

Polish Mycological Society established



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Fig. 1. Founder Members of the Polish Mycological Society (Łódź, 2011, November 5, at 13:40) presenting the written congratulations from Dr. David Minter, President of the European Mycological Association (Phot. B. Osiński).

The POLISH MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY (PMS) was established on 5 November 2011, in Łódź. The aims of the society are to develop, coordinate and support mycological studies, and to popularize mycology in its widest sense among the people in Poland, in cooperation with mycologists and mycological societies worldwide. As required by Polish law, the Society was registered (entry 00004 22681) on 23 June 2012 in the National Court Register of the City of Warsaw District Court. **Contact information** for the Society is as follows. **Website:** www.ptmyk.pl **E-mail:** polskietowarzystwomykologiczne@gmail.com. **Postal address** (under its Polish name): Polskie Towarzystwo Mykologiczne (PTMyk), Al. Ujazdowskie 4, PL-00-478 Warszawa, Poland.

The background for establishing the PMS was both general and local. Historically, mycology was represented only through sections of other societies including the Polish Botanical Society, Polish Hygienic Society, Polish Dermatological Society, and Polish Society of Building Mycology. Interest in scientific study and practical use of fungi increased after recognized them as a separate kingdom within Eukaryota. As a result the influence of mycology, and its connection with and presence in many areas of knowledge became more evident. This led mycologists to realize that their science faced structural issues: coverage of mycology lacked focus. The increase in scientific mycology had a social counterpart with the remarkable rise in numbers of amateurs interested in fungi, particularly rare and little known species (the website www.grzyby.pl is excellent example of their work). Their research, observations and documented collections suggested that enhanced contact and collaboration between amateurs and professionals would be good for mycology. There was a clear need to integrate these different elements into a single forum for exchanging ideas and information.

External conditions also became more favourable, with the appearance of new scientific infrastructure at continental and global levels. In 1985 the European Council for Conservation of Fungi was established, and that was followed in 2003 by formation of the European Mycological Association. Polish mycologists participating in these initiatives became aware that they were among a minority of Europeans who lacked their own national mycological society.

The gestation period of the new mycological society was long: discussions about the need for a national mycological society and the form it should take lasted several decades. It all started when the Mycological Section of the Polish Botanical Society was set up in 1957. This gathered together experimental mycologists and researchers in Poland, and was headed by Professor ALINA SKIRGIELŁO for 50 years. In September 2001, at a forum of this Mycological Section of the Polish Botanical Society, a proposal to establish a Polish mycological society was submitted by Maria Ławrynowicz, on behalf of the Board of that Section. The resulting discussions supporting and motivating the idea lasted ten years and spanned several meetings (2004, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011). They resulted in preparation of a constitution and, finally, in the formation of the PMS on 5 November 2011, during a special nationwide Polish Mycological Convention held under the auspices of the European Mycological Association in the presence of DAVID MINTER, its President and STEPHANOS DIAMANDIS, its Past Vice-President.

All the necessary documentation was unanimously accepted by that meeting, and the establishment of the PMS enthusiastically approved, by the 34 Founder Members (Fig. 1). This historic event was the culmination of long efforts by three generations of Polish mycologists. The meeting appointed an initial Executive Committee as follows: Dr MARTA WRZOSEK as President, Dr hab. JANUSZ ŁUSZCZYŃSKI as Vice-President, Dr MAŁGORZATA RUSZKIEWICZ-MICHALSKA as Secretary, Dr JULIA (BUDZISZEWSKA) PAWŁOWSKA as Treasurer.