



<https://doi.org/10.15407/ukrbotj81.05.374>

Toward the *Madrid Code*: nomenclatural proposals of Ukrainian botanists

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Abstract. The *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants* is the document that regulates the nomenclature of taxa belonging to these groups of organisms, and thus it is crucially important for maintaining stability of scientific names applied to them. Stable, universal, and properly regulated nomenclature is a solid basis of biological taxonomy and all fields of science and other human activities depending on knowledge of living and fossil organisms. The *Code* is governed by the users represented by members of the Nomenclature Section of an International Botanical Congress. The Nomenclature Section has a power to modify the *Code* by voting and taking actions on formal proposals to amend the *Code* that are submitted by the users before the Congress. In this article, information is provided on the nomenclatural proposals by Ukrainian botanists (and one mycologist), or with participation of Ukrainian botanists, submitted to the XX International Botanical Congress (XX IBC) held in Madrid in July 2024. In total, nine Ukrainian scientists from Kyiv (M.G. Kholodny Institute of Botany of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine) and Lviv (Institute of Ecology of the Carpathians of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv) have submitted 29 proposals to amend the *Code*, or 6.7% of the total number of proposals to amend the *Code* submitted to the XX IBC. These proposals were either single authored, or co-authored by Ukrainian authors and/or authors from other countries. Some of the accepted (3), accepted as amended (2), and rejected proposals are considered and briefly discussed. The participation and contribution of Ukrainian scientists in the process of amending the *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants* are emphasized.

Keywords: International Botanical Congress, *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants*, Madrid Congress, proposals on nomenclature, Ukraine

The XX International Botanical Congress (IBC), or the Madrid Congress, which was held in Madrid, Spain from 15 to 27 July 2024, has amended the preceding edition of the *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants*, the *Shenzhen Code*, adopted by the previous Congress, the XIX IBC in Shenzhen, China in 2017

(Turland et al., 2018). Amendments to the *Code* became effective immediately upon acceptance of the Resolution at the closing plenary session of the XX IBC on 27 July 2024 (see Resolution in Turland et al., 2024b). Thus, the *Shenzhen Code* is currently superseded and replaced by the *Madrid Code*. Publication of the final version of the

ARTICLE HISTORY. Submitted 30 September 2024. Revised 24 October 2024. Published 29 October 2024

CITATION. Hayova V.P., Boiko G.V., Mosyakin S.L. 2024. Toward the *Madrid Code*: nomenclatural proposals of Ukrainian botanists. *Ukrainian Botanical Journal*, 81(5): 374–380. <https://doi.org/10.15407/ukrbotj81.05.374>

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Madrid Code is expected in mid-2025 (Turland et al., 2024b).

The *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants* (usually abbreviated as the *ICN*) is the internationally recognized document that regulates the nomenclature of taxa belonging to the mentioned groups of organisms, and thus it is crucially important for maintaining stability of scientific names applied to them. Stable, universal, and properly regulated nomenclature is a solid basis of biological taxonomy and all fields of science and other human activities depending on knowledge of living and fossil organisms (see Ceriaco et al., 2023; Jiménez-Mejías et al., 2024; etc.). The *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants*, as a set of rules and recommendations for scientific naming of these organisms, is governed by the users of the *Code* represented by members of the Nomenclature Section of an IBC (see Division III, Provision 1.1 of the *ICN*: Turland et al., 2018). The Nomenclature Section is empowered to modify the *Code* by discussing, voting and taking actions on formal proposals to amend the *Code* that are submitted by the users before the Congress. Prior to the Madrid Congress, 433 proposals to amend the *Code* have been submitted and officially published in *Taxon*, the official journal of the International Association of Plant Taxonomy — IAPT (Turland, Wiersema, 2024). It is not only more than the number of proposals submitted for the Shenzhen Congress of 2017 (397), but the largest number at any Nomenclature Section since the Stockholm Congress of 1950 (550 proposals) (Turland et al., 2024a, 2024b). Following the Nomenclature Section decisions on the 433 submitted proposals, 134 (31.0%) were accepted and about twice as more, 272 (62.8%) proposals, were rejected; the rest were either referred to the Editorial Committee or Special-purpose Committees, or were withdrawn (Turland et al., 2024b).

