

2017 Annual report of the IAVS Working Group European Vegetation Survey

The 26th Meeting of the European Vegetation Survey (EVS) will take place in Bilbao, Spain, on 13–16 September 2017. Although the traditional timing of the EVS meetings is in spring, this year's meeting was postponed to September in order to avoid potential competition with the 2017 IAVS Symposium, which will be held also in southern Europe (Palermo), in June 2017. The EVS meeting will be organized by the team of Professor Javier Loidi at the University of the Basque Country.

The activities of the European Vegetation Survey group between the 25th meeting in Rome (April 2016) and the 60th IAVS Symposium (June 2017) included:

(1) The work “Vegetation of Europe: Hierarchical floristic classification system of vascular plant, bryophyte, lichen, and algal communities”, colloquially known as EuroVegChecklist, has been published as a Supplement Issue of the journal *Applied Vegetation Science* at the end of the year 2016 (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/avsc.12257/abstract>). This work, led by Ladislav Mucina and involving 32 authors from 16 countries, provides the baseline for the standard phytosociological classification of European vegetation.

(2) Stephan Hennekens prepared an interactive online version of EuroVegChecklist, which was integrated into the EVS website in March 2017 (www.synbiosys.alterra.nl/evc). This online version enables browsing through the classification hierarchy, includes short descriptions of vegetation types, synonyms and for phytosociological classes also lists of diagnostic species and bibliography. The users can also post online their comments on the concepts of individual syntaxa.

(3) The EVS Steering Committee prepared a draft of the procedures for updating the EuroVegChecklist classification, which will be discussed at the IAVS Palermo and EVS Bilbao meetings.

(4) Another team involving many EVS members finished a three-year project funded by the European Commission DG Environment by publishing the European Red List of Habitats (Janssen et al. 2016; http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/redlist_en.htm), both in print and in an online platform which also contains detailed factsheets for European habitat types, distribution maps and territorial data. This project, led by John Janssen and John Rodwell, provides scientific information in a standardized format, which will be an important basis for conservation of natural habitats in Europe.

(5) The European Vegetation Archive (EVA) grew further. In February 2017, it comprised 73 databases and 1,334,950 plots. EVA data were provided to 50 projects. In total 13 scientific papers based on the analyses of the EVA database were published or submitted, most of them with broad international author teams. Further, EVA data were used in 6 completed reports and 38 presentations at conferences or workshops. The EVA website (www.euroveg.org/eva-database) was extended to take account of these publications. Basic statistics of EVA data and EVA projects and their results were summarized in the EVA annual report.

(6) An EVS team led by Joop Schaminée, working under contract from the European Environment Agency (EEA), prepared an expert system for automatic classification of

vegetation plots to European grassland habitat types following the modified EUNIS/Red List classification (https://forum.eionet.europa.eu/nrc-biodiversity-data-and-information/library/eunis_classification/report-2016-eunis-grasslands-ii-incl-plot-maps). Using this expert system, the EVA database was interrogated to provide distribution maps and extensive lists of diagnostic, constant and dominant species for European grassland habitat types.

(7) Two Special Issues/Features on European vegetation types edited by the EVS members and partly based on the presentations given at the EVS meetings were completed. The Virtual Special Feature “Towards consistent classification of European grasslands” in Applied Vegetation Science, edited by Jürgen Dengler, Erwin Bergmeier, Wolfgang Willner and Milan Chytrý, included 7 papers plus an editorial, published between 2013 and 2017. The Special Issue “Classifying halophytes and halophytic vegetation”, edited by Erwin Bergmeier and Joop Schaminée and published as issue 2016/4 of Phytocoenologia, included four papers plus an editorial.

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