

29 May 2017

Dear members of European Vegetation Survey,

It was agreed at the previous Business Meetings of the European Vegetation Survey that:

- (1) After its publication, the classification system of EuroVegChecklist (Mucina et al. 2016, *Appl. Veg. Sci.*) will be accepted by European Vegetation Survey as the standard phytosociological classification of European vegetation;
- (2) A formal procedure and a committee will be established for updating the EuroVegChecklist classification system;
- (3) Updating will be done conservatively, meaning that any change of syntaxon concepts has to be supported by a convincing data analysis (typically summarized in a published scientific paper) and any change of names has to be supported by an unequivocal argument based on the International Code of Phytosociological Nomenclature.

Here the Steering Committee of European Vegetation Survey proposes a first draft of possible procedures as a basis for discussion which will be convened at a meeting of the European Vegetation Survey group during the IAVS Symposium in Palermo, which is preliminarily planned for Tuesday 20th June 2017 afternoon. If you are attending the IAVS Symposium, you are most welcome to participate at this meeting. Based on this discussion, the final version of the procedures will be prepared and the final vote about them will be at the EVS meeting in Bilbao, 13-16 September 2017, at which also the committee will be elected. If you cannot come to Palermo, you can send me your comments on this material before the EVS meeting in Bilbao.

Best wishes,

Milan Chytrý
Secretary
European Vegetation Survey

Procedures for updating the standard European vegetation classification (draft)

The baseline classification system

Maintenance and updating of the standard phytosociological classification of European vegetation is the responsibility of the IAVS Working Group European Vegetation Survey (hereafter 'EVS Group'). The classification system published by Mucina et al. (2016, *Applied Vegetation Science* 19, Suppl. 1: 3–264; hereafter 'EuroVegChecklist') is accepted by the EVS Group as the baseline of the standard European vegetation classification.

The European Vegetation Classification Committee and Specialist Groups

The Steering Committee of the EVS Group establishes the European Vegetation Classification Committee (hereafter 'EVC Committee'), which has the following tasks:

- (1) receiving proposals for changes of specific parts of EuroVegChecklist;
- (2) reviewing these proposals by international expert groups;
- (3) deciding about acceptance or rejection of the proposals;
- (4) online publishing of the proposals and decisions about them;

(5) online publishing of the numbered updated versions of EuroVegChecklist with accepted changes included.

The members of the EVC Committee are appointed based on the decision of the Steering Committee of the EVS Group for a period of 8 years. The EVC Committee involves experts whose expertise collectively covers most European vegetation types and most European regions [*It is expected that the EVC Committee will consist of several dozens of experts*]. The EVC Committee elects a Secretary and a Deputy Secretary, whose task is to coordinate the activities of the committee. The Secretary and Deputy Secretary serve for a period of four years, which can be extended to another period of four years.

EVC Committee establishes a Specialist Group for each proposal received. Each Specialist Group consists of at least three members of the EVC Committee whose expertise is close to the topic of the proposal. Any member of the EVC Committee has the right to become a member of the Specialist Group for a specific proposal except for the author or co-authors of the proposal or the author or co-authors of the publication in which the proposal was made. The members of the EVC Committee can inform the Secretary about their interest to work in the Specialist Group for the particular proposal. If there are less than three interested EVC Committee members, the Secretary calls upon the members whose expertise is closest to the topic of the proposal. The Secretary assigns one member of the Specialist Group as the Coordinating Editor for the particular proposal.

EuroVegChecklist update workflow

- Any communication related to proposals for modification of EuroVegChecklist including voting is done via e-mail.
- Any vegetation scientist can send a proposal for modification of a specific part of EuroVegChecklist to the Secretary of the EVC Committee. The proposals should be typically based on published scientific papers.
- The Secretary sends the proposal to all members of the EVC Committee.
- Each proposal is evaluated by a Specialist Group. If necessary, the Coordinating Editor can ask experts that are not members of the EVC Committee for their opinion about the proposal.
- Based on the discussion within the Specialist Group, the Coordinating Editor prepares a recommendation about the proposal, which can be 'Accept', 'Reject' or 'Postpone the decision until more information is provided'. The recommendation must be accompanied by a text explaining the reasons for taking a particular decision.
- The recommendation and the explanatory text are sent to the Secretary of the EVC Committee who passes it to all members of the EVC Committee and asks them to vote about this recommendation. The decision is accepted if a majority of the received votes supports the recommendation. If it is rejected, a new Specialist Group with a new Coordinating Editor is established, which prepares a new recommendation with a new explanatory text and the vote is repeated.

Publication of the EuroVegChecklist updates

Any modification proposal and decision about it is published by the Secretary of the EVC Committee in Comments in the interactive online version of EuroVegChecklist (<https://www.synbiosys.alterra.nl/evc/>). In regular intervals of a few years, as necessary, updated versions of EuroVegChecklist that include the accepted modification proposals are published by the EVC Committee on <https://www.synbiosys.alterra.nl/evc/>. These versions are numbered and dated.