

The 9th European Dry Grassland Meeting

19-23 May 2012
Prespa, Greece



First circular

Organizers:

- European Dry Grassland Group (EDGG) (www.edgg.org) has been established in August 2008. It is as an official group of International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS, www.iavs.org). Its basic aims are to compile and to distribute information on research and conservation in dry grasslands beyond national borders, and to stimulate active cooperation among dry scientists NGO's and all who work with or are interested in dry grasslands.
- Hellenic Range and Pasture Society (HERPAS) (www.elet.gr) has been established in December 1992. It is a member of the European Grassland Federation (EGF, www.europeangrassland.org). Its basic aims are to broaden, disseminate and apply knowledge related to the conservation of rangelands and pastures, to promote the research and education for rangelands and pastures, and to establish partnership and cooperation with similar societies both within Greece and elsewhere.

Supporting organisations and institutions:

- International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS, www.iavs.org); its original precursor was the International Phytosociological Society (IPS) which was founded in 1939. IAVS is a worldwide union of scientists and others interested in theoretical and practical studies of all aspects of vegetation. The main goals of the IAVS are to facilitate personal contacts among vegetation scientists all over the world and to promote research in all aspects of vegetation science and its applications.
- Municipality of Prespa (www.prespes.gr). It is the major state's administration unit in the area of Prespa, Greece. Recently (June of 2010), it took its current form by expanding its geographical scope to the area of Krystalopygi. The municipality has its main goal the prosperity and well being of the citizens (16 villages, 1570 inh.) who live in its state (504 km²).
- Society for the Protection of Prespa (www.spp.gr). It has been established in the area of Prespa, Greece in 1990; its members are ten (10) national and international environmental NGOs. The SPP's mission is to safeguard the natural and cultural heritage of the Prespa basin as a whole, for the benefit of all its inhabitants both today and in the future.
- Prespa National Forest Management Body (www.fdedp.gr). It has been established in the area of Prespa, Greece in 2002. Its main purpose is to protect and conserve biological diversity in the area of Prespa having always driven sustainable development and management of the region, while focus on protecting and guarding the area to information - awareness and environmental education of citizens through organizing conferences, workshops, exhibitions and general promotional activities.
- John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (<http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/>) was founded in 1807. It aspires to be a valued and respected provider of products and services that make important contributions to advances in knowledge and understanding, a role that is essential to progress in a healthy and prosperous society. Wiley's mission is to provide must-have content and services to professionals, scientists, educators, students, lifelong learners, and consumers worldwide.

Main topic of the meeting:

Dry Grasslands of Europe: Grazing and Ecosystem Services

Subtopics: a) grazing impacts on biotic environment (impacts on soil and water resources, desertification, climate change and dry grasslands, etc.), b) grazing impacts on abiotic environment (impacts on plants, vegetation units, fauna, etc.), c) ecology and management of dry grasslands (all types of biotic interactions, succession, biodiversity, restoration and conservation of dry grasslands,

etc.), d) dry grasslands and rural societies (grasslands of high nature value, CAP reforms, permanent pastures, science-based policy, etc.).

All other topics related to dry grassland ecosystems are also welcome.

Preliminary time schedule:

18.05 (Friday): arrival to Prespa, registration, accommodation

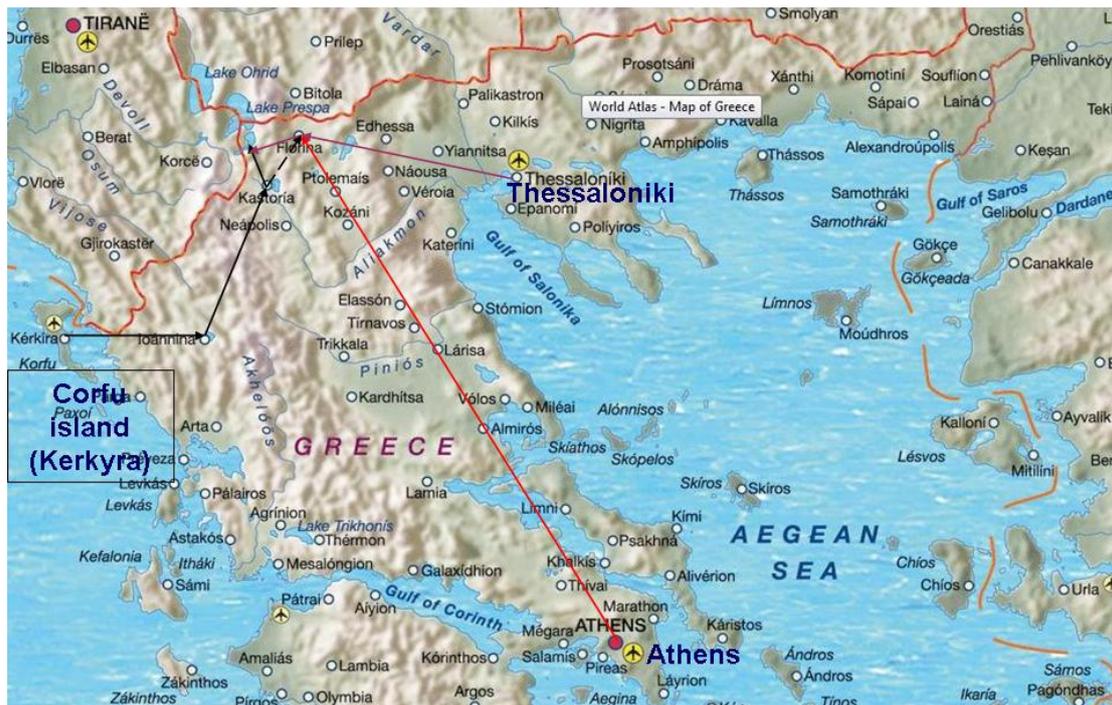
19.05 (Saturday): registration, opening ceremony, lectures, poster session, HERPAS General Assembly