Out of the total number of 433 proposals to amend the *Code* submitted to the Madrid Congress, 29 proposals, i.e. 6.7%, have been submitted by the authors and/or co-authors from Ukraine. Of them, ten proposals published in seven articles were single authored (see Mosyakin, 2021a, 2021b, 2022c, 2023a, 2023c; Nachychko, 2021; Olshanskyi, 2023), three were co-authored only by the authors from Ukraine (Hayova et al., 2023; Mosyakin et al., 2023a; Mosyakin, Tsymbalyuk, 2023); and the rest (16 proposals in 6 articles) represented results of international co-authorship (see Earp, Mosyakin, 2023;

Landrum et al., 2021a, 2021b; Mosyakin, McNeill, 2022, 2023a, 2023b; Mosyakin et al., 2023b).

Altogether, nine Ukrainian scientists were the authors or co-authors of these proposals. They represent the M.G. Kholodny Institute of Botany of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv (seven researchers: Ganna Boiko, Mykola Fedoronchuk, Vera Hayova, Sergei Mosyakin, Ihor Olshanskyi, Natalia Shiyani, and Zoya Tsymbalyuk), the Institute of Ecology of the Carpathians of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Lviv (Iryna Bednarska), and the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (Viktor Nachychko).

By far the largest number of proposals (25) was submitted by Sergei Mosyakin (Kyiv) as an author or co-author; three single authored proposals (published in one article) were by Victor Nachychko (Lviv); all other mentioned researchers are authors or co-authors of a single proposal each.

As for the sequence of the parts of the *Code*, the proposals by Ukrainian scientists were submitted to: Preamble, Articles (including Recommendations under Articles) 7, 8, 9, 23, 38, 40, 41, 51, 60, H.11, Division III.

All authors of the proposals from Ukraine participated in the preliminary guiding vote (“mail vote”) to amend the *Code* by sending an electronic copy of the filled out ballot by email to the International Association for Plant Taxonomy (IAPT) office. As the purpose of the preliminary guiding vote was to advise the Nomenclature Section of the level of support for proposals to amend the *Code* (see Division III, Provision 2.6 of the *ICN*), the ballots had to be sent prior to the sessions of the Nomenclature Section of the Madrid Congress, by 31 May 2024 (Turland et al., 2024a). Thus, out of total 201 completed ballots received by the IAPT office, 100 ballots were returned by authors of proposals to amend the *Code* (Turland et al., 2024a); of these, nine ballots were sent by Ukrainian authors of the proposals.

Nicholas J. Turland (Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum Berlin, Freie Universität Berlin) was designated to exercise five institutional votes (see Division III, Provision 3 of the *ICN*) of the M.G. Kholodny Institute of Botany of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (KW, National Herbarium of Ukraine) at the Nomenclature Section of the XX International Botanical Congress in Madrid. Unfortunately, because of many wartime obstacles, no registered participants from Ukraine were present at the Nomenclature Section.

Of the Ukrainian submissions, three proposals were accepted exactly as they were proposed. One of them, Recommendation 51A.1(new), is an additional, completely new Recommendation in the *Code*:

“51A.1. When publishing names of new taxa or replacement names, authors are strongly encouraged to avoid such names as may be viewed or treated as inappropriate, disagreeable, offensive, or unacceptable by any national, ethnic, cultural, or other groups of actual or potential users.” (Mosyakin, 2021a).

