

Forum

The Forum section offers the possibility to our members to post small requests or initiate discussions that might be interesting to other members as well.

SIGNAL – European gradients of resilience in the face of climate extremes

The new BiodivERsA project “SIGNAL”, initiated and coordinated by EDGG member Prof. Dr. Anke Jentsch, University of Bayreuth, just started on 1 March 2013. This international research project analyses how climate change, land-use change and biotic invasions influence biodiversity and ecosystem services of European grasslands and how, vice versa, various components of biodiversity (species diversity, intraspecific diversity, functional diversity) might make these grasslands resilient against such pressures. The project funded by the ERA-Net and running for the next three years involves partners (including many EDGG members) from nine countries along a climatic gradient (Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Turkey, Israel). The questions are addressed in standardised field experiments in typical semi-natural grasslands of all

countries and in a subsequent mesocosm experiment, which will also involve most of the partners. These data then will be combined with literature review, meta-analyses of other experiments, evaluation of vegetation-plot databases and GIS techniques to extrapolate the findings to the semi-natural grasslands of Europe. Involvement of stakeholders, i.e. informing farmers, conservation NGOs, conservation administrations and policy makers about the implications of the findings will play a key role too, and here cooperation with EDGG and its members is highly welcome. The kick-off Workshop of SIGNAL took place in mid-March in the Rabenstein Castle in the Franconian Jura, Bavaria, Germany, with a visit of the research sites of the University of Bayreuth. While a late winter spell delayed the arrival of many of the foreign participants, the workshop then was very productive and the partners are now ready to install their experiments, some of which will start soon.

Homepage: <http://www.bayceer.uni-bayreuth.de/signal/index.php?lang=en>

Jürgen Dengler (juergen.dengler@uni-bayreuth.de)

