

## **MINUTES OF THE MOTAX GROUP MEETING 2006**

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The MOTAX group meeting was held on Wednesday 12 April, in Serres, Greece during the 15<sup>th</sup> European SOVE Meeting. The meeting was chaired by Carles Aranda (Chairperson of MOTAX, 2001-2006). Twenty-five people were present at the meeting, representing mosquito taxonomists, molecular biologists, mosquito control personnel and field scientists from thirteen European countries.

### **1. Election of Secretary for the meeting**

Yvonne Linton (MOTAX representative, UK) agreed to take the minutes of the meeting.

### **2. Additions to the Agenda**

No additional agenda items were proposed.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held in Osijek 2004**

All members were in agreement that the minutes circulated following the MOTAX 2004 meeting comprised a true representation of its content.

### **4. Information about the MOTAX Group, Web page**

Carles Aranda informed the group that the MOTAX website continues to be popular, scoring 2,600 hits in March 2006.

A request to help update the information on the webpage was issued. Members were asked to contribute new distribution records to facilitate the update of European taxon records in the online chart of European mosquitoes.

### **5. Changes within tribe Aedini. Discussion and MOTAX common position**

This debate concerned proposed generic changes within the tribe Aedini following the publications of Reinert (2000) and Reinert et al. (2004). Given the scale of the proposed taxonomic changes, and considerable global opposition to these radical changes in the taxonomic stability of the tribe Aedini which contains several species of public health importance, MOTAX members were encouraged to discuss this topic and to propose a common position within the MOTAX group. Prior to the meeting, a technical note dated 28/02/2004, authored by Carles Aranda and Francis Schaffner, was circulated to MOTAX members. This note is available on the news page of the MOTAX website.

In the first paper, Reinert (2000) divided the genus *Aedes* Meigen into two separate genera, *Aedes* and *Ochlerotatus* Lynch Arribalizaga. This change was adopted overall by the scientific community. However in the second paper by Reinert *et al.* (2004), higher-level relationships within the tribe Aedini were explored using morphological characters (eggs, fourth-instar larvae, pupae, and

adult females and males) and the authors proposed to replace the existing 12 genera and 56 subgenera, elevating 34 previously subgeneric taxa to genus level.

Carlas Aranda opened the discussion expressing concern for such radical changes in Aedini taxonomic nomenclature. He pointed out that should the scientific community adopt all these changes, only 15 species in the European Aedini fauna would have a valid generic and subgeneric placement, whereas a further 38 species would be regarded as *Incertae sedis* (uncertain taxonomic position).

Francis Schaffner (MOTAX representative, France) raised the point that these taxonomic changes have a huge impact on nomenclature and lead to radical name changes in commonly known species (even to the non-scientist community) such as the proposed change of *Aedes albopictus* to *Stegomyia albopicta*.

Yvonne Linton, on behalf of Ralph Harbach (co-author of Reinert *et al.*, 2004), reported that another manuscript by the same authors has already been submitted that will further affect the generic and subgeneric classification in the Aedini. She also discussed the fact that these changes met such strong opposition by US mosquito workers that a separate forum was established

Christine Dahl (MOTAX representative, Sweden) cautioned the hasty adoption of the proposed changes in nomenclature due to its affect on taxonomic stability, and expressed particular concern with the acceptance of such a different classification of the tribe Aedini based only on morphological characters.

Frank Rettich (MOTAX representative, Czech Republic) stated that as the proposed classification had been peer-reviewed and published, that we, as taxonomists should accept the changes as valid until proven otherwise. He reminded MOTAX members that indeed Reinert's 2004 paper, raising *Ochlerotatus* to separate generic status, although not popular at first, has since been proven correct using molecular methods, including the paper given at this conference by Gregoris Spanakis at this meeting. He suggested that we should adopt the new nomenclature until another published work serves to disprove it.

Given the follow on paper by Reinert *et al.* with again more proposed changes, Carles Aranda proposed that the MOTAX group adopt the position of many US scientists. This position is to err on the side of caution for the sake of taxonomic stability and allow individual scientists the freedom to utilize either the old or new nomenclature, so long as they always to cite the old/new name alongside its first mention in written works e.g. *Aedes albopictus* (*Stegomyia albopicta* in Reinert *et al.* 2004). This was put to the vote and accepted unanimously.

It was agreed that this position should be reviewed at the next meeting of the MOTAX group.

## **6. Reports of country representatives and MOTAX members**

Due to lack of time at this meeting, members were asked to email Carles Aranda ([caranda@elbaixllobregat.net](mailto:caranda@elbaixllobregat.net)) with updated contributions to the listings of new and ongoing mosquito projects currently being carried out on mosquitoes across Europe.

## **7. Election of new representatives for MOTAX countries**

During the meeting new members were elected:

Nana Voutsina (Greece)  
Jan O. Lundström (Sweden)  
Enrih Merdic (Croatia)  
Cornelia Ceianu (Romania)

## **8. Search and election of members for non-represented regions or countries**

Members were asked to promote MOTAX to colleagues and particularly target countries where our membership is not strong.

## **9. Election of new Chairman of MOTAX for the next period**

Carles Aranda, after serving MOTAX as chair for 6 years, requested to stand down as chairperson. The group were asked to nominate a new chairperson amongst their fellow members. Francis Schaffner was nominated but declined due to other commitments. Yvonne Linton (MOTAX representative, UK) was nominated and accepted the position as chairperson of MOTAX until 2009.

## **10. Any other items of interest**

Yvonne Linton brought the opportunities posed by the EU-SYNTHESYS Integrated Infrastructure Initiative. This five-year programme, which started in February 2004, comprises 20 European Natural History Museums and Botanical Gardens, and aims to create an integrated European infrastructure for researchers in the natural sciences. Researchers of any level can apply and these small grants allow training in museums across Europe (international travel, accommodation and subsistence paid). The deadlines for on-line submissions are Friday 15 September 2006, Friday 16 March 2007, Friday 14 September 2007 & Friday 14 March 2008. For more details and to submit an application, see: <http://www.synthesys.info/>

## **11. Date and venue of next meeting**

The next MOTAX meeting will be held at the EMCA meeting Prague on 2007.

Yvonne Linton  
Meeting secretary  
12/04/06