MINUTES OF EWRS INVASIVE ALIEN PLANTS WORKING GROUP MEETING IN ATHENS

EWRS Invasive Alien Plants (IAP) Working Group (WG) met in Athens on 20 June 2022 with 15 members and discussed issues related to WG including an opinion paper and future projects.

1. Reorganizing mailing list of WG

There is a large mailing list which includes more than 500 people that have been accumulated since the establishment of the WG. This may hamper communication among real WG members and bother those colleagues who are not interested in our WG anymore. We decided to send an e-mail to everyone on the current e-mail list and ask for their interest to stay in the list. Tijana Stajanovic will voluntarily do it.

1. Opinion paper for Weed Research Journal

New weed species, especially non-native ones, have become detrimental problems in managed and unmanaged areas, as well as in urban areas, due to global change. The role of weed scientists needs to be rethought under global change and new technologies. The WG has discussed these issues in Palic and a paper was presented in Athens. The next step will be an opinion paper including strategy of WG. The chair will take care to prepare a draft as soon as possible. Then, authors of the Palic report, Athen’s presentation, and the WG members will be invited to contribute to the paper.

1. Tree of heaven Project

*Ailanthus altissima* (tree of heaven) is originated from East Asia and has become a very large problem worldwide including Europe and Mediterranean Basin. The current situation of the problem, research, implementations, and needs were discussed. Outreach and research were stressed. Biological control studies were widely recognized despite general policies in Europe. A basic project among WG was decided as the most applicable activity. The goal of the project will be to study the distribution of the potential biological control agent *Aculus taihangensis* (Acari: Eriophyidae) in the countries of the WG members. Dr. Francesca Marini will support WG members by providing information about how to detect and collect the mite. The samples collected will be then identified by Dr. Biljana Vidović, eriophyid mite specialist at the University of Belgrade. Dr. Javid Kashefi will lead preparation of a larger proposal to submit to relevant authorities.

1. Silverleaf nightshade project

*Solanum elaeagnifolium* (silverleaf nightshade) is native to North America and has become a large problem in the Mediterranean Basin and the Middle East. The current situation of the problem, research, implementations, and needs were discussed. The funding opportunities will be sought to focus on a proposal.

1. Biological control research and implementation in other IAP were shortly discussed. *Ambrosia artemissfilia* (common ragweed) and some other species that are problem in our area are included in a recent EU/China proposal. *Parthenium* *hysterophorus* (parthenium weed)*,* as a newcomer to our area, will have special attention for preventive purposes.
2. Meetings

Next year, a workshop will be organized in Turkey, and biological control of IAP will be one of the main topics of the workshop. Weed Control in Mediterranean WG or other WG(s) will be invited to join the organization of the workshop. IOLB is thought as another partner for this workshop and will be contacted. A new EWRS WG on Biological Control (sensu latu) is presently being initiated and a first joint meeting (on subsequent days) could be envisaged.