

For Immediate Release

Positive Impulses from World Conference on Native Orchids Research & Conservation, Samos, Greece

Samos, 28th April 2015 – Orchidologists and other researchers from 30 countries from around the world concluded recently the **International Conference on Temperate Orchids Research & Conservation (TORC'15)** on the Greek island of Samos organized by the non-profit SAILS-FOR-SCIENCE FOUNDATION, Germany and under the auspices of the HELLENIC SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATURE (HSPN), Greece. Prof. Marc-André Selosse, Président de la Société Botanique de France, emphasized during the event that “the congress was not just very well organized, but that is very important to highlight the undervalued importance of the rich nature of an island like Samos”. Dr. Michael F. Fay, Chair of the Orchid Specialist Group of the Species Survival Commission of IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), the world authority in species protection and defining the Red List, as well as Chief Editor of the Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society from Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, London, United Kingdom, explained the importance for the local economy and the conservation of orchids to stimulate eco-tourism opportunities for the Aegean Islands. Prof. Bijaya Pant was traveling for 30 hours by plane from Kathmandu, Nepal just for this event on Samos. One highlight for the international visitors was the field excursions around the island with a very cooperative weather. It would be particular useful to provide for the many tourists interested experiencing the nature in the flowering period which is the pre-season for tourism and usually an idle time for local businesses. The local community urged the organizers to repeat such initiative in the future. The congress was highly appreciated by scientists from Greece, Europe, North- and South America and Asia to exchange latest breakthroughs in plant science understanding. As Prof. Theodora Petanidou from the Aegean University, Mytilene expressed, new unexpected knowledge was gained and new exciting projects conceived. To name few, new collaborations between Greece and Turkey, the UK and Russia and Poland as well Germany are in the making. Prof. Ekrim Sezik, Yeditepe University Istanbul highlighted to immense challenges in the conservation of native orchids in Turkey through the uncontrolled exploitation for making Salep. As wild orchids are disappearing, we are just starting to understand the importance of this group of plants and their key functions in our ecosystems. On the Greek Island of Samos, local entrepreneurs, namely Giakoumis Amyrsonis, first producer of orchids in Greece and Greenhouses of Orchids (Garoufalis), have established the only major horticulture production of orchids in Greece, turning it into a successful export business. The Hellenic Post Office dedicated nationwide a special collectable First Day Letter about this event raising awareness for the protection of these charismatic flowers and their native habitats. Greece has an intriguing orchid flora with more than 220 taxa. Among them the Bee Orchids, are of particular interest, because the country's many islands and mountains make it possible to discover new orchid taxa even today. They are the “Pandas of the plant world”.

The conference is generously supported by the Municipality of Samos; the Regional Government of the North Aegean, the Chamber of Commerce; the 1. Technical Lyceum of Karlovasi; Société botanique de France; the Schwarz Foundation gGmbH, Germany; the New Phytologist Trust, United Kingdom; the Good Cop Bad Cop GmbH, Germany; Avis Samos; Frantzeskos Ouzo Samos, Armirsonis Orchids Samos; Garoufalis Orchids Samos, InkHouse Samos; Factor Sigma Informatics Ltd. and the Samos Hotel. We thank all volunteers for their contributions.

<http://www.samosconferences.com/torc15>

Contact:



Sails For Science Foundation is a German non-profit non-governmental organization thriving to help global island communities whilst maintaining a sustainable balance between nature and society.

Dr. Sven Wagner, Director, Sails For Science Foundation

Tel. +30-69802-59904

Email sailsforscience@gmail.com



**Hellenic Society
for the Protection
of Nature**

Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature (HSPN) / Ελληνική Εταιρία Προστασίας της Φύσης (ΕΕΠΦ) founded in 1951, is the oldest Greek environmental NGO which operates throughout the country for the protection of nature. Since its founding it has been at the forefront of efforts to establish National Parks, to protect habitats and threatened species of fauna and flora, and to modernize and implement environmental legislation.

Dr. Nikos G. Petrou, President

Tel. +30-210-3224944

E-mail info@eepf.gr