

## Key to the paper and social wasps of Central Europe (Hymenoptera: Vespidae)

### Klíč k určování vosků a vos střední Evropy (Hymenoptera: Vespidae)

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**Abstract.** A determination key to the Central European paper wasps (Polistinae – *Polistes* Latreille, 1802 – eight species) and social wasps (Vespinae – 11 species: *Vespa* Linnaeus, 1758 – one species, *Vespula* Thomson, 1869 – four species, *Dolichovespula* Rohwer, 1916 – six species) is given. Distribution and biotope requirements of all species in the Czech Republic and Slovakia are briefly mentioned. All social wasps occur more or less regularly in both countries. Four paper wasps are relatively common but four other species (*Polistes atrimandibularis* Zimmermann, 1930, *P. sulcifer* Zimmermann, 1930, *P. associus* Kohl, 1898, and *P. gallicus* (Linnaeus, 1767)) are very rare with the Czech Republic and/or Slovakia at the northern edge of their range.

**Key words.** Determination, Europe, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hymenoptera, Vespidae, *Vespa*, *Vespula*, *Dolichovespula*, *Polistes*

### Introduction

According to present knowledge, social and paper wasps form two subfamilies (Vespinae, Polistinae) of Hymenoptera: Aculeata: Vespidae. Mason wasps (Eumeninae) and pollen wasps (Masarinae), ranked as different families in the past, are now considered as subfamilies within the Vespidae as well (e.g. CARPENTER 1982). The last (and the only) usable key to the paper and social wasps of the Czech Republic (BOUČEK & ŠUSTERA 1956) is 50 years old. Regional, European, Palaearctic and world keys to the social and paper wasps have been published in recent decades (e.g., GUIGLIA 1972, ECK 1984, ARCHER 1989, STARR & LUCHETTI 1993, MAUSS & TREIBER 1994, PEKKARINEN 1995), but they have some limitations for Central European