This proposal has been made in response to the recent discussions and concerns regarding supposedly offensive, derogatory, or inappropriate names of some taxa, and the means of replacing or rejecting these names (see Smith, Figueiredo, 2022; Mosyakin, 2022a, 2022b, 2023d, 2024; Thiele et al., 2022; Antonelli et al., 2023; Ceriaco et al., 2023; Pethiyagoda, 2023; Jiménez-Mejías et al., 2024, etc.) and relevant alternative proposals to amend the *Code* (e.g., Hammer, Thiele, 2021; Smith, Figueiredo, 2021). Thus, now the creation of “inappropriate, disagreeable, offensive, or unacceptable” scientific names of organisms is officially strongly discouraged, and responsible researchers should follow this new Recommendation.

Two other exactly accepted proposals from Ukraine provide more precise wording for Art. 9.23 and Art. 40.6, including Example 7 (Nachychko, 2021).

Two proposals by the Ukrainian authors and co-authors were accepted as amended. The first is an addition to Recommendation 7A.1:

“... Authors publishing names of new species or infraspecific taxa are encouraged to deposit some type material in one or more herbaria, collections, or other specialized institutions in the country or countries of origin of the newly described taxon.” (Mosyakin, 2021a).

This Recommendation was accepted with only a parenthetic phrase deleted specifying the type material, namely “(holotype, isotypes, and/or paratypes)”.

The second proposal accepted as amended is a new Provision 4 (converted to a new Recommendation when accepted) to Division III about virtual or online participation in the Nomenclature Section of an International Botanical Congress, requiring the Nomenclature Section to be live-streamed so that it

can be at least observed on the Internet, which was submitted by the Special-purpose Committee on Virtual Participation in the Nomenclature Section (Landrum et al., 2021a, 2021b).

One more of the proposals by the Special-purpose Committee on Virtual Participation in the Nomenclature Section aimed at amending Division III, the one assuming that online registered members of the Nomenclature Section would accumulate institutional votes (Landrum et al., 2021a), was withdrawn (Turland et al., 2024b). The rest of the proposals by Ukrainian authors, or co-authored by Ukrainian authors, were rejected, either automatically (as the proposal 163 to amend Art. 8 that depended on acceptance of proposal 164 to amend Art. 38, which was also rejected: Mosyakin, McNeill, 2022; see also comments in Turland et al., 2024: 13: “Art. 8 Prop. J depended on acceptance of Art. 38 Prop. A, which was rejected”), or rejected by mail vote (as the proposal 133 that received 75% or more “no” votes in the mail vote: Landrum et al., 2021a). In particular, most of the proposals by the Special-purpose Committee on Virtual Participation in the Nomenclature Section were rejected (Landrum et al., 2021a), probably because they were considered premature or non-implementable at the present stage.

Other proposals were rejected due to the decisions of the Nomenclature Section or the Editorial Committee (for functions of this Committee, see Division III, Provisions 7.4 and 7.11 of the *ICN*). In particular, that Committee “is empowered to make any editorial modification not affecting the meaning of the provisions concerned, e.g. to change the wording of any Article, Note, or Recommendation and to avoid duplication, to add or remove non-voted Examples, and to place Articles, Notes, Recommendations, and Chapters of the *Code* in the most convenient place, while retaining the previous numbering insofar as possible” (Division III, Provision 7.11 of the *ICN*). Consequently, some proposals by Ukrainian authors were automatically referred to the Editorial Committee: see, e.g., proposals by Mosyakin and McNeill (2022) and comments in Turland and Wiersema (2024: 336).