20.05 (Sunday): excursion to Mt. Devas, boat trip to Macro Prespa Lake, grassland party

21.05 (Monday): lectures, poster session, EDGG General Assembly

22.05 (Tuesday): excursion to Mt. Varnous, visit to Agios Achillios island, meeting with local herders

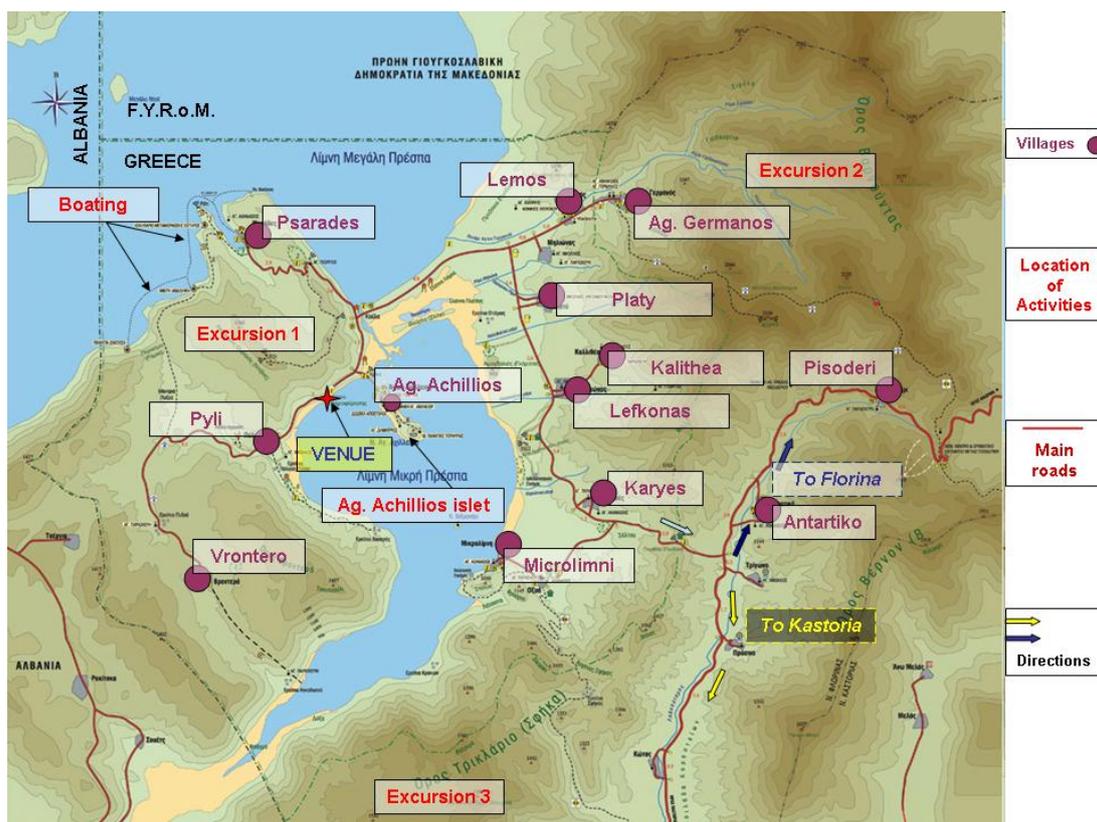
23.05 (Wednesday): excursion to Mt. Sfika



