First Report of the European Vegetation Classification Committee (EVCC)

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Abstract
The European Vegetation Classification Committee (EVCC) was established in 2017 by the European Vegetation Survey to maintain and update a standard phytosociological classification of European vegetation. Vegetation scientists can send proposals for modification of specific parts of the EuroVegChecklist, which is used as a baseline. The proposals are accepted or rejected based on recommendations issued by a specialist group and after voting by EVCC members. Here we report the results of the first voting, which took place from 4 June to 4 July 2020. EVCC members voted on the recommendations issued for three proposals of change concerning spring and dune vegetation, and mediterranean grasslands. As a result, EVCC accepted to modify the classes *Ammophiletea* and *Helichryso-Crucianelletea*, but rejected to include the alliance *Philonotidion seriatae* and the class *Charybdido pancratii-Asphodeletea ramosi*. These rejections are not final, and similar proposals can be submitted again with new data supporting the proposed changes.

Abbreviations: EVCC = European Vegetation Classification Committee; SG = Specialist Group.

Keywords
Alliance, class, European Vegetation Survey, EuroVegChecklist, EVCC, order, phytosociology, syntaxonomy

Introduction
European phytosociology has traditionally been characterised by a pluralism of national and regional traditions (Guarino et al. 2018). The idea to develop a coherent overview of vegetation units for the whole of Europe was revived by the formation of the IAVS working group ‘European Vegetation Survey’ in 1992, and a first preliminary compilation was published by Rodwell et al. (2002). In the following years, these attempts were intensified, culminating in the publication of the ‘EuroVegChecklist’ (Mucina et al. 2016).

In 2017, the European Vegetation Classification Committee (hereafter EVCC) was established by the European Vegetation Survey to maintain and update a standard phytosociological classification of European vegetation, taking the EuroVegChecklist as a baseline. The EVCC involves experts whose expertise collectively covers most European vegetation types and most European regions. Its tasks are: (a) receiving proposals for changes of specific parts of the EuroVegChecklist; (b) organising the reviewing of these proposals by international expert groups; and (c) deciding about acceptance or rejection of the proposals.

Currently, the EVCC has the following 69 members: Emiliano Agrillo, Iva Apostolova, Fabio Attorre, Christian Berg, Erwin Bergmeier, Edoardo Biondi, Idoia Biurrun, Carlo Blasi, Richard Boeuf, Salvatore Brullo, Helga Bültmann, Juan Antonio Campos, Jorge Capelo, Andraž Čarni, Milan Chytrý, János Csiky, Fred Daniëls, Jürgen Dengler, Yakiv Didukh, Panayotis Dimopoulos, Romeo Di Pietro, Nikolai Ermakov, Giuliano Fanelli, Federico Fernández-González, Dan Gafita, Rosario Gavilán, Dan...
Report on proposals, recommendations and voting

Proposal 001 – Inclusion of the alliance Philonotidion seriatae in the EuroVegChecklist

Author of proposal: Dirk Hinterlang
Date of proposal: 5 October 2017

Summary of proposal: The author suggests to include the alliance Philonotidion seriatae Hinterlang 1992 in the EuroVegChecklist, where it is currently indicated as syn- taxonomic synonym of the alliance Swertia perennis-Anisothecion squarrosi Hadač 1983.

Supporting publication: Hinterlang (2017).

Specialist Group: Michal Hájek (Coordinating Editor), Ladislav Mucina, Jürgen Dengler, Jose Molina, Christian Berg, Milan Valachovič, Jozef Šibík.

Recommendation (23 February 2018): The SG suggested to reject the proposal, but to reconsider the decision if additional material is provided which clearly demonstrates the floristic independence of Swertia-Anisothecion squarrosi and Philonotidion seriatae (i.e., own diagnostic species) at a wider geographical scale.

Voting: The recommendation of the Specialist Group was confirmed by the EVCC.

Proposal 002 – Inclusion of the class Charybido pancratii-Asphodeletea ramosi in the EuroVegChecklist

Authors of proposal: Edoardo Biondi, Simona Casavecchia, Simone Pesaresi, Roberta Gasparri and Nello Biscotti
Date of proposal: 27 February 2018

Summary of proposal: The authors suggest to include the new class Charybido pancratii-Asphodeletea ramosi Biondi et al. 2016 with its two new orders Asphodeletalia ramosi Biondi in Biondi et al. 2016 and Bellido sylvestris-Arisaretalia vulgaris Biondi in Biondi et al. 2017 in the EuroVegChecklist.

Supporting publications: Biondi et al. (2016), Biondi et al. (2017).

Specialist Group: Andraž Čarni (Coordinating Editor), Jorge Capelo, Romeo Di Pietro, Giuliano Fanelli, Ladislav Mucina, Jozef Šibík.

Recommendation (11 November 2019): The SG noted that this proposal goes beyond merely accepting a new class into the EuroVegChecklist. It also contains syntaxonomic changes of concern for the classes Lygeo-Stipetea Rivas-Mart. 1978 and Trifolio-Geranietea T. Müller 1962. A proposal of a new class should be clearly ecologically and floristically argued. The floristic delimitation would be unequivocally addressed if a synoptic table was presented that would document the status of the new class in relation to other, floristically similar classes. The SG identified at least two classes towards which the Charybido-Asphodeletea should be delimited, namely towards the Lygeo-Stipetea and the Trifolio-Geranietea. Therefore, the SG recommended rejection, but encouraged the authors to provide additional evidence for their proposal by means of synoptic tables.

Voting: The Recommendation of the Specialist Group was confirmed by the EVCC.

Proposal 003 – Modification of the classes Ammophilettea and Helichryso-Crucianelletea in the EuroVegChecklist

Authors of proposal: Corrado Marcenò and Milan Chytrý
Date of proposal: 18 October 2019

Summary of proposal: The authors suggest to rearrange the syntaxonomic framework of European dune vegetation. They propose to modify the classes Ammophilettea Br.-Bl. et Tx. ex Westhoff et al. 1946 and Helichryso-Crucianelletalia maritimae Gehu et al. in Sissingh 1974. The main change would be the inclusion of the Honkenyo-Elymetea arenarii Tx. 1966 and Elymetailia
Summary and outlook

The modifications as indicated in Proposal 003 will be implemented in the next EuroVegChecklist update. However, we would like to emphasise that the rejection of Proposals 001 and 002 is not final. In both cases, the main reason why the expert committees recommended rejection was the lack of a pan-European revision with synoptic tables. Thus, it is possible that the same or similar proposals are submitted again when new data supporting the proposed changes have been presented.

Two more proposals are now in the evaluation process. We would like to remind vegetation scientists who are willing to submit a proposal to follow the abovementioned procedures, especially regarding the documentation supporting the proposal, e.g., scientific papers including synoptic tables showing the floristic delimitation between the target syntaxon/syntaxa and other related ones.

Proposals have to be sent to the acting EVCC Secretary or Deputy Secretary (see http://euroveg.org/evc-committee).

Author contributions

W.W. planned the report, I.B. wrote it with important inputs from W.W.

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