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REPORT

18th Congress of European Mycologists: Conference Report

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The 18th Congress of European Mycologists was held between September 16 and 21, 2019 in Warsaw and Białowieża, Poland. It gathered more than 250 participants from 52 countries from all over the world who presented 77 talks and 176 posters (Hawksworth, 2019; Pawłowska et al., 2019). During the first 3 days, mycologists were meeting in Old Library at the University of Warsaw and they could participate in two offered and six thematic sessions: “From genome to function” (led by Ekaterina Shelest, Germany), “Taxonomy and systematics” (led by Jos Houbraken, The Netherlands), “Fungi in biotechnology” (led by Katarzyna Turnau, Poland), “Fungal interactions” (led by Martin Bidartondo, United Kingdom), “Medical mycology” (led by Michaela Lackner, Austria), and “Fungal diversity” (led by Carrie Andrew, Sweden). Four thematic sessions were organized in Białowieża: “Fungi in primeval forests and other natural habitats” (led by Anders Dahlberg, Sweden), “Hypogeous mycorrhizal fungi” (led by Giovanni Pacioni, Italy), “Fungal conservation” (led by Susana C. Gonçalves, Portugal), and “Data session” (led by Dmitry Schigel, Denmark). Additionally, two workshops were organized in the Białowieża part of the Congress: “Global fungal red-listing” (by David Minter, United Kingdom) and “Biology of Polypores” (by Dmitry Schigel, Denmark). An

open European Council for the Conservation of Fungi (ECCF) discussion forum entitled “Fungal conservation across borders in Europe (and beyond) for the next 4 years – What role for the ECCF?” was also held. The scientific program was also honored by keynote lectures of eminent mycologists: Annegret Kohler (France), David Hawksworth (United Kingdom), Geoffrey Gadd (United Kingdom), Duur K. Aanen (The Netherlands), Dominik Begerow (Germany), Marc-André Selosse (France), Bogdan Jaroszewicz (Poland), and Lynne Boddy (United Kingdom). At a general meeting of the European Mycological Association, a new board was elected, with Izabela Kałucka (Poland) as President, Mitko Karadelev (Macedonia) as Vice-President, Katerina Rusevska (Macedonia) as Secretary, Eske De Crop (Belgium) as Treasurer, Vijai Kumar Gupta (Estonia) as Membership Secretary, Tatiana Semenova-Nelsen (USA) as Publicity & Social Media Officer, Paulo de Oliveira (Portugal) as EMA Webmaster, and Susana C. Gonçalves (Portugal) as Conservation Officer and Chair of the ECCF. The outgoing President, David Minter, was thanked for all he had done for the EMA during his tenure. During the closing ceremony, it was agreed that the next, the 19th Congress of European Mycologists will be organized in Turin, Italy, in 2023.

As the motto of the Congress was “Fungi in nature and culture,” a rich program of mycology related, artistic events was proposed, e.g., a photo exhibition “Fungi – Master sculptures of nature,” “Dystopia” – Spatial composition by H  l  ne Soulier and Ewa Rudnicka, “Anomalium” – Graphics exhibition of Agnieszka Zdziabek, “Broken links” – Performance of Maria Subczyńska. Additionally, two mushroom exhibitions in Warsaw and the 25th Exhibition of Fungi of the Bia  owieza Forest were also organized. On Tuesday evening, the public lecture “Mycology: A recent weapon in the forensic armory” was given in the Copernicus Science Centre by Patricia Wiltshire (United Kingdom).

Finally, common mushroom hunting and iNaturalist.org BioBlitz project were also organized, as a follow up of the GBIF presentation stressing the importance of sharing data on fungal occurrence. In less than 2 weeks, 750 observations and 217 species of fungi from Bia  owieza Forest (Poland) were recorded. Some collections were also taken for further identification. All these data will be processed and prepared for publication in the *Acta Mycologica* journal. This will be the first paper opening a new chapter in the journal’s history. *Acta Mycologica*, as one of the world’s first mycological journals, has decided to join the GBIF initiative to share data on fungal distribution. We hope that such a decision will significantly increase the representativeness of Polish mycological data in international databases and will become a measurable and globally visible effect of the recent Congress.

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