 	<p>By bus/car</p> <p>A. Thessaloniki – Florina – Prespa villages</p> <p>B. Athens – Florina – Prespa villages</p> <p>C. Corfu (Kerkyra) – Ioannina – Kastoria – (Florina) – Prespa villages</p>	<p>The 9th European Dry Grassland Meeting</p> <p>19-23 May 2012 Prespa, Greece</p>
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Location: The meeting will be held in the Information Center run by the Prespa National Forest Management Body near the village of Pyli, in the area of Prespa (northwestern Greece). Prespa is located at about 200 km from Thessaloniki, 560 km from Athens, 45 km and 54 km from the cities of Florina (capital of the prefecture, 15,000 inh.) and Kastoria (20,000 inh.), respectively. The landscape is dominated by the water bodies of Macro and Micro Prespa Lakes, forming a basin of 1600 km². The Macro Prespa Lake is divided between Albania (38.8 km² surface area), Greece (84.8 km² surface area) and F.Y.R.o.M. (190 km² surface area). The Micro Prespa Lake is shared only between Greece (138 km² drainage area; 43.5 km² surface area) and Albania (51 km² drainage area; 3.9 km² surface area). They are the highest tectonic lakes in the Balkans, located at an altitude of 853 m and surrounded by the Mts. of Devas (1373 m), Sfika (1776 m) and Varnous (2334 m). The region was established as a National Park in 1974, and is the largest park in Greece covering an area of 256 km². The Transboundary Prespa Park was established in 2000. Over 270 bird, 60 mammal, 22 reptile and amphibian species as well as a large number of fish and invertebrate species exist in Prespa. Micro Prespa Lakes hosts the most important breeding colony of Dalmatian

Pelicans in the world (nesting with White Pelicans) and other rare birds such as Herons and Pygmy Cormorants, a fact that makes this area one of the most important wetlands in Europe.



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Due to intensively changing topography, the determining role of the water bodies, and the petrographic combination (a limestone-dominated western sector, a granite-dominated eastern sector), several vegetation types alternate, thus creating a diverse mosaic-type landscape. At least 194 plant species are of global, European and national importance since they are mentioned in relevant Red Data Books or are Greek endemics. Some of them have been recorded in a few mountains, or found in their southern limit of their distribution in Europe, or are of national importance since they are restricted in the wider area of Prespa, or included in the Annexes II and V of the Directive 92/43/EEC. According to the European Habitats Directive 92/43, the National Park of Prespa includes the Natura 2000 sites “*ETHNIKOS DRYMOS PRESPON (National Park of Prespa)*” (GR 1340001) and “*ORI VARNOUNTA (Mount Varnous)*” (GR 1340003) which cover the whole of the Prespa Lakes basin in its Greek part. The first site is characterized by 25 habitat types, 14 of them being habitat types of the Natura 2000 network, with 4 of them being priority habitat types (*6210 *Semi-natural dry grasslands on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia)*, *6220 *Pseudosteppe with grasses and annuals (Thero-Brachypodietea)*, *6230 *Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)*, and *9562 *Grecian juniper woods*). The second site is characterized by 15 habitat types of the Natura 2000 network, with 7 of them being habitat types mentioned in the Directive 92/43/EEC, while 1 is European priority habitat types (*6230).

Language: English

Accommodation is available in single, double, three- or four-bed rooms, or in apartments. The approximate price is 20-30 € per night per person. A list of available hotels will be given in the second circular. Participants may choose between guesthouses in several villages (see map). Small busses, free of charge, will be available to carry participants from and to the Meeting Center on specific hours according to the meeting programme and the needs of participants.

Conference publications: All participants will receive a book of abstract, which will be also published online on the EDGG homepage.

IMPORTANT: Depending on the quality of the submitted full papers and the positive opinion of the writers, the HERPAS intends to publish a book (in English) with selected contributions. The book will have the title of the meeting. Detailed information concerning the full paper submission will be provided in the second circular.

Based on the number, quality and topics of the submitted abstracts, the Local Organising Committee together with EDGG might organise Special Features in international journals as in previous years. Potential target journals are *Plant Biosystems*, *Biodiversity & Conservation*, *Journal for Nature Conservation*, *Journal of Biological Research*, or *Tuexenia*. If you are interested in contributing to such a Special Feature or if you have suggestions regarding journal, topic or guest editors, please contact to the Local Organising Committee.

Prizes: As in previous years, prizes will be given to young scientists who excellently present their researches (orally or in poster). For these purposes, young scientists (less than 35 years old) will be asked in the registration desk if they want to participate in the contest.

