov: *Assessments of the soil seed bank in the Kyzylkum Desert rangelands along distance gradients from watering wells*

10:15–10:30 Amirouche Zaidi: *Geoecological Characterization of Grassland Soils in the Gouraya National Park (Northern Algeria): Implications for Biodiversity Conservation*

10:30–11:00 *Coffee break*

Chair: Idoia Biurrun

11:00–11:15 Nina Fahs: *From Suppression to Diversity: How Rhinanthus Parasitism Reshapes Grassland Structure and Enhances Ecological and Agricultural Value*

11:15–11:30 Nina Polchaninova: *Losers or winners? An impact of small-scale steppe fire on ground-dwelling arthropods*

11:30–11:45 Armin Macanović: *Ecosystem Services of the grasslands of Velež Mountain (Bosnia and Herzegovina) identified through the use of medicinal plants*

11:45–12:00 A word from the Organisers

12:00–13:00 Lunch

Poster Session 3 (13:00–14:15)

24. Marta Krzempek — *Climate-driven habitat loss of a moisture-dependent alpine grass *Ptilagrostis malyshevii* in Central Asian mountains*

25. Tarık Emre Karaman — *The Effects of Urban Land Use on Taxonomic Plant Diversity in Ankara's Urban Ecosystem (Türkiye)*

26. Olha Chusova — *The role of grassland communities in South-Eastern Ukraine as a source of trophic resources for pollinators*

27. Olha Kilnitska — *Preliminary structural analysis of the flora of the "Kovalivskyi Yar" landscape reserve, Kyiv Region, Ukraine*

28. Armin Macanović — *Floristic Diversity of Grasslands on Bitovnja Mountain (Bosnia and Herzegovina)*

29. Nabil Rabah Aouragh — *Ecological Restoration and Sustainable Management of the Akfadou Forest Ecosystem in Northern Algeria*

30. Nadiia Skobel — *Drivers of vascular plant diversity in cultural heritage sites: a case study of old cemeteries (southern Ukraine)*

31. Károly Penksza — *Grassland maintenance and various grassland restoration measures in pannonian grasslands*

14:15–14:45 Coffee break

14:45-15:15 Awards ceremony

15:15 - 16:15 General Assembly of EDGG

16:15 - 16:30 Closing ceremony

Acknowledgements

The Organising Committee gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our sponsors and partner organisations. Their financial and logistical contributions have been essential in making the 21st Eurasian Grassland Conference possible.



