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Early Miocene evolution of the rodent *Megacricetodon* in Europe and its palaeobiogeographical implications

Adriana Oliver and Pablo Peláez-Campomanes
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The *Megacricetodon* material from Aliveri (Isle of Evia, Greece) was previously assigned to *M. primitivus*, implying palaeobiogeographical relationship between south-eastern and south-western Europe. The material from Aliveri is here assigned to the new species *Megacricetodon hellenicus* sp. nov. This form has significant morphological differences compared to other Early Miocene species from Europe. This new evolutionary hypothesis of this genus has implications on the Early Miocene paleobiogeography of Europe. This work presents a new interpretation on the earliest European representative of the genus *Megacricetodon* from Aliveri localities. Analyses of the *Megacricetodon* material from MN 4 and MN 5 localities enable to propose a new palaeobiogeographical framework in which there are three main migration events of the genus *Megacricetodon* into Europe, each corresponding to different lineages that evolved independently. The new Greek taxon is considered the first migration wave from Anatolia, representing an endemic lineage different from any other European *Megacricetodon*.

Key words: Mammalia, Rodentia, Cricetodontidae, migrations, endemism, Miocene, Greece.

Adriana Oliver [mcnao831@mncn.csic.es] and Pablo Peláez-Campomanes [mcnp177@mncn.csic.es] (corresponding author), Department of Paleobiology, Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales, MNCN-CSIC, C/ José Gutiérrez Abascal, 2. 28006, Madrid, Spain.

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