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INTRODUCTION FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the Newsletter aims to bring readers up-to-date with developments in the Euro+Med Project during the last two months.

A crucial part of the first stage of the project involves updating and expanding the original ESFEDS (*Flora Europaea*) database to include details of both new taxa described from Europe since the publication of *Flora Europaea*, and taxa that occur only in the non-European parts of the Mediterranean. The revised database will be known, from now on, as the Euro+Med Database. The updating process is being carried out by the four Euro+Med Data Input Centres based in Bratislava (Slovakia), Palermo (Italy), Sevilla (Spain) and Sofia (Bulgaria). The primary goal of the Secretariat over the past few months has been to ensure that the four Centres were equipped to start inputting data into the system.

As reported in Newsletter No. 1, Richard Pankhurst visited the Secretariat in August/September to discuss alterations to the PANDORA database system in which the Euro+Med Database is held, in preparation for the start of data input. All the necessary changes have now been incorporated into PANDORA.

The Secretariat has also been working on the documentation needed by the Centres in order to commence data entry. Two documents '*Preparation of the Initial Checklist: Operational Guidelines*' and '*A Guide for Data Inputters*' were prepared. After a review by the Euro+Med Executive and Work Package leaders at a meeting in Madrid (see Page 2 for further details) these documents have been finalised and circulated to the Centres.

A PANDORA Training Workshop was held in Berlin in October. This was attended by at least one representative from each Data Input Centre. Further details of the Workshop are given on Page 3.

All the Centres have now received a copy of the Euro+Med Database and updated PANDORA software and have begun to input data. We would like to welcome all the people at the four Centres who are involved with data input (a list of the people concerned is given on Page 4).

The Centres are now working from a set of Standard Floras. Unfortunately some of the Centres do not have access to all the Floras they require. A list of Floras still needed is given on Page 5. If you have access to any of these, and would be prepared to help, please let the Secretariat know urgently.

If you did not receive Issue No. 1 of the Newsletter it is available to download from the Euro+Med website, the address of which is given above. Alternatively you can write to me at the address given above or email me at the Euro+Med email address, and I shall be happy to send you a copy.

I should like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all at the Secretariat.

Judith Heald

RECENT EVENTS

Euro+Med PlantBase Executive and Work Package Leaders at Real Jardín Botánico, Madrid: October 25th—27th, 2000

Meetings of both the Executive Committee and Work Package Leaders were held at the Real Jardín Botánico, Madrid at the end of October.

After a brief Executive Committee meeting on the morning of the 25th, the 'Work Package Leaders plus Executive meeting' was convened. Present were: K. Amman (Bern), N. Bailly (Fauna Europaea), W. Berendsohn (Berlin), F. Bisby (Reading), M. Carine (Reading), S. Castroviejo (Madrid), V. Heywood (Reading), S. Jury (Reading), A. Kyporissis (Patras), P. Uotila (Helsinki) and B. Valdés (Sevilla).

Stephen Jury briefly reviewed the status of the project and reported that contracts had been signed by the EU to start on September 1st, 2000. He also informed the meeting that Reading had received a grant of 30,000 Euros from the EU European Topic Centre in Paris as a contribution to the cost of developing the Data Standards Documents at the Secretariat [see 'Further Grant to Euro+Med' article on Page 4].

The meeting then turned to its main task: the evaluation of two draft Data Standards documents prepared by the Secretariat. The first document, entitled '*Preparation of the Initial Checklist: Operational Guidelines*' set out the project data standards and the procedure for gathering data at the start of the Checklist Upgrading Process. The second document, '*A Guide for Contributors of Initial Taxonomic Accounts*', was prepared to assist authors of new taxonomic treatments. In addition to nomenclatural and chorological information, new treatments would also contain descriptions, identification keys, lists of illustrations and relevant publications, and information on karyology, growth form, hardiness, ecology, phenology etc.

The documents were subjected to very close scrutiny. A day and a half later, the review was complete and the Secretariat left to pick up the pieces!

In fact, the *Operational Guidelines*, had to be revised very quickly as an updated document, reflecting the changes discussed in Madrid, was needed for the PANDORA Training Workshop starting on October 30th (two days later).

The Project Data Standards are now available from the Euro+Med website under 'Documents'. The Secretariat, in collaboration with Santiago Castroviejo, is still working on the *Guide for Contributors of Taxonomic Accounts* and aim to have this available early in January.

Other matters discussed by the Work Package Leaders meeting included Milestones and Deliverables, the first of which are scheduled for March, 2001, the EU evaluation process, and the need to maintain close co-operation with *Fauna Europaea* (represented by N. Bailly at the meeting).

