

(349) Proposal to amend the Preamble by adding a “Non-Discrimination Statement”

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Authors of several recent discussion articles, and even of some formal proposals to amend the *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants* (“Code”: Turland & al. in *Regnum Veg.* 159. 2018), favoured and advocated various changes in biological nomenclature, in particular: rejection or replacement of scientific names of organisms considered by some to be “culturally offensive and inappropriate” (Hammer & Thiele in *Taxon* 70: 1392–1394. 2021; Smith & al. in *Taxon* 71: 933–935. 2022; Thiele & al. in *Taxon* 71: 1151–1154. 2022; Roksandic & al. in *Nat. Ecol. Evol.* 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-023-02104-x>); rejection or replacement of names reflecting the “symbols of colonial and imperialist power” (Smith & al., l.c.: 934; see also Smith & Figueiredo in *Taxon* 70: 1395–1396. 2021; in *Taxon* 71: 1–5. 2022) or part of the “epistemic empire, which is bound to be biased against non-Western knowledge systems” (Mabele & al. in *Nat. Ecol. Evol.* 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-023-02105-w>); cancellation of *all* eponyms (Guedes & al. in *Nat. Ecol. Evol.* 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-023-02022-y>) or only *some* eponyms (Thiele in *Nat. Ecol. Evol.* 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-023-02106-9>); and replacement of current scientific names with “indigenous” ones (Gillman & Wright in *Commun. Biol.* 3: art. 609. 2020; Wright & Gillman in *Taxon* 71: 6–10. 2022). In many cases these authors linked their proposals, claims and demands to some political, social, cultural or ethical arguments and agendas, including decolonization, diversity, equity and representation. These proposals were discussed in several other publications (Palma & Heath in *Bionomina* 22: 32–38. 2021; Mosyakin in *Taxon* 71: 249–255. 2022; in *Taxon* 71: 1141–1150. 2022; Ceriaco & al. in *Zool. J. Linn. Soc.* 197: 283–286. 2023; Pethiyagoda in *Megatata* 10: 20–25. 2023; Antonelli & al. in *Nat. Ecol. Evol.* 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-023-02108-7>, and references therein).

I think that we should resist the attempts to “overhaul” (see, e.g., Mabele & al., l.c.) our *Code* (as well as other nomenclatural *Codes*) and its fundamental principles and traditions, especially when such attempts are based not on scientific or at least pragmatic but on politically motivated and often discriminatory reasoning.

In particular, I have already presented arguments (Mosyakin in *Taxon* 72: 469–482. 2023) supporting an opinion that at least some proposals, despite being seemingly aimed at better representation of some groups of people and their cultural values (e.g. indigenous peoples; see Gillman & Wright, l.c.; Wright & Gillman, l.c. 2022), will, if accepted, in fact introduce in nomenclature the system of discrimination based on national, racial or ethnocultural identities of other groups of people and/or their representatives, despite the contrary apologetic arguments (Wright & Gillman in *Taxon* 72: 483–485. 2023), which I consider unconvincing.

However, the global community of taxonomists of plants and fungi, and all users of the names governed by this *Code*, should be aware that the *Code* contains no provisions that discriminate against authors and users of scientific names because of their race, colour, ethnicity, national origin, disability, age, sex and sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, social status, cultural identity and political beliefs. It should also be clearly stated that the authors and editors of this *Code* respect and ensure the equal rights of all authors and users of scientific names, and also demonstrate their intolerance to any forms of unlawful discrimination.

Consequently, I think that it will be useful to add to the Preamble a “Non-Discrimination Statement”, in addition to the already proposed “Potentially sensitive content disclaimer and limitation of liability” (Mosyakin in *Taxon* 72: 442–443. 2023). These additions will reflect the fundamental democratic and humanistic principles respected, followed and observed by the authors and editors of this *Code* and recommended to all users of scientific names governed by the *Code*.

Non-discrimination provisions are present in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>, all online resources accessed 28 Jun 2023), other international documents, constitutions and laws of many countries. Non-discrimination statements are now commonly adopted and displayed by numerous governmental agencies, public and other companies, universities, organizations, associations and other institutions; they are also present in many publications and online resources (e.g. EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Art. 21. Non-discrimination: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/eu-charter/article/21-non-discrimination>; U.S. Department of Agriculture: <https://www.usda.gov/non-discrimination-statement>; Botanic Gardens Conservation International [BGCI]: <https://www.bgci.org/legal-and-policies/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-policy/>; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew: <https://www.kew.org/about-us/equality-diversity-inclusion>; Field Museum [Chicago]: <https://www.fieldmuseum.org/about/non-discrimination-statement>).

Therefore, the following amendment is proposed.

(349) Amend the Preamble by adding after Pre. 14 the following text:

“Non-Discrimination Statement

Authors and editors of this *Code* recognize the importance of principles of human rights, equal rights and opportunities, diversity, inclusivity, and representation, especially with regard to authors and users of scientific names governed by this *Code*.

Authors and users of scientific names governed by this *Code* shall not be discriminated against on the basis of their race, colour, ethnicity, national origin, disability, age, sex and sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, social status, cultural identity, and/or

political beliefs, and shall have equal rights under this *Code*, including the rights to propose amendments to this *Code*.

Preferential or discriminatory treatment, rejection or censoring of names governed by this *Code* because of the aforementioned characteristics of their authors, or because of actual or assumed association of such names with any cultural, religious, political, social, ethnic, national, or racial concepts, beliefs, or ideologies, is not allowed, except for the cases explicitly regulated by this *Code* (e.g. the preferential status of the Latin alphabet and the Latin and English languages in nomenclature)."

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(350–351) Proposal on a new taxonomic rank, supergenus

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The secondary ranks of taxa are specified in Art. 4.1 of the *Shenzhen Code* (Turland & al. in Regnum Veg. 159. 2018), and Art. 4.2 states: "If a greater number of ranks of taxa is desired, the terms for these are made by adding the prefix "sub-" to the terms denoting the principal or secondary ranks." These ranks have their own endings in names above the rank of genus, which makes it easy to recognize which taxonomic rank we are dealing with (e.g. Art. 19.1 and 19.3). In addition, Art. 4.3 states that "Further ranks may also be intercalated or added, provided that confusion or error is not thereby introduced."

In taxonomic revisions, in the case of division of a genus into smaller genera, which need to be given new generic names, it may be desirable to combine them all into a higher-ranked unit, but preferably one that would keep the generic name unchanged in relation to one previously well-known generic name. Therefore, we propose the taxonomic rank of "supergen" as a new rank between subtribus and genus. This rank has not yet been recognized in the *Code*. We also propose that a supergen should bear the previous generic name unchanged, so that it can be undoubtedly determined for which genus a given supergen is a superior rank. For example, if we decided to

raise the generic name *Juncus* to the rank of tribe or subtribe, then it would have to change the ending and be called *Junceae* or *Juncinae*, respectively (instead of *Juncus*). To keep the previous generic name unchanged, the new supergen rank with new naming rules for this rank is in our opinion the best solution to maintain nomenclatural stability, which could not be achieved so easily if the ending of the name were changed (e.g. Brožová & al. in Molec. Phylogen. Evol. 177: 107588. 2022). This is important especially in the context of new subsequent taxonomic revisions, where existing genera are divided into smaller ones, with new names that could mean "nothing" to anyone.

(350) Add a new Article after Art. 4.3:

"4.3bis. A rank of a taxon between subtribe (subtribus) and genus is supergenus."

(351) Add a new Article after Art. 19.3:

"19.3bis. The name of a supergen is identical to the generic name from which the supergen name is derived."