We should take into consideration that quite often proposals for minor changes in the *Code* have the highest chances to be accepted at the Nomenclature Section because such proposals provoke less discussion and are often considered useful additions and clarifications of the existing rules

and recommendations. At the same time, proposals aimed at introducing some considerable, often dramatic and controversial, changes are less commonly supported. For example, one of us proposed to add to the Preamble of the *Code* two important and large-scale additions, one for adding a “Potentially sensitive content disclaimer and limitation of liability” (Mosyakin, 2023a) and another for adding a “Non-Discrimination Statement” (Mosyakin, 2023c). As the Rapporteur-général and Vice-rapporteur commented, these proposals, “although not changing the rules themselves, would add a dimension to the *Code* that is not currently present, which users may or may not feel is needed” (Turland, Wiersema, 2024: 327). As it has been mentioned in the original proposals, such disclaimers and non-discrimination statements are becoming increasingly common in many international and national documents, so the author hoped for their warm acceptance by both supporters of dramatic “ethics-based” or “politically motivated” changes (see interesting discussions and arguments in Hammer, Thiele, 2021; Smith, Figueiredo, 2021, 2022; Thiele et al., 2022; Wright, Gillman, 2022, etc.) and proponents of stability, neutrality, and traditions in biological nomenclature (like the authors and signatories of the article by Jiménez-Mejías et al., 2024; see also Ceriaco et al., 2022; Mosyakin, 2022a, 2022b; Antonelli et al., 2023; Pethiyagoda, 2023). However, it should not be assumed that those people who voted against the “Non-Discrimination Statement” in fact favored discrimination; most probably many of them just preferred to avoid any kind of “politicization” of the *Code*. However, probably now some degree of that “politicization” is for us to stay, as we may judge from the acceptance of at least some proposals (e.g., Smith, Figueiredo, 2021, accepted by a card vote; Hammer, Thiele, 2021, proposals 119 and 122 rejected, 120 and 121 accepted as amended; see Turland et al., 2024b).

Furthermore, some apparently non-controversial proposals have not been accepted either. This applies, in particular, to our proposal (Hayova et al., 2023) made in response to the recent discussions concerning the use of vernacular (especially indigenous) names in taxonomy and, specifically, to the informal proposals about restoration of indigenous names in scientific nomenclature (see, e.g., Wright, Gillman, 2022, and references therein), criticized in several publications (see, e.g., Palma, Heath, 2021; McGlone et al., 2022; Mosyakin, 2023b, 2024;

Pethiyagoda, 2023, etc.). Our proposal was aimed at encouraging taxonomists “to use the local or indigenous vernacular names in forming the scientific names of new taxa” (Hayova et al., 2023), instead of any rejection or retroactive replacement of existing valid and legitimate names, especially those considered seemingly “inappropriate” or “disagreeable”, with the “indigenous” ones. However, quite unexpectedly (at least for us), it was also rejected, as stated in the Report of Congress actions (Turland et al., 2024b). Probably (we can only guess) the exceedingly radical, controversial, and rather aggressively promoted informal proposals by Wright and Gillman (2022, and their earlier publications) in fact prevented the positive response to a modest proposal (in a non-binding Recommendation!) for a wider use of indigenous and other vernacular names in the nomenclature of new taxa. In any case, we find comfort in the thought that neither acceptance nor non-acceptance of our proposal (Hayova et al., 2023) changes the currently applied rules of botanical and mycological nomenclature, and authors of scientific names are free to use, or not to use, indigenous and/or any other vernacular names in biological nomenclature, when proposing names for new taxa.

In our opinion, this experience of participation of Ukrainian botanists (and one mycologist) in the process of amending the *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants* was highly positive. We think that even the proposals that have been rejected were in fact useful because they stimulated in-depth discussions regarding the best ways of maintaining the stability, reliability, and universality of the rules of botanical and mycological nomenclature, and biological nomenclature in general (see Jiménez-Mejías et al., 2024; Ceriaco et al., 2023, and references therein).

