



28 April 2022

First Update ISPP Resilience Bursary for Plant Pathologists

This Progress Bulletin for the global plant pathology community provides background on the establishment of the ISPP Resilience Bursary for Plant Pathologists, an update on the partnership between the ISPP and the Polish Phytopathological Society, and the status of support provided to Ukrainian plant pathologists and scientists in aligned disciplines who have arrived or will soon arrive in Poland. The ISPP and the plant pathology communities of Poland and Ukraine are deeply appreciative of the donors and donations received and offered.

Future needs and opportunities are also discussed.

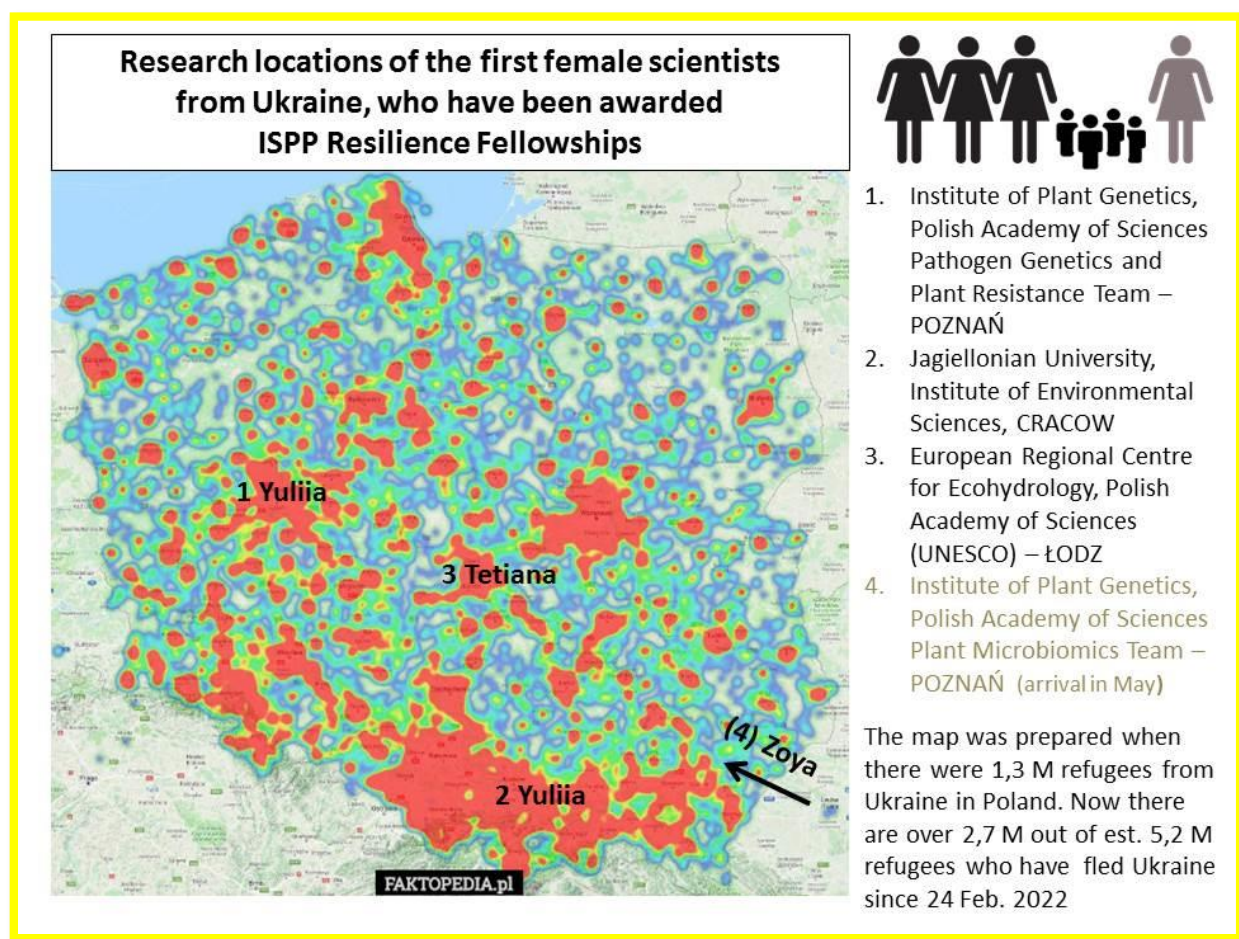


Figure 1. The location of the current and planned recipients of ISPP Resilience Bursaries in Poland. The colour shading shows location and of refugees arriving since February 24 2022, with red showing the highest density of arrivals (cities) and blue the lowest density (extending to almost every village). Numbers are lowest near the Eastern border (except border crossings).

Background

National and regional conflicts around the world have displaced many plant pathologists in the past and present, creating financial hardships and threatening lives and livelihoods. During March 2022, the International Society for Plant Pathology established a “Resilience Bursary for Plant Pathologists”. The purpose of the fund is to support emergency/refugee situations, specifically providing support for plant pathologists.

The current urgent need is support for the plant pathologists from Ukraine, some of whom are reaching Poland as refugees (Figure 1). ISPP is providing support for fellow plant pathologist refugees and the vital work that they have been doing to reduce plant disease losses and assure food and fiber security in the region.

