



CETAF
Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities
MUSEO NACIONAL DE CIENCIAS NATURALES
CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES
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CETAF expresses its support for European Directories of Species Names.

The Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF) made in its meeting of 23 May 2004 in Warsaw the following decision.

Considering that:

- the European taxonomic databases (or the successors of) ERMS, Euro+Med PlantBase and Fauna Europaea, are expected to take care of maintaining and updating the authoritative databases of European species names,
- these database services depend on the efforts of qualified taxonomic specialists,
- many of these taxonomic specialists are employed in the member institutes of CETAF,
- the taxonomic community, and as such also CETAF, feels a strong responsibility for the specialist input in these database services.

Concluding that:

- CETAF is supportive to the objectives of the cooperating European taxonomic databases,
- taxonomic specialist contributions to these European taxonomic databases should be considered as institutional tasks,
- CETAF is willing to provide guidance to the operations and further development of EuroSpecies.

Strongly recommends that:

1. the employees in its member institutes, if they are invited to act as selected taxonomic specialists for European taxonomic databases, are allowed to perform this scientific work as part of their institutional tasks on the basis of
 - a. the normal project decision structure of the institute,
 - b. a policy to give proper credit and citation of the taxonomic specialist contributions (as established in the procedures of the database services).
2. representatives of CETAF are willing and prepared to serve in committees or other collaborative bodies that will oversee the further development of European taxonomic database services.

CETAF (<http://www.cetaf.org/>) was established in 1996 by the directors of the Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna; Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, Brussels; National Botanic garden, Meise; Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren; National Museum for Natural History, Prague; Natural History Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen; Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris; Botanischer Garten und Botanischer Museum, Berlin-Dahlem; Forschungsinstitut Senckenberg, Frankfurt; Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin; Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde, Stuttgart; Staatliche Naturwissenschaftliche Sammlungen Bayerns, München; Hungarian Natural History Museum, Budapest; Museo Civico di Storia Naturale, Milan; Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures, Utrecht; National Museum of Natural History Naturalis, Leiden; National Herbarium Netherlands, Leiden; Zoological Museum Amsterdam; Museum and Institute for Zoology PAN, Warsaw; Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales, Madrid; Real Jardín Botánico, Madrid; Naturhistoriska Riksmuseet, Stockholm; Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; The Natural History Museum, London.

Background information

Present status of the three taxonomic checklist projects

The European Commission has subsidized three related projects with the objective to build digital checklists.

- The European Register of Marine Species (FP4) ended in 2000
- Euro+Med PlantBase (FP5) ended in 2003
- Fauna Europaea (FP5) will finish in 2004.

The scope of the projects is not similar, as result of different histories and species numbers.

| Comparison of EU funded projects | | | |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | <u>Fauna Europaea</u> | <u>ERMS</u> | <u>Euro+Med PlantBase</u> |
| Taxa or name based | name based | name based | taxon based |
| Species names | • | • | • |
| Actual number of species | 119044 | 31810 | 36898 |
| Estimated number of species | 130322 | 32000 | 36898 |
| Number of names | ± 300000 | 65724 | 64932 |
| Intraspecific taxa | subspecies | subspecies | subspecies, varieties, forms |
| Synonyms | • | • | • |
| Systematic position (family) | • | • | • |
| References | • | - | • |
| Distribution (level) | • | ◦ | • |
| Level | country | Atlantic-Mediterranean | country & GIS |
| Occurrence details | - | - | • |
| Karyology | - | - | • |
| Conservation status | - | - | • |
| Growth form | - | - | ◦ |
| Ecology | - | - | ◦ |
| Phenology | - | - | ◦ |
| Common names | - | - | - |
| Collection information | - | - | - |
| Identification bibliography | - | • | • |
| Experts | • | • | • |

The projects have in common that they all strive to deliver authoritative lists for a variety of different users groups. As such, much effort was invested in working together with recognized specialists. This authority status of the databases is also the real asset of the projects.