Definitely, the new *Madrid Code* will be a big step forward in improving the scientific nomenclature of algae, fungi, and plants, and we are waiting impatiently for the final published version. However, despite all tremendous efforts of the international community of plant taxonomists and their representatives at the Nomenclature Section in Madrid, the new *Code* will still contain some imperfect provisions and unresolved problems, such as, for example, the problem of inappropriate epitypifications (see Mosyakin, McNeill, 2023b, and references therein). But the very existence and persistence of such problems, and especially successful attempts to solve them, indicate that our *Code* is a living

document, which is constantly improved through discussions, solid argumentation, careful considerations, and finally the concerted efforts of many taxonomists and other stakeholders all over the world. We are glad that, despite the war and many other obstacles, the voices of Ukrainian taxonomists were heard and considered in this process, and some of our proposals will now be included in the *Madrid Code*.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to all authors and co-authors of the mentioned proposals. Special thanks are due to our experienced colleagues, with whom we discussed many important and complicated issues of biological nomenclature (listed alphabetically): John McNeill (Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom; and Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada), Nicholas J. Turland (Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum Berlin, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany), and John H. Wiersema (Department of Botany, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.). Leslie R. Landrum (Natural History Collections, School of Life Sciences, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, U.S.A.) skillfully steered the Special-purpose Committee on Virtual Participation in the Nomenclature Section through the complicated process of preparing the report and nine proposals,

and his efforts are greatly appreciated. Finally, one of the authors (Sergei Mosyakin) would like to express his sincere gratitude to several colleagues whose proposals and discussion articles, despite considerable differences in our views and attitudes, stimulated some of his proposals and articles: Timothy A. Hammer (The University of Adelaide, School of Biological Sciences, Adelaide; and State Herbarium of South Australia, Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia), Estrela Figueiredo and Gideon F. Smith (Ria Olivier Herbarium, Department of Botany, Nelson Mandela University, Gqeberha, South Africa), and Kevin R. Thiele (The University of Western Australia, School of Biological Sciences, Crawley, Western Australia, Australia). And, last but not least, we are greatly indebted to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, whose self-sacrificial bravery in defending our native land allowed us to continue uninterruptedly our research and to keep scientific traditions of our taxonomic botany and mycology.

ETHICS DECLARATION

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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**На шляху до Мадридського кодексу:
номенклатурні пропозиції українських ботаніків**

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Реферат. Міжнародний кодекс номенклатури водоростей, грибів і рослин є документом, який регулює номенклатуру таксонів, що належать до цих груп організмів, і саме тому він має вирішальне значення для підтримки стабільності наукових назв, що застосовуються до них. Стабільна, універсальна та належним чином регульована номенклатура є надійною основою біологічної систематики та всіх галузей науки та інших видів людської діяльності, що залежать від знань про живі та викопні організми. Кодекс регулюється та вдосконалюється користувачами, представленими членами Номенклатурної секції на Міжнародному ботанічному конгресі. Номенклатурна секція має повноваження вносити зміни до Кодексу шляхом голосування та вжиття заходів щодо офіційних пропозицій про внесення змін до Кодексу, поданих користувачами до Конгресу. У цій статті ми подаємо інформацію про номенклатурні пропозиції українських ботаніків (і одного міколога), або зроблені за участю українських ботаніків. Загалом офіційні пропозиції подали дев'ять українських науковців з Києва (Інститут ботаніки ім. М.Г. Холодного НАН України) та Львова (Інститут екології Карпат НАН України, Львівський національний університет імені Івана Франка). 29 пропозицій про внесення змін до Кодексу, або ж 6,7% від загальної кількості пропозицій щодо внесення змін до Кодексу, було подано на XX Міжнародний ботанічний конгрес (Мадрид, липень 2024 р.) за участі українських дослідників; серед них були як одноосібні, так і підготовлені у співавторстві українських авторів та/або авторів з інших країн. Розглянуто та стисло обговорено деякі прийняті (3), прийняті з поправками (2) та відхилені пропозиції. Підкреслено участь та внесок українських науковців у процес внесення змін до Міжнародного кодексу номенклатури водоростей, грибів і рослин.

Ключові слова: Мадридський конгрес, Міжнародний ботанічний конгрес, Міжнародний кодекс номенклатури водоростей, грибів і рослин, пропозиції щодо номенклатури, Україна