

**7TH PLANTA EUROPA CONFERENCE «PLANTS FOR PEOPLE, PEOPLE FOR PLANTS»
(Kolymari, Chania, Crete, Greece)**

The 7th Conference of *Planta Europa*, a leading European network of the plant diversity conservation, brought together in the late springtime (22–25 May, 2014) more than 135 plant scientists from 24 countries of Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America.

The tradition of this meeting was launched in 1995 in Hyeres, France, and since that time became a regular event with the periodicity of several years: Uppsala, Sweden (1998); Průhonice, Czech Republic (2001); Valencia, Spain (2004); Cluj-Napoca, Romania (2007); and Krakow, Poland (2011). This year the *Planta Europa* conference was hosted by the Orthodox Academy of Crete (OAC, <http://www.oac.gr/>), a nonprofit educational institution that organized about 2 000 social and scientific events since its foundation in 1968. The OAC is located at the suburbs of the scenic Mediterranean town of Kolymari (Chania Prefecture, Crete, Greece). The slogan of the 7th *Planta Europa* meeting of botanists, mycologists, environmentalists, cell biologists, and other plant scientists from all over the world was «*Plants for People, People for Plants*» that emphasizes quite symbolically the importance of the implementation of the Global and European Strategies for Plant Conservation. Ukrainian scientists properly represented their country during the conference with oral presentations and posters: Prof., Dr. Victor Melnyk (M.M. Gryshko National Botanical Garden, National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Ukraine), «*In situ* and *ex situ* plant conservation in Ukraine»; Dr. Mykyta Peregrym (O.V. Fomin Botanical Garden at the Educational and Scientific Centre «Institute of Biology», Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv), «*In situ* and *ex situ* conservation of bulb and bulbotuberiferous plants in Ukraine»; Dr. Yuliya Krasylenko (Institute of Food Biotechnology and Genomics, NAS of Ukraine), «*Arceuthobium oxycedri* (DC.) M. Bieb. in Crimea: a brief history and future prospects» and «Educational and environment-oriented potential of the Fascination of Plants Day (FoPD) celebration in Ukraine» (with Prof., Dr. Yaroslav Blume and Andriy Mosyakin), and Marina Rudenko (Crimean Nature Reserve), «Conservation of *Allium siculum* subsp. *dioscoridis* in Ukraine». Also, a foreign member of the Ukrainian Botanical Society from Bulgaria, Prof., Dr. Alexander Tashev, par-

ticipated in the meeting presenting the paper with Evgeniy Tsavkov «The dendroflora of the Pirin Mountain (Bulgaria) and its conservation importance». Ukrainian botanists also contributed abstracts to the conference proceedings: Dr. Olesya Bezsmertna (O.V. Fomin Botanical Garden at the Educational and Scientific Centre «Institute of Biology», Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv), «*Polypodiophyta* of the native flora of Ukraine», Dr. Andriy Babytskiy (National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine), «Incipience of study about the geocoenoconsortium structure of ecosystems», Dr. Svitlana Zhygalova M.G. Kholodny Institute of Botany, NAS of Ukraine), «Conservation of natural habitats of critically endangered *Iris pineticola* Klokov (*Iridaceae*) in Ukraine», and Dr. Igor Olshanskiy (M.G. Kholodny Institute of Botany, NAS of Ukraine), «Two *Juncaceae* species disappeared from the Ukrainian Carpathians». Moreover, M. Peregrym and Y. Krasylenko participated in the *Planta Europa* photo and art completion and took the 2^d and the 3^d Prizes for the picture and art-herbarium, respectively.

Favorable conditions that facilitated the participation of the Ukrainian scientists have to be noted, namely the *Planta Europa* grants covering the accommodation, meals, and registration fee for the researchers that presented reports or posters.

Opening ceremony started from the greetings of *Planta Europa* leaders: Chairman Dr. Jan-Willem Sneep (the Netherlands), President Prof., Dr. Anca Sârbu (Romania), and the OAC governance. The traditional Jean-Paul Halland Award for the special input into the plant conservation in Europe was conferred to J.-W. Sneep, and the Silver Leaf Award — to Prof., Dr. Claudia Perini (Italy), Ms. Elizabeth Radford (UK), and Prof., Dr. Kostas Iatrou (Greece). It should be noted that the Ukrainian botanist, Prof., Dr. Tetyana Andrienko, was awarded the Silver Leaf in 1998.

The Conference sections covered 14 thematic areas, such as the reconsideration of biodiversity protection and sustainable development concepts, red lists of rare plants and protected areas, IPAs (Important Plant Areas) development, international political aspects of the environment protection, *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, collaboration of experienced botanists with inspired amateurs as environmental volunteers, the European En-

vironment Strategy, tourism and sustainable use, invasive species and commerce, agricultural ecosystems, taxonomy and wild plant biology, climate change and ecosystem services, and some others (for the complete listing of main topics, see Book of Abstracts at <http://7peconference.wix.com/plantaeuropa>).

During the conference, participants had the opportunity to test some plant-derived organic products produced in Crete, such as orange and lemon juice-supplemented olive oil, balsamic vinegar and herbal teas; to attend the presentation and botanical tour of Prof., Dr. Jacques Zaffran (a leading expert in the Cretan flora) and Dr. Lucas Andrianos in the Natural Flora Museum of the OAC, one of the major centers of Cretan plant diversity, exhibiting herbariums and floral illustrations by Ms. Julia Jones, to enjoy the field trip to the Botanical Garden of the Technical University of Crete (Akrotiri Peninsula) with the unique Mediterranean xerophytic shrub vegetation (tomillar, maquis and phrygana or garrigue), to the oldest Oil Museum in the village of Vouves, and to the Elafonisi, a key area of the NATURA 2000 network with an extremely rich and unique littoral psammophytic vegetation; to puzzle themselves in a workshop dedicated to *in vitro* orchid propagation by Prof., Dr. Philip Seaton (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK) and, finally, to visit such world-famous regional protected areas as Samaria and Agia Irini Gorges with well-preserved endemic and rare species of both the Crete and the Mediterranean Greece in general.

Among the capturing and informative oral and poster presentations highlighting the studies and conserva-

tion of plant diversity in European, North African and Asian countries, some have to be emphasized particularly. Thus, E. Radford reported on the «Updates of the implementation of PE strategy, European strategy and COP 10», analyzing the success and challenges in the implementation of the Global and European Strategies for Plant Conservation, and A. Sârbu shared the ideas about biodiversity education inside and outside botanical gardens. The development of educational and information technologies, including Android mobile phone applications, and their importance in the coordination of efforts of botanists and volunteers was discussed in most of the reports, both directly and indirectly.

At the closing session, the preliminary version of the «Crete Declaration» (available from the official *Planta Europa* website <http://www.plantaeuropa.net/>) was presented by Dr. Mora Aronsson (Sweden), who was elected a new Chair for the 8th *Planta Europa* Conference in 2017. We are pleased to inform that M. Peregrym, the active plant expert representing our country, was included in the Steering Committee in 2011 and was chosen to organize the next *Planta Europa* Conference in Kyiv at the O.V. Fomin Botanical Garden at the Educational and Scientific Centre «Institute of Biology», Taras Schevchenko National University of Kyiv in spring 2017, in collaboration with the M.G. Kholodny Institute of Botany of the NAS of Ukraine, M.M. Gryshko National Botanical Garden of the NAS of Ukraine, as well as engaged individual *Planta Europa* members from the friendly profile organizations.

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