

Plant scientists propose new classification system for european vegetation

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Vegetation of the *Spartinocytisetea supranubii* with iconic *Echium wildpreti* in the Las Canadas, Tenerife, Canary Islands. Credit: A Santos

Experts have presented a new classification system for vegetation in Europe that aims to standardize classifications across the continent and

aid the European Union Nature Information System, which brings together data for nature resource management and conservation, land planning, education, and environmental policy implementation.

As they worked on the project for more than 15 years, plant ecologists evaluated approximately 10,000 bibliographic sources to revise previously proposed [classification](#) units, and to create a unified comprehensive [system](#) reflecting the units' floristic and ecological distinctness, clarity of geographic distribution, and underpinning ecological and evolutionary processes.

The resulting system provides a classification of European vegetation into 1298 basic-level types that are grouped into broader types at higher hierarchical levels.

"This work summarizes more than 120 years of knowledge collected by vegetation science in an effort to understand the complexity of vegetation patterns in Europe. In achieving our goal, Europe becomes the first continent having a complete and unified vegetation classification system," said Dr. Ladislav Mucina, lead author of the *Applied Vegetation Science* article. "It has been a great privilege to be a part of this quest, pursued by a team of the best minds in European vegetation science."

More information: Vegetation of Europe: hierarchical floristic classification system of vascular plant, bryophyte, lichen, and algal communities; *Applied Vegetation Science*; DOI: 10.1111/avsc.12257

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