

Working Group “Integrated Protection in Oak Forests”, Meeting October, 2004 – Report

The fourth meeting of the working group «integrated protection in oak forests» was held in Tunisia (Hammamet), 4 to 8 October, 2004.

Besides IOBC, the meeting was supported by the INRGREF (Institut National de Recherche en Génie Rural, Eaux et Forêts, Tunisie), the DGF (Direction Générale des Forêts, Tunisie), the ATTF (Association Tunisienne des Techniciens Forestiers) and the MNHN (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France). About 120 participants attended to the meeting: working group members from 8 countries (Algeria, France, Iran, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia) as well as representatives of Tunisian institutions of forest research and protection and INRGREF students (about 60 persons).

The location of the meeting and the founding allocated by IOBC/ WPRS enabled for the first time an important participation of Algerian students and scientists (as well as Tunisian ones). We took this opportunity to encourage the scientists of Algerian Universities and INRGREF (Tunisia) to subscribe to IOBC/WPRS as institutional or supporting members, as have recently done our colleagues of the Sassari University (Italy). We were also happy to welcome in our group an Iranian forest scientist who assessed the situation of oak forest decline in Iran. By another way, we were pleased to notice that most of the researchers we financially helped during the last meeting found funding.

As the previous ones, the fourth meeting aimed to consider the actual phytosanitary situation of European and Mediterranean oak stands and to share the results of the recent works. 35 oral communications and 22 posters were presented during the sessions which concerned respectively: phytosanitary status of the oak forests; biology and impact of xylophagous pests; biology and impact of pathogenous fungi; biology and impact of phytophagous pests; natural enemies, biological and integrated control of phyllophagous insects; forest management; cork production and forest fires; oak forest fauna. An excursion was organized during the last day in the region of Tabarka. It included a guided tour of Tunisian cork oak stands and visits of a tree nursery and a forest reserve.

Six of the oral communications concerned current common researches involving scientists of several Mediterranean countries : preservation and recovering of cork-growing areas (Sardinia, Tunisia), bioecology of the xylophagous pest *Platypus cylindrus* (Morocco, Portugal), declining factors in cork oak stands (Morocco and Portugal, Algeria and France), bioecology of *Lymantria dispar* (Morocco, Portugal, France), cork oak seedling production at out-soil culture (Tunisia, Algeria). Several new collaborative projects were also discussed during the meeting; they notably concerned: entomophagous fungi (Tunisia, Sardinia, Portugal), *Platypus cylindrus* infestation (Tunisia, Sardinia, Morocco, Portugal), *Lymantria dispar* (Tunisia, Sardinia, Morocco, Portugal, France) and impact evaluation of forest decline factors (Sardinia, Tunisia, Portugal, Algeria).

It appeared also necessary to find more reliable collaborations to assess the economical impact of oak forest decline and make every effort to better explain the research aims and results to the public and the forest firms. As for agricultural research, forest research must be better supported and forest stands improved by ecotourism and micro enterprise projects.

EDMUNDO SOUSA proposed to take in charge the engraving of a CD gathering information provided by working group members and other persons involved in oak forest research and management.

In order to better harmonise their research programs and to homogenize the evaluation methods of oak phytosanitary status and pest damages, the participants of the fourth meeting suggested to divide our working group in three subgroups which can meet independently and more regularly:

- oak pathogenous fungi
- oak insect pests
- forest management

Subgroup meetings seem to be necessary to establish reliable field comparison and to homogenise the evaluation methods of oak decline and pest impact in the perspective of preparing IOBC guidelines in oak forest integrated protection.

Working group meetings would continue to be held every three years and each subgroup would meet each year during the two inter-meeting years. In the course of the global working group meeting, a day would be devoted to subgroup round-tables.

During the fourth meeting, EDMUNDO SOUSA, scientist of the National Forestry Station in Oeiras, was unanimously elected as new convenor of the working group by the IOBC member participants. Two deputy convenors were also elected: PR. FRANCESCHINI from the Sassary University (Italy) and M. BEN JAMAA from the INRGREF (Tunisia).

If the subgroup creation proposal will be accepted by the IOBC/ WPRS council, their direction will be attributed as follows:

- PR. FRANCESCHINI: oak pathogenous fungi
- E. SOUSA: oak insect pests
- M. BEN JAMAA: forest management

The fifth meeting of the group would take place in October 2007 in Tlemcen (Algeria).

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