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Dissertation Council Д 212.243.13
Saratov University
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Re: Expert Statement on ***T.M. Lysenko: Vegetation of saline soils of the forest-steppe and steppe zones of the Volga Region: Diversity, Distribution, Ecology and Protection*** submitted as the thesis for the degree of Doctor of Biological Sciences, at the Saratov University, Russian Federation

Sirs,

I take the liberty to offer my expert opinion about the submission of a thesis by of Tatiana Lysenko to the goal of achieving the scientific degree of Doctor of Science. I base this opinion on two documents – the thesis itself as well as the short self-report ('autoreferat'), both in Russian. Here I declare that despite Russian is not my mother tongue, I am able to understand in full as well as to communicate actively in Russian language. Further, my task was made easier by my profound knowledge of the Dr Lysenko's published work.

I know the author in person and had the pleasure to work for a prolonged period of time sorting out the syntaxonomy of the saline vegetation at the pan-European scale (for the project EuroVegChecklist). Results of this work have been submitted to print in Applied Vegetation Science and we wait for early acceptance of this mega-manuscript entailing more than 400 pages. Dr Lysenko has collaborated in shaping the following classes: *Thero-Salicornietea*, *Festuco-Puccinellietea*, *Kalidietea foliati*, *Artemisietea lerschianae* and also (to a lesser extent) *Festuco-Brometea* and *Nerio-Tamaricetea*. Her contribution was highly valued and proved to me that she is open to new ideas and methodologies. She has also mastered many aspects of the handling of the Code of Phytosociological Nomenclature. We have also co-authored several other papers and abstracts.

As stated by the author, the aim of this thesis was - to develop a syntaxonomic system of saline vegetation of the forest-steppe and steppe zones of the Volga region in order to construct the basis of knowledge of the diversity of vegetation, environmental monitoring and optimize the protection of this vegetation in the studied region. I am confident that the author has achieved the goal of her thesis. She also contributed by expanding the knowledge of the syntaxonomy by description of several new syntaxa and corrected nomenclature of many others.

This thesis is a witness to the high level of expertise of Dr Lysenko in the field of modern descriptive vegetation science, and the classification of saline vegetation in particular.

Dr Lysenko has expensively published here results and contributed to the knowledge of the saline vegetation in Eastern Europe. She became indeed one of the most respectable personalities in the field.

Although the Doctor of Science is technically scientific title (not degree) in Australia, I am well aware of similar degree structures as used in former Czechoslovakia (my country of birth) and currently in Slovakia. According to the criteria of the Doctor of Science known to me from countries having comparable criteria, I can witness that the work of Dr Lysenko meets these criteria and that she should be awarded this high, prestigious scientific degree.

With my best wishes to Dr Lysenko on occasion of her upcoming public defense I with respectful regards to the Dissertation Council, I remain

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ladislav Mucina".

W/Prof Ladislav Mucina