

SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

6th Balkan Botanical Congress, Rijeka, Croatia

The 6th Balkan Botanical Congress was held at the campus of the University of Rijeka, Croatia from 14th - 18th September 2015. It was coordinated by the Natural History Museum Rijeka, Croatian Botanical Society, Botanical Society of Slovenia and the University of Rijeka. This continued the tradition of holding regular Balkan botanical congresses of which the first was held in Thessaloniki, Greece (1997), Istanbul (2000), Sarajevo (2003), Sofia (2006) and the fifth in Belgrade (2009).

According to the printed Book of Abstracts, over 500 botanists representing 27 countries contributed their scientific findings; the actual number of participants presenting their research at the congress (excluding accompanying persons) was much less. Nearly 50 lectures, including four plenary speeches, were presented and three poster sessions organized over the four working days. Many of the 157 posters submitted for acceptance in the various botanical disciplines (cryptogams, conservation, vegetation science, ethnobotany, alien taxa, floristics, systematics, etc.) were prepared by young scientists and graduate students. Two Round Table discussions took place, without concrete conclusions.

The Congress also commemorated the 200th anniversary of Josif Pančić's birth (b.1814-1888). Born in a small Croatian village not far from the Congress venue, Pančić later moved to Serbia and became one of the most eminent Balkan naturalists, famed for his work on the floras of Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria. His life and botanical heritage was presented in a plenary lecture by Prof. Vladimir Stevanović (Belgrade) who also opened a special virtual exhibition entitled 'Josif Pančić, The Everlasting Heritage' on the evening of 14 September at the Natural



Dr. Željka Modrić Surina, President of the Organising Committee, opening the Congress (photo V. Vladimirov).

History Museum, Rijeka. Three mid-congress excursions were offered, of which the most popular were the visits to the Croatian Northern Velebit National Park and the island of Krk. The Velebit excursion was a guided walk along part of the Premužić Trail which itself is an impressive 57 km route, designed to provide access to the most rugged parts of the Northern Velebit mountains.

All in all, the Congress was a successful, well-organized one and for this we sincerely thank the dedicated efforts of the various committees. The venue for the 7th Balkan Botanical Congress has not been announced at the time of writing.

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