



European Dry Grassland Group (EDGG)

Report for the period from 15 July 2012 to 15 July 2013

As of 15 July 2013, EDGG had 949 members from 58 countries, including zoologists and botanists as well as scientists and conservation practitioners. Membership in EDGG is free of charge (to join, send an e-mail to juergen.dengler@uni-bayreuth.de).

The annual meeting in 2013 (10th European Dry Grassland Meeting) took place in Zamość (Poland) on 24-31 May attended by 82 participants from 18 countries. It was very professionally organized by Klub Przyrodników (www.kp.org.pl) headed by our member Katarzyna Barańska. The topic was “When theory meets practice: Conservation and restoration of grasslands”. The 3-day pre-symposium excursion focused on dry grasslands of *Koelerio-Corynerophoretea* in central and eastern Poland. Within the post-symposium excursion (3 days) the participants visited xerothermic habitats between the Bug and Vistula rivers.

During the meeting, the General Assembly of the EDGG was held, attended by 59 EDGG members from 16 countries. Elena Volkova presented the formal proposal and preliminary program and schedule of next European Dry Grassland Meeting (EDGM) 2014 in Tula, Russia. Jürgen Dengler (in the name of Ute Becker and Thomas Becker) presented some information about the proposed EDGM 2015 in Mainz, Germany. After the presentation the General Assembly accepted this proposal. During the General Assembly, the best posters and talks presented by young investigators were awarded with attractive book prizes, provided mainly by Wiley-Blackwell.

In May 2013, formal election to the EDGG Executive Committee took place for the second time (period 2013–2015). The six members of the past Executive Committee (Jürgen Dengler, Monika Janišová, Solvita Rūsiņa, Péter Török, Stephen Venn and Mike Vrahnakis) were re-elected. The new Executive Committee kept the internal responsibilities more or less as in the previous period, except that now Monika Janišová (with Péter Török as deputy) is representing EDGG within the IAVS.

On 10 July 2013, the European Grassland Archive (EGA) was founded by an agreement between representatives of the two IAVS Working Groups, EVS and EDGG, as well as the BiodivERsA project SIGNAL. EGA will establish a vegetation-plot database of all grassland types across all European countries (within the technical framework of the Braun-Blanquet project of the EVS). The main purpose of EGA is the common use of these data for analyses and papers on supranational grassland classification, parameterisation of grassland vegetation types and description of plot-scale richness across Europe (contact: juergen.dengler@uni-bayreuth.de).

The publication activities of the EDGG during the reported period were rich:

- (i) 3 issues of the Bulletin of the EDGG

- (ii) Proceedings of the EDGM 2012 in Prespa, Greece (Vrahnakis M., Kyriazopoulos A.P., Chouvardas D. & Fotiadis G. (2013, eds.): *Dry Grasslands of Europe: Grazing and Ecosystem Services*. Hellenic Rangeland and Pasture Society)
- (iii) Introduction paper on the EDGG and its activities (Vrahnakis M., Janišová M., Rūsiņa S., Török P., Venn S. & Dengler J. (2013, eds.): *The European Dry Grassland Group (EDGG): stewarding Europe's most diverse habitat type*. In: Baumbach H. & Pfützenreuter S. [Eds.]: *Steppenlebensräume Europas – Gefährdung, Erhaltungsmaßnahmen und Schutz*. Thüringer Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Forsten, Umwelt und Naturschutz, Erfurt)
- (iv) 5 EDGG-edited Special Issues /Features in international journals (in press/in preparation):
 - Special Issue of *Biodiversity and Conservation*, topic: *Diversity patterns in European grasslands across taxa, regions and scales* (20 articles invited, it will appear soon);
 - Special Issue of *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment*, topic: *Grassland biodiversity: patterns, processes and conservation* (20 articles invited, it will probably appear in the end of this year);
 - Virtual Special Issue of *Applied Vegetation Science*, topic: *Towards a consistent classification of European grasslands* (12 articles invited, the first paper has appeared in June 2013);
 - Special Feature of *Tuexenia*, topic: *Temperate dry grasslands* (6 papers on temperate and boreal grasslands + series with results from EDGG expeditions, in press);
 - Special Issue of *Hacquetia*, topic: *Mediterranean dry grasslands* (15 papers invited focussing on Mediterranean and submediterranean grasslands).

In autumn 2012, two young EDGG members from Bulgaria and Ukraine, Hristo Pedashenko and Anna Kuzemko, received the first two EDGG Fellowships (supported by 1200 EUR from IAVS). With these fellowships, they stayed for several weeks in the group of EDGG EC member Jürgen Dengler in Hamburg to work on the analysis and publication of data from the EDGG Research Expeditions in these two countries. The paper of Pedashenko et al. will appear in *Tuexenia* 33 (2013: *Dry grasslands of NW Bulgarian mountains: first insights into diversity, ecology and syntaxonomy*), while the one of Kuzemko et al. is in the final stages and will be submitted for *Tuexenia* 34 (2014).

For the next year, two new Special Issues/Special Features are planned:

- Special Feature of *Tuexenia*, focussing mainly on *fundamental research on vegetation and flora of European dry grasslands (e.g. biodiversity patterns, vegetation classification, population biology, plant-animal interactions)*; editors: Thomas Becker (DE), Steffen Boch (CH), Monika Janišová (SK), Triin Reitalu (EE) & Eszter Ruprecht (RO)
- Special Issue of *Hacquetia*, focussing on *Conservation value, management and restoration of Europe's semi-natural open habitats (including zoological and botanical contributions)*; editors: Jürgen Dengler (DE), Marta Carboni (IT/FR), Jasmin Mantilla-Contreras (DE), Péter Török (HU), Stephen Venn (FI) & Michal Zmihorski (PL)

Forthcoming EDGG events during the next 12 months are:

- International Conference “Concepts for modern management of xeric grasslands between nature conservation and agriculture” (trilingual: German, Polish, English), 26-27 September 2013, Brandenburg Academy Criewen Castle, Criewen, Germany [co-organised by EDGG]

- Conference “Open Landscapes 2013 – Ecology, Management and Nature Conservation”, 29 September - 3 October 2013, Hildesheim, Germany [co-organised by EDGG]
- 11th European Dry Grassland Meeting “European steppes: ecology, anthropogenic transformation and restoration”, 5-9 June 2014, Tula, Russia, with post-symposium excursion 10-15 June 2014 [head of the local organising committee: Elena Volkova]
- 7th Research Expedition of the EDGG to N Spain, approx. end of June 2014 [organisers: Itziar Garcia-Mijangos, Idoia Biurrun & Maria Asunción Berastegui]

We warmly invite you to join EDGG, its events and activities!

Monika Janišová (on behalf of the Executive Committee of the EDGG)



Participants of the 10th European Dry Grassland Meeting in Zamość (24-31 May 2013, Poland).
(Photo: Piotr Chmielewski)