After the conclusion of the Work Package Leaders meeting in the afternoon of October 27th, the Executive Committee held a brief second meeting. Topics discussed by the Executive in Madrid included:

- Intellectual Property Rights issues (to be reviewed at the next meeting).
- Activation of National and Territorial Centres by the Secretariat.
- Possibility of extra-territorial representation on the Steering Committee.
- Composition of Family Editorial Panels. These will comprise 3-5 people and will be responsible for the review of new taxonomic treatments (suggestions for membership would be considered at the next meeting).
- Plans for the General Meeting in Palermo (see article on Page 4).
- Links from the Euro+Med website (Stephen Jury agreed to produce a list of possible sites)

The meetings in Madrid saw the Euro+Med PlantBase project take a significant step forward. As a result of the meeting, many of the protocols and standards are now either in place, or nearing completion, and the project is ready to progress apace.

RECENT EVENTS CONTINUED...

A wonderful paella lunch was provided in the gardens, with the scientific staff, on the second day of the meeting and this was followed by a demonstration of some new and exciting taxonomic database applications under development in Madrid. We are very grateful to Santiago Castroviejo, and to the Real Jardín Botánico, Madrid for all of their efforts in hosting and organising the Executive and Work Package Leaders meetings on behalf of Euro+Med PlantBase.

Mark Carine

Pandora Training Workshop at the Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum, Berlin: 30th – 31st October, 2000

The Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum, Berlin-Dahlem, recently hosted a workshop to provide initial training in the use of PANDORA. It was primarily aimed at those involved in data input at the start of the Euro+Med PlantBase Checklist Upgrading Process. In attendance were: Walter Berendsohn (Berlin), Mark Carine (Reading), Valeri Georgiev (Sofia), Anton Güntsch (Berlin), Andrea Hahn (Berlin), Judith Heald (Reading), Judita Lihová (Bratislava), Giuseppe Norata (Palermo), Richard Pankhurst (Edinburgh), Francisco José Pina (Sevilla) and Natale Surano (Palermo). Not everyone involved in the data input process could attend, but all Data Input Centres were represented.

After a welcome to the Museum from Prof. Werner Greuter, Richard Pankhurst spent the rest of the first day providing an overview of the PANDORA database package. Day two focused more specifically on the requirements of Euro+Med PlantBase and started with an introduction to the Data Standards and Data Input Process from Mark Carine. Participants then spent the rest of the day inputting data following the project protocols that had been developed at Reading by Judith Heald.

The workshop was an important step towards ensuring the effective and consistent use of PANDORA in the capture of nomenclatural and chorological data from the Standard Floras used in the project. We hope that all participants left Berlin with a useful insight into the PANDORA database package and a clear idea of their role in the project.

Thanks are due to Walter Berendsohn, Anton Güntsch and Andrea Hahn for organising and co-ordinating this highly successful meeting.

Note: A *Guide for Data Inputters* and a revised *Data Standards* document are now available as pdf files on the Euro+Med PlantBase website under 'Documents'. These documents incorporate changes resulting from modifications made to PANDORA after the Berlin meeting.

Mark Carine

TDWG 2000, Naturmuseum Senckenberg, Frankfurt: 10th – 12th November, 2000

The International Taxonomic Databases Working Group's 16th annual meeting was concerned mainly with digitising biological collections and was partly organised by Walter Berendsohn, leader of the Euro+Med Computer Work Package. TDWG is responsible for developing and recognising 'standards' and 'schemas' for the biological community, and Euro+Med PlantBase standards are consistent with those of TDWG.

During the Frankfurt meeting a revised Accessions Subgroup was set up to focus on defining the formation of standard queries to be sent to heterogeneous databases over the Internet. Euro+Med PlantBase will adopt the standards developed by the Subgroup. For further details of the meeting in Frankfurt see:
www.bgbm.fu-berlin.de/tdwg/2000

Stephen Jury

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- January 16th, 2001: **Computer Working Group**, The University of Reading.
- February 1st, 2001: **Executive Committee Meeting**, The University of Reading.
- March 7th, 2001: **Executive Committee Meeting**, The University of Reading.
- March 8th & 9th, 2001: **Steering Committee Meeting**, The University of Reading.
- April 19th, 2001: **Executive Committee and Project Partners Meetings**, Palermo.
- April 20th – 22nd: **General Meeting**, Palermo (see below for further details).
- April 23rd: **Executive Committee Meeting**, Palermo.

Euro+Med PlantBase 3rd General Meeting, Palermo 20 – 22 April 2001

A third General Meeting of the Euro+Med PlantBase project is planned for Palermo, Friday 20th, Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd April. This will be preceded on April 19th by an Executive meeting (a.m.) and Project Partners meeting (p.m.). A final review will be held by the Executive after the meeting on the morning of Monday 23rd.