Relation with Species-2000 and GBIF

The three projects are partner in the EuroCAT (Species-2000 Europe) project. This project started in January 2004, and one of its objective is to build a so-called EuroHub to allow for an integrated access to the three interlinked databases. The three database organisations are becoming members of the Species-2000 organisation.

GBIF entered into an agreement with the Consortium Catalogue of Life (consisting of Species-2000, ITIS and other cooperating initiatives) in order to offer GBIF integrated access to a validated names service.

Summarizing, the respective roles are as follows.

- The ERMS, Euro+Med PlantBase and Fauna Europaea projects take care of maintaining and updating the authoritative databased authoritative indices of European species names (= contents).
- The “EuroHub” provides integrated access to the ERMS, Euro+Med PlantBase and Fauna Europaea databases.
- The Consortium Catalogue of Life offers combined access to the Global Species Databases, and Regional Species Databases (including the EuroHub)
- GBIF applies the service of the Consortium in its information architecture, together with other information categories such as specimen data.

ENBI, the European Network for Biodiversity Information, is a network of European projects in biodiversity information and of GBIF-nodes in Europe.

The role of CETAF

Continued involvement of the contributing taxonomic specialist.

The start of ERMS, Euro+Med PlantBase and Fauna Europaea required data collation and data entry in a relatively short period for almost all described European species. After this initial effort, the maintenance and updating of the data sets has to be continued. The status of these databases as authoritative directories depends strongly on the professional involvement of the specialists. This will be facilitated if the institutions, in which the contributing specialists are based, would agree with the activities of these specialists to continue with updating and expansion of the species databases. Since quite a number of these specialists are employed in the member institutes of CETAF, this consortium wants to express its responsibility for the maintenance and updating of the three European taxonomic databases with the recommendation that employees in its member organisations, acting as selected specialists for these database services, should be allowed to perform scientific checklist work in institutional time. Other institutes are suggested to also follow this recommendation.

Involvement of CETAF in the operations of the database organisations.

Three major categories of stakeholders should be involved in decision making about the further development and integration of the European database services.

1. The taxonomic specialists.

As a spin-off of the ERMS project has been established the “Society for the Management of European Biodiversity Data”. This society organises the contributing specialists and represents their intellectual property rights. Fauna Europaea started to negotiate a position for its contributing specialists in this Society.

2. The institutional basis

The majority of specialists contributing to the European taxonomic databases is employed in academic institutions (including museums and herbariums), or have a guest status in these institutes. CETAF covers with its member organisations the institutional basis of a large part of the contributing specialists. As such, CETAF has expressed before its interest in the continuity of the European taxonomic databases.

3. The financing body of the database services.

Continuity of the database services also depends on the (European) agency or agencies with an interest to financially maintain these services.

It may be considered that the “Society for the Management of European Biodiversity Data” (organising the specialists involvement), and CETAF (the only existing European organisation organising the larger taxonomic facilities), together assist in funding negotiations, by

- representation of the ‘resources’ with respect to the taxonomic specialists (united in the ‘Society), and the institutional basis (strongly constituted by CETAF).
- definition of the conditions for the selection and functions of the hosting institute(s) of the database services (if present hosting institutes cannot continue to do so).
- serving as the advisory body for the hosting institute(s).
- establishment of supporting advisory bodies, amongst which on
 - taxonomy
 - end-users
 - editorial committee

CETAF did express its willingness to serve in such committees or other collaborative bodies.

CETAF (Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities)
Euro+Med Plantbase
ENBI (European Network for Biodiversity Information)
ERMS (European Register of Marine Species)
Fauna Europaea
GBIF (Global Biodiversity Information Facility)
Species-2000 Europe

<http://www.cetaf.org/>
<http://www.euromed.org.uk/>
<http://www.enbi.info/>
<http://erms.biol.soton.ac.uk/>
<http://www.faunaeur.org>
<http://www.gbif.org> and <http://www.gbif.net>
<http://sp2000europa.org>