Registration will be open from 20th of October at the Conference homepage:
www.edgg.org/edgg_meeting.html

Important dates:

Deadline for registration: 28 February 2012

Deadline for abstract submission (to consider for publication in the Book or Special Features): 30 November 2011

Deadline for abstract submission (to include only in the Book of Abstracts): 28 February 2012

Fees: A charge of 100 € per person (70 € for non-graduate, M.Sc. and Ph.D. students) will cover

- a) mid-session snacks and soft refreshments,
- b) tickets for two lunches (1st and 3rd day),
- c) ticket to grassland party,
- d) attendant pack (book of abstracts included),
- e) boat tour from Psarades bay along the southwest coast of Lake Macro Prespa to visit Christian hermitages (sketes) from Byzantine eras,
- f) snacks and soft refreshments for the first excursion (second day of the Meeting), and
- g) the Book published from HERPAS (it will be sent as soon as it is ready)

An additional amount of 10 €/day will be charged optionally for those who take part in the second (4th day) and third (5th day) excursion. The amount covers sandwiches and soft refreshments.

All fees will be paid in the registration desk in the first day.

Contact persons:

Michael Vrahnakis, Department of Forestry and Management of Natural Environment, Technological Educational Institute of Larissa, Terma Mavromihali, GR-43100, Karditsa, Greece, mvrahnak@teilar.gr (for requests regarding scientific programme, deadlines, fees, and other organizational matters).

Yiannis Kazoglou, Municipality of Prespa, GR-53007, Lemos, Prespa, Greece, ykazoglou@gmail.com (for requests regarding accommodation and other specific information concerning Prespa).

Excursion 1: The species-rich Mt. Devas

Although Devas is a mountain of relatively low altitude (1373 m), compared to the other mountains of the area, it preserves remarkable floristic diversity, mostly due to its limestone parent material. There are over 500 plant species; among them you may find important species like *Phelypaea boissieri*, *Lilium chalcedonicum*, *L. candidum*, *Cynoglottis barrelieri* ssp. *serpentinicola*. Together with this extra-ordinary floristic diversity (1/7 of the total Greek flora) there are several vegetation units with dominant the one of *Juniperus excelsa* and *J. foetidissima* woodlands. Several vegetation gaps appeared inside the juniper and oak (mainly *Quercus trojana*) forests and shrublands of *Buxus sempervirens*. The gaps represent dry grasslands of *Festuco-Brometea*, with an exceptionally high numbers of orchids, iris, etc. In addition, the area is characterized by the remarkable chasmophytic vegetation of rocky shores, dominated by *Campanula versicolor*.



Excursion 2: Dry grasslands of Mt. Varnous

Mt Varnous is characterized by the ragged terrain, the geologic bedrock (granite), the high altitude (2000 m) and the high levels of humidity, even during summer months. Given this unusual abiotic settings for Greece, very specific floristic elements and vegetation types occur. The vegetation is characterized by extended beech and fir forests, and grasslands that are kept thanks to the intense livestock grazing activity. The grasslands of the high altitudes are dominated by *Nardus stricta*, and *Juniperus communis* ssp. *nana*, while in low elevations dwarf shrub species like *Chamaecytisus* spp. The vegetation along to the banks of streams is characterized by vegetation units of *Mulgedio-Aconitetea*. Major threat for the grasslands of Mt. Varnous is the changing of the species of grazing animals, as sheep and goats that were the main users of the plant resources for decades are gradually replaced by cattle. There have been recorded over of 700 plant taxa in the broad area of Mt. Varnous, with some of them being quite important, like *Galanthus nivalis* (near threatened),

Ramonda serbica (vulnerable), *Dianthus myrtinervius* ssp. *myrtinervius* (endemic of the broader area), *Lilium carniolicum* ssp. *albanicum*, etc.



Excursion 3: Dry grasslands of Mt. Sfika

The calcareous massif of Mt. Sfika (or Triklario) is characterized by rich vegetation, occupied by extended forest in its northern slopes (*Fagus sylvatica*, *Quercus pubescens*, *Q. cerris*, *Q. frainetto*, *Q. trojana*, *Carpinus orientalis*, etc.), while southern slopes are dominated by extended grasslands, intensively used by sheep and goats. Grasslands up to 1500 m belong to the *Festuco-Brometea* (*Stipo-Morinion*). These grasslands sustain a remarkable variety of plant taxa, mainly of Mediterranean origin. Grasslands over 1500 m are dominated by caespitose dwarf shrubs, forming dense tussocks, and belong to the Greek endemic class of *Daphno-Festucetea*.



Let's vote for Smolenice Grassland Declaration!
(please read the text and vote [here](#))