

“Do you know EDIT, CETAF, DEST, EJT, EoL and so on?” Initiatives for the promotion of taxonomy on a European level.

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The Darwin Declaration 1998 referring to the „taxonomic impediment“ started highlighting the global problems of taxonomic research. Calls for help and for improvement of this bad situation from museum and university taxonomists are already commonplace nationally and internationally.

Usually taxonomists are organized in their specific scientific societies, but it needs concerted communication and action on a much broader base to be heard politically. The recent improvement of communication and organization among taxonomists must not hide the fact that operative actions are needed in order to reverse the fatal situation.

The „Global Taxonomy Initiative – GTI“ is an intergovernmental project within the Biodiversity Convention and was ratified in 2002. Thus the problem was outlined and set into an institutional framework. But it did not yet bring a measureable improvement of the situation. New projects were initiated but especially the education of taxonomists at university and non-university level is still decreasing rapidly. This fact is really threatening and still unsolved. The foundation of NOBIS-Austria was an initiative on the national level with the aim of improving communication between Austrian taxonomists, of strengthening group dynamics and of offering a joint approach to the public.

Here some international projects are introduced concerning the wider frame of taxonomy. These might be of interest because project proposals often need a view on a broad scale. Recent projects are for example EDIT (European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy), CETAF (Consortium European Taxonomic Facilities), DEST (Distributed European School of Taxonomy), EJT (European Journal of Taxonomy), EoL (Encyclopedia of Life), etc.

Both national and international approaches will be necessary in the future in order to promote the legal concerns of taxonomists and to find political acceptance.