Very successful General Meetings were held in Palermo, in June 1997, and Sevilla, in May-June 1998, for all botanists interested in the creation of Euro+Med PlantBase. Now that part of the project has received funding, we plan to hold the third meeting to report on progress, develop the project further, invite collaboration and discuss further links and grant proposals. Besides reports from Euro+Med groups, a number of plenary lectures are planned. In addition, a half-day will be devoted to posters and further time given to taxonomic presentations.

We are happy to extend an invitation to all of you who are interested in European and Mediterranean floristics, taxonomy and associated fields, to come to this meeting and offer poster presentations and suggestions for short papers. The January Newsletter will contain further details of the meeting. Please contact the Secretariat for further information.

Stephen Jury

STAFF EMPLOYED AT THE FOUR DATA INPUT CENTRES

Welcome to the following people who will be involved in the data inputting process:

Bratislava

Karol Marhold (Project Leader)
Viera Jurkovicova
Viktor Kucera
Judita Lihová
Marián Perný
Jozef Somogyi

Palermo

Francesco M. Raimondo (Project Leader)
Giannantonio Domina
Vincenzo Ilardi
Eleonora Mazzè
Giuseppe Norata

Sevilla

Benito Valdés (Project Leader)
Francisco José Pina
Rocío Paneque Sánchez-Toscano

Sofia

Mincho Anchev (Project Leader)
Dessislava Dimitrova
Valeri Georgiev
Pavlina Grozdanova
Liliana Vassileva

Further Grant to Euro+Med

We are pleased to acknowledge a grant of 30,000 Euros from The EU European Topic Centre for Nature Conservation in Paris. This grant allowed us to employ Dr Mark Carine and Ms Judith Heald to undertake the preparatory work on the documents *Preparation of the Initial Checklist: Operational Guidelines* and *A Guide for Contributors of Taxonomic Accounts*, before the main EU contracts were signed. This involved a considerable amount of work reviewing the data standards and liaising with Fauna Europaea and other organisations. The work involved discussions in Madrid and a visit to Reading by Dr Richard Pankhurst from Edinburgh.

Stephen Jury

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Standard Floras Needed

Sofia:

KETSKHOVELI, N. N. (Ed.). [Flora of Georgia].
Ed. 2. **Vol. 8-11**. Tbilisi, 1971-1987

GAVRILOVA, G., SULES, V. Latvijas vaskularo
augu flora. Taksonu saraksts. Riga. 1999

GUDZINSKAS, Z. Lietuvos induociai augalai
[Vascular plants of Lithuania]. Vilnius. 1999

JURTZEV, B. A. (ed.) Flora Arctica URSS.
Leninopoli. 1984. From TOLMATCHEV, A. I.
Arkticeskaja Flora USSR. **Vol. 6**. Moskva &
Leningrad, 1960–1987

KARYAGIN, I.I. (Ed.). Flora Azerbaydzana [Flora
of Azerbaidhan]. **Vol. 4-8**. Baku, 1950-1961

TAKHTAJAN, A.L. Flora Armenii. [Flora of
Armenia]. **Vol. 9**. Erevan, 1954-1995

MOSYAKIN, S. L. & FEDORONCHUK, M. M.,
Vascular plants of Ukraine. A nomenclatural
checklist. Kiev, M. G. Kholodny Institute of Botany,
1999

MARTINIC ET AL., Mala Flora Slovenije, ed. 3,
1999 Tehniska založba Slovenije, Ljubljana, ISBN
86-365-0300-0

Bratislava:

JONSELL, L. & B. Krok & Almquist's Svensk flora,
ed. 27, 1994

KARLSSON, T. Foerteckning oever svenska
kaerlvaexter, 1997

Describing Distributions

Euro+Med PlantBase aims to incorporate a number
of new taxonomic treatments in the taxonomic core
as part of the first phase of the project. These will
provide a rich source of information on the plant taxa
covered.

As in *Flora Europaea*, we propose to record
distribution using territory codes. The system
developed is consistent with the TDWG Standard,
and the countries of Europe and the Mediterranean
together with their major political areas are
represented.

In addition, a brief and generalised summary of
geographical distribution within the Euro+Med
PlantBase area will also be provided for each taxon
treated. This will also follow the format adopted in
Flora Europaea. Thus, the distribution of a plant
species may be described as 'Central Europe',
'Extreme North', 'Carpathians', etc.

Flora Europaea provided definitions for descriptive
geographical terms used in that work and these have
also been adopted by the Euro+Med PlantBase
project. However, the project still needs to adopt
descriptive geographical terms for those parts of the
Euro+Med PlantBase area which were not covered
by *Flora Europaea*. These could be
phytogeographical areas, mountain ranges etc.

**We particularly need suggestions for northern
Africa, the Middle East, Turkey and the
Caucasus and any suggestions (including
definitions) would be gratefully received by the
Secretariat.**