

SIDE EVENT

***Zelkova abelicea* project – final project workshop: Guidelines and Recommendations for the Long-term Conservation of *Z. abelicea* in Crete**

Within the framework of the International Zelkova project (www.zelkova.ch), in partnership with the University of Fribourg – Switzerland and with funds from the Fondation Franklinia (<https://fondationfranklinia.org/>); the CIHEAM-MAICh in collaboration with the four Forest Directorates of Crete (Chania, Rethymno Herakion and Lassithi) and the University of Fribourg initiated in 2014 a project entitled: ‘Conservation of *Z. abelicea* in Crete’ (<https://abelitsia.gr/en/>).

The overall objective of the project was to enable, enhance and promote the long-term conservation of the endangered Cretan tree *Z. abelicea* by coupling *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation actions with communication and outreach activities, while at the same time gathering valuable scientific information about the ecology, the biology and the risk level of the species. The project represents the first attempt to develop a common approach and methodology for the conservation of *Z. abelicea* in Crete, where a high level of endemism is associated with a remarkable degree of environmental and human influences.

The guidelines and recommendations are based on the results of 8 years of monitoring and various scientific studies aiming at improving the knowledge for the most effective protection of *Z. abelicea* in Crete. Those guidelines and recommendations can be used as support for the long-term conservation of the species and are addressed to National Authorities, decision makers, nature conservationists or anyone else interested in the conservation of *Z. abelicea*.

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