ISPP Resilience Fund

The idea of ISPP Resilience Bursary emerged during dialog with the Polish Phytopathological Society (PPS) President and ISPP Councillor, who indicated that colleagues were arriving or expected in Poland along with their children with Polish collaborating institutions arranging accommodation and living support for c. \$1,000 per month. This provided a platform for the ISPP to deliver support and the Resilience Bursary Fund was established to collect and distribute support.

The ISPP has allocated \$6,000 from its reserves with an additional \$10,000+ already received or committed by ISPP associated societies and individuals. In the current partnership with the PPS, each \$1,000 of funding provides one month support for an individual plant pathologist. Fund collection, disbursement and acquittal processes are being overseen by the ISPP Treasurer with the ISPP executive approving the initial and any subsequent disbursements.

Polish Phytopathological Society - Role and Reporting

The Polish Phytopathological Society (PPS) / Polskie Towarzystwo Fitopatologiczne was established in 1971. Membership of the PPS is about 300 plant pathologists and specialists on plant protection. It has eight branches distributed across Poland. One of the aims of PPS activity is to keep and upgrade cooperation with national and foreign plant pathologists. Based on this rule, the Presidium and the Board of PPS have created a new Commission for Cooperation, with the PPS President, two deputy presidents, secretary and the treasurer constituting this body to assist in delivery. The PPS amended their regulations and developed mechanisms for allocating and monitoring support. The individual scientist application and reporting procedures are being developed bearing in mind that refugee arrivals have faced trauma and loss already, with uncertainty about their spouses and other family in Ukraine.

According to the regulations of PPS, the Commission chooses successful candidates. Potential recipients apply in writing and indicate their willingness to accept the funding, and either provide proof they are plant pathologists, or indicate they want to increase their knowledge and skills in plant pathology (this also helps PPS find the relevant lab). The application is simple and the PPS asks for available documentation, but this proof is not compulsory. The PPS checks research profiles (Research Gate, LinkedIn etc.). The decisions made by the Commission are in the form of resolutions. Each scientist reports regularly to their supervisor with collaboration tailored to experience, and current research projects at the host institution and or the scientist's home institution. The PPS is providing ISPP with details of the scientists' activities, their Polish supervisors and host institutes and projects.

Progress: The initial ISPP funds have been transferred to the PPS who have chosen three candidates (Figure 2.), with a fourth one on her way to Poznan:

- (1) Yuliia hosted at Institute of Plant Genetics, Polish Academy of Sciences Pathogen Genetics and Plant Resistance Team – POZNAŃ
- (2) Yuliia hosted at Jagiellonian University, Institute of Environmental Sciences –CRACOW
- (3) Tetiana hosted at European Regional Centre for Ecohydrology, Polish Academy of Sciences (UNESCO) – ŁODZ
- (4) Zoya hosted at Institute of Plant Genetics, Polish Academy of Sciences Plant Microbiomics Team – POZNAŃ (arrival in May)



Figure 2. Ukraine scientists now in Poland. Above - Yuliia in Poznań; Below - Left, Yuliia in Cracow; Right, Tetiana in Lodz.

The women scientists all arrived with children and the first step was to find nurseries or kindergartens for their care. Some kindergartens were able to offer a Ukrainian teacher, so the children would not have to struggle with a foreign language. The three listed above (1-3) have signed contracts between themselves, the research organisation and the institute. Each candidate has her own dramatic story. With the ISPP Bursary they also feel financially secure and they are thankful to ISPP and PPS for this great joint initiative led by ISPP.

In future updates and social media posts we will discuss the activities of each scientist and their hosts in more detail.

Ukraine Plant Pathology

In establishing the Resilience Bursary, the ISPP executive has also established contact with the Ukraine plant pathology community through a colleague, Alex, who remains in Kyiv with his family. Alex is providing information on the major plant disease problems in Ukraine and initiating the reestablishment of a Ukrainian Phytopathology Society to connect more than 200 plant pathologists working there.

The ISPP also aims to collate information on current and past collaborative projects with Ukrainian plant pathologists (or graduate students in plant pathology) to identify additional opportunities for support or linkages. This information will be kept confidential for privacy protection. Submit comments to: resilience@isppweb.org.

As refugees move across Europe and around the world other opportunities and needs to support plant pathologists may arise. The ISPP will consider additional partnerships with more Plant Pathology Societies for other refugee emergencies as needs arise.

Support the Bursary Fund

The ISPP and the plant pathology communities of Poland and Ukraine are deeply appreciative of the donors and donations received and offered.

This year on 12 May, the global plant health community will celebrate the inaugural International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) as agreed by The United Nations General Assembly as a legacy of the International Year of Plant Health 2020 to continue efforts to increase public awareness of plant health, and foster the implementation of International and Regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures to protect plant resources and facilitate safe trade. Perhaps as individuals and societies we could combine a celebration of the International Day of Plant Health with fundraising for the ISPP Resilience Bursary.

If you have any suggestions, questions, or information that you would like to share about colleagues that may need help, please email us at: resilience@isppweb.org.

Credit card payment link for additional donations to the Fundraising Campaign for the ISPP Resilience Bursary is here:

Funds can also be provided as a check or bank wire to ISPP. Please communicate with resilience@isppweb.org to get specific information. The donation will be considered a gift to this program and is tax deductible in the U.S.



Please share this update with those you think might be interested in supporting and contributing. ISPP is also seeking support from institutional partners.

Jan Leach, President, ISPP
Greg Johnson, Immediate Past President, ISPP
Mathews Paret, Treasurer, ISPP

Małgorzata Mańka, President, Polish
Phytopathological Society & ISPP Councillor
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