

ENLARGING THE PLANT MICRORESERVES MODEL ACROSS EUROPE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

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The model of protection of populations for rare, endangered or endemic plants through Plant Microreserves (PMRs) was started by one of the authors (EL) in the Valencian Community (Spain) by 1991, and promoted thanks to the EU's LIFE funds in a couple of LIFE-Nature projects since 1994 till 2003. Information on the model and its experience in Spain and other European countries can be found at the CRETAPLANT project website: http://cretaplant.biol.uoa.gr/cretaplant_en.htm

Nowadays, the Valencian PMR network comprises 258 protected sites as 'Plant Microreserves', a specific legal figure established by the Valencian Government. Its schema has been followed by other European regions, promoting legal designations to protect small-sized sites for plant reservation (i.e. in 2007 in Castilla y Leon, Spain) or enlarging the model of microreserves for all kind of nature kingdoms (in Latvia since 2001; in Spain, since 1999 in Castilla-La Mancha and 2005 in Balearic Islands).

In order to enlarge the development of PMR networks, the European Commission has granted 3 projects in Minorca in 2002-2004, (Balearic Islands, Spain – project LIFE00 NAT/E/007355, 2001-2004), the Karst Edge (Slovenia - LIFE02 NAT/SLO/00858, 2002-2005) and the department of Chania (Crete, Greece - LIFE04 NAT/GR/000104, 2005-2008, named CRETAPLANT), only or mostly focused on the protection of threatened plant populations. In these three cases, the PMR have been designed under the advice or collaboration of the Valencian team, and developing intense actions of local partnership, in order to promote ways for the PMRs legal protection. Up to 28 sites have been proposed in Minorca, 30 in the Karst Edge and 7 in the department of Chania, most of them devoted to the conservation of species and/or priority habitats protected by the Directive of Habitats.

Although the philosophy of PMR networks is ongoing, the authors consider that a larger partnership, under the frame of a big pan-european project is needed.

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