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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction from the Editor	p.1
Euro+Med first Annual report	p.1
Upgraded Euro+Med website	p.3
Bratislava Meetings	p.4
Report on Computer Working Group meeting.....	p.4
Report on Executive and Partners meeting.....	p.4
Forthcoming Events	p.6

INTRODUCTION FROM THE EDITOR

A happy new year to you all, and welcome to the 4th Euro+Med PlantBase newsletter. The start of the new year has been a busy time for Euro+Med, with much activity amongst the Secretariat and Computer Working Group to get our new database software ready for the Checklist Review process to begin. The Secretariat has also been busy inviting experts throughout Europe and the Mediterranean to contribute to our editorial review panels, and so far have received an enthusiastic response. We are also currently in the middle of preparing a new funding proposal for the EC, as well as organising forthcoming meetings, and following up on issues that were raised at our recent Executive and Partners meeting in Slovakia.

We hope you will find this newsletter useful in keeping you up to date with what is going on within the project. If you would like to contribute anything to a future newsletter, please email Liz Caddick at the Euro+Med Secretariat (l.r.caddick@reading.ac.uk).

L. Caddick

EURO+MED FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

We have recently heard from our EC project officer that the 1st year report, which was sent to Brussels back in October, has been accepted. Not surprisingly, our project officer did have a few criticisms of the report, but this was a learning process for all involved, and the comments made by the EC will undoubtedly help us to produce an excellent final report at the end of the project. So thank you to all those who contributed to the production of the report.

UPGRADED EURO+MED WEBSITE

Tarik el Atechi, the IT co-ordinator at Reading, has been working hard redesigning the Euro+Med website. The new website will not only provide people interested with more information, but will also allow password protected access to parts of the database being reviewed by our network of National and Territorial Advisory Centres and Editorial Panels. The new website should be up and running in February 2002.

BRATISLAVA MEETINGS, 2001

Since the last Euro+Med newsletter, then main event in the Euro+Med calendar has been the Executive/Partners and Computer Working Group meetings in Bratislava, Slovakia. These meetings were hosted by Karol Marhold of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, with the help of: Judita Lihová, Marián Perný, Martin Kolník, Jaromír Kucera, Eduard Mátuš and Peter Repa. Everyone attending was extremely well looked after in Bratislava, and we would like to thank Karol and his staff for all their efforts.

Report on Computer Working Group meeting, November 27-28, 2001

The following issues were discussed during the recent CWG meeting:

Nomenclatural management: The importance of including in the database a name acceptance reference and a circumscription acceptance reference for accepted taxa, and an inclusion reference for synonyms was agreed.

Bibmaster: The Bibmaster software being used to produce Taxonomic Revisions for Euro+Med, is currently being tested for compatibility with other project software.

Appending: Data input and Appending is running to schedule.

Merging: The software for Merging the datasets from the four data input centres is currently being tested. Judith Heald and Richard Pankhurst are working hard to resolve software problems as they arise.

Beads: Reports were presented on the development of the Conservation and Mapping bead datasets. The content of these summary datasets was further discussed and agreed upon during the subsequent Executive meeting. Co-ordination of the bead workpackages has been sub-contracted by Klaus Ammann (Bern) to VIM (Germany).

Taxonomic Editor: Anton Güntsch presented a progress report with development of the Euro+Med taxonomic editor, and gave a demonstration of it. Currently, the taxonomic editor includes features such as: password protected access, search using wildcards, immediate loading of edited/added data, dynamic form fields, syntax checks, alphabetically fragmented bibliography to speed up searches. The taxonomic editor will be developed in such a way as to produce Checklist and Flora output formats.

Funding: The possibility of applying for further funding through the EC's latest call to incorporate new partners from NAS into existing framework 5 projects was discussed, and a proposal will be submitted from Reading.

Report on Executive and Partners meeting, November 28-29, 2001

The following issues were discussed during the recent Euro+Med Executive-Partners meeting:

Workpackage 2: Issues raised in the CWG meeting were discussed, including nomenclatural management, internet display of the database and future funding.

Workpackage 3: Members of editorial panels for the first phase of Euro+Med Checklist review (monocots) were agreed, and invitations have been sent by the Secretariat. So far we have had an enthusiastic response. The review for each family has been timetabled to take approximately 10 months, which means that all involved will have to work quickly to keep things to schedule. Checklist review can begin as soon as the technical problems associated with merging datasets have been ironed out, and the datasets are merged.

Workpackage 4: Taxonomic revisions to be produced during the current phase of the project were agreed. These taxa will not be included in the checklist review process. Data from the Euro+Med database, including bead data, will be made available to authors of taxonomic revisions, who will be formally invited by the Secretariat early in 2002.

Workpackage 6: Co-ordination of the beads workpackages (WPs 6, 7, and 8) is now being done by VIM in Germany.

Workpackage 7: The *Atlas Florae Europaeae* grid has been extended to cover the whole Euro+Med area, and work is in progress to fix borders of the remaining Mediterranean countries to this grid. New software is also being developed to collate data from the Euro+Med grid.

Workpackage 8: The draft conservation bead output format was presented, and will include: names and authorities, threat status in all Euro+Med countries, distribution summary, and information on conservation measures and protected areas. Prototype beads are being designed for *Galanthus* and *Geranium*. A meeting was arranged for January 2002 to discuss co-operation between the Euro+Med conservation workpackage and IUCN.

Future funding: Discussion focussed on the recent EC call to incorporate partners from the EC newly associated states (NAS) into existing framework 5 projects. A number of potential new partners from NAS were able to attend the meeting, and are currently working with the Secretariat to produce a grant proposal by February 15, 2002.

Euro+Med has also joined with *BIONET International* in submitting a proposal to the UNDP, under the *NAfrinet* programme, to facilitate agreement between NAfrinet countries on developing taxonomic infrastructure and national biodiversity strategies etc.

Euro+Med is also involved in the *European Network on Biodiversity Information* (ENBI), which recently submitted a proposal to the EC framework 6 programme, to fund a major biodiversity information network for the future. This network may be used in the future as a structure for handling biodiversity informatics grant applications.

Euro+Med publications: The Secretariat put in a request that full reference citations for all publications/conference abstracts mentioning Euro+Med be sent to Liz Caddick (l.r.caddick@reading.ac.uk), as we need to compile these for future annual reports. If you can also send copy of the publication, that would also be much appreciated.

Intellectual property rights: The first draft of our projects Technological Implementation Plan (TIP) has been produced by the Secretariat. Contributions to this will be made by all partners before the end of year 2 (August 2002).

The Secretariat is also currently investigating the production of Transfer of Rights Agreements for those who will be involved in producing data for Euro+Med.

Future of the project: Frank Bisby represented Euro+Med at a recent meeting held by Fauna Europaea, at the Linnean Society, which unfortunately clashed with the Partners-Executive meeting. The meeting aimed to address the issue of the future status of EC-funded informatics projects such as Euro+Med and Fauna Europaea. This issue will be further discussed at the forthcoming Euro+Med and Fauna Europaea Steering Group meetings in March.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Joint Meeting of Euro+Med and Fauna Europaea Steering Committees

Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris
March 8, 2002

Meeting of Euro+Med Steering Committee

Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris
March 8-9, 2002

Meeting of Euro+Med Executive and Partners

Botanical Garden, University of Bern, Switzerland
Provisional dates: June 6-8, 2002

Meeting of Euro+Med Computer Working Group

University of Reading, UK
June 17-18 2002

ICSEB Conference

University of Patras, Greece, September 9-16.
To include a meeting of the Euro+Med Executive and Partners; dates to be arranged.