

Karditsa, Friday 2 October 2009

Dear Mediterranean members of the EDGG,

Dry grasslands (not-irrigated, natural) in most of our countries cover large geographical areas, from the lowlands up to the sub-alpine and alpine zones, represent valuable resources for local and national economies, contribute to a large extent in the high aesthetical value of the Mediterranean natural landscapes, shape the cultural rural identity of our countries, and indirectly “adjust” habits and behaviours of large societal groups. They consist of particularly species-rich communities, in terms of flora and fauna. Additionally, it is well-recognized that they support numerous rare and/or threatened species, while their level of endemism is one of the highest in the world. Despite their high natural, societal, aesthetical, cultural and economic values, Mediterranean dry grasslands are considered as rather neglected systems in terms of their **systematic, supra national study**.

Having these in mind, Mediterranean Dry Grasslands (Med-DG) is established as a sub-group within the European Dry Grasslands Group (EDGG). Our aim is to establish a forum for coordinating and communicating efforts for:

- (i) establishment and evaluation of a Mediterranean vegetation database for dry grasslands relevés, and
- (ii) construction of a platform for research and conservation of the Mediterranean dry grasslands.

The geographic scope of our Med-DG subgroup includes the following fourteen (14) European Mediterranean countries: Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Bulgaria, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, Malta, France, Spain, and Portugal. This is in accordance with the map of Biogeographical Regions 2001 of Europe published by the EEA – (European Environment Agency)¹. Of course, our subgroup welcomes members from non-Mediterranean countries who have scientific interests for Mediterranean dry grasslands. Country members from North Africa and Middle-East Asia will soon be included in our subgroup.

We are kindly inviting you to support our effort and participate in our activities. Please have in mind that (i) any addition made by you of how our subgroup will be more efficient is welcome, (ii) at present, please consider me initiator & acting chair of the Med-DG subgroup, while additional members in the first subgroup steering committee from other countries are welcome towards higher representativeness and more effective coordination.

I think that a first step for our activities is to initiate an **open forum**, via e-mails and circulation of working documents, where future objectives and activities of the Med-DG subgroup will be organized. These objectives and activities must become clear in order to publish them in the next Bulletin (No. 5) of the EDGG, where the “official” announcement of our subgroup’s foundation will be made. It means that we have two months, more or less, to organize our thoughts.

Looking forward to your input,

Michael Vrahnakis (mvrahnak@teilar.gr)
Chairman of the Med-DG subgroup

¹ <http://dataservice.eea.europa.eu/atlas/viewdata/viewpub.asp?id=155>