

# **Strong genetic structure among populations of the tick Ixodes ricinus across its range**

Pedro Poli, Jonathan Roger Michel Henri Lenoir, Olivier Plantard, Steffen Ehrmann, Knut Røed, Hans Petter Leinaas, Marcus Panning, Annie Guiller

## **To cite this version:**

Pedro Poli, Jonathan Roger Michel Henri Lenoir, Olivier Plantard, Steffen Ehrmann, Knut Røed, et al.. Strong genetic structure among populations of the tick Ixodes ricinus across its range. Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases, 2020, 11 $(6),$  pp.101509.  $10.1016/j.ttbdis.2020.101509$  .  $\,$  hal-02917046  $\,$ 

# **HAL Id: hal-02917046 <https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-02917046v1>**

Submitted on 10 Nov 2020

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

- 1 **Strong genetic structure among populations of the tick** *Ixodes ricinus* **across its**
- 2 **range**
- 3 Pedro Poli<sup>1</sup>, Jonathan Lenoir<sup>1</sup>, Olivier Plantard<sup>2</sup>, Steffen Ehrmann<sup>3</sup>, Knut H. Røed<sup>4</sup>,
- 4 Hans Petter Leinaas<sup>5</sup>, Marcus Panning<sup>6</sup>, Annie Guiller<sup>1</sup>
- 5 <sup>1</sup> Université de Picardie Jules Verne, UMR « Ecologie et Dynamique des Systèmes
- 6 Anthropisés » (EDYSAN, UMR 7058 CNRS), 33 Rue Saint Leu, 80000 Amiens CEDEX
- 7 1, France
- 8 <sup>2</sup> BIOEPAR, INRAE, Oniris, 44307, Nantes, France
- 9 <sup>3</sup> German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research (iDiv) Halle-Jena-Leipzig,
- 10 Deutscher Platz 5e, 04103 Leipzig, Germany
- 11 <sup>4</sup> Department of Basic Sciences and Aquatic Medicine, Norwegian University of Life
- 12 Sciences, N-0033, Oslo, Norway (knut.roed@nmbu.no)
- <sup>5</sup> 13 Department of Biosciences, University of Oslo, Box 1066 Blindern, N-0316 Oslo,
- 14 Norway (h.p.leinaas@ibv.uio.no)
- 15 <sup>6</sup> Institute of Virology, Medical Center University of Freiburg, Faculty of Medicine,
- 16 University of Freiburg, Hermann-Herder-Str, 11 79104, Freiburg, Germany
- 17 **Corresponding author**: Pedro Poli, UMR « Ecologie et Dynamique des Systèmes
- 18 Anthropisés » (EDYSAN, UMR 7058 CNRS-UPJV), Université de Picardie Jules Verne,
- 19 33 Rue Saint Leu, 80000 Amiens CEDEX 1, France, [pvpoli@gmail.com](mailto:pvpoli@gmail.com)

 **Abstract:** *Ixodes ricinus* is the most common and widely distributed tick species in Europe, responsible for several zoonotic diseases, including Lyme borreliosis. Population genetics of disease vectors is a useful tool for understanding the spread of pathogens and infection risks. Despite the threat to the public health due to the climate-driven distribution changes of *I. ricinus*, the genetic structure of tick populations, though essential for understanding epidemiology, remains unclear. Previous studies have demonstrated weak to no apparent spatial pattern of genetic differentiation between European populations. Here, we analysed the population genetic structure of 497 individuals from 28 tick populations sampled from 20 countries across Europe, the Middle-East, and northern Africa. We analysed 125 SNPs loci after quality control. We ran Bayesian and multivariate hierarchical clustering analyses to identify and describe clusters of genetically related individuals. Both clustering methods support the identification of three spatially- structured clusters. Individuals from the south and north-western parts of Eurasia form a separated cluster from northern European populations, while central European populations are a mix between the two groups. Our findings have important implications for understanding the dispersal processes that shape the spread of zoonotic diseases under anthropogenic global changes.

**Keywords:** gene flow; infection risks; range shift

#### **Introduction**

 *Ixodes ricinus* (Acari, Ixodidae) is the most widespread tick species occurring across Europe and an important vector of multiple tick-borne diseases, both to humans and livestock. Commonly reported pathogens transmitted by *I. ricinus* include: the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi* sensu lato, responsible for the Lyme borreliosis, which is the most prevalent tick-borne disease in temperate Europe (ECDC, 2015); arboviruses (genus *Flavivirus*) causing tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) and louping-ill (LI); the protozoan *Babesia microti*, responsible for the babesiosis; and the bacterium *Candidatus* Neoehrlichia mikurensis, responsible for neoehrlichiosis, an emerging tick-borne pathogen (Portillo et al., 2018; Welinder-Olsson et al., 2010). The current climate-driven redistribution of hematophagous arthropods such as ticks and mosquitoes may lead to severe challenges to public health and husbandry, by carrying a wide range of vector-borne diseases to new areas (Dantas-Torres, 2015; Pecl et al., 2017). For instance, many studies have demonstrated that the range of *I. ricinus* is already shifting northward and to higher elevations (e.g. Hvidsten et al., 2020; Jore et al., 2011; Lindgren and Gustafson, 2001) and those shifts are expected to continue in the future (Alkishe et al., 2017; Medlock et al., 2013).

 Despite the threats of emerging infectious diseases following the redistribution of *I. ricinus*, little is known about the genetic structure of tick populations across the entire species range. Population genetic differentiation and spatial structuring can, however, impact the vector fitness and distribution, and therefore disease transmission (Blanchong et al., 2016; Wonham et al., 2006).

 Population genetics approaches such as individual genetic clustering and assignment methods enable inference on migrants (exchange of genes between populations) and the risk of pathogen spread between populations (Kozakiewicz et al., 2018). For example, Lang and Blanchong (2012) applied clustering and distance- based methods to assess gene flow and disease spread risk between populations of white-tailed deer in the USA. Similarly, Van Zee et al. (2015) identified different genetic clusters between the southern and northern range of the tick *Ixodes scapularis* while the prevalence of borreliosis is known to be lower in the southern range. The authors suggest that this pattern of spatial genetic structure might be linked to differences in questing behaviour as ticks from the northern range would be more likely to bite humans*.* Differences in several life history traits of *I. ricinus* – such as the temperature at which nymphs begin to quest – have been reported along a latitudinal gradient (Gilbert et al., 2014), suggesting a spatially explicit phenotypic plasticity or adaptation. Yet, such basic knowledge about the distribution of genetic variation in *I. ricinus* and the migration processes involved in disease transmission remain largely unknown, albeit being essential to design better vector control strategies (Araya-Anchetta et al., 2015; Gooding, 1996; Tabachnick and Black, 1995).

 The genetic structure of parasites' populations is known to be influenced by the distribution of the hosts (Kempf et al., 2009; Wessels et al., 2019). In general, 82 it is assumed that generalist parasites relying on a wide range of hosts tend to show weak or no genetic structure, as shown in many studies on various parasite species (e.g. Archie and Ezenwa, 2011; Wessels et al., 2019). The tick species *I. ricinus* is a

 generalist ectoparasite infesting a wide range of hosts, such as reptiles, mammals, and birds (Casati et al., 2008; Norte et al., 2012). It has been proposed that tick abundance and population genetic structure are dependent on the species' biology (such as reproduction strategies and life cycle), but also on the host distribution and behaviour (Kempf et al., 2011; McCoy et al., 2001; Rizzoli et al., 2009; Norte et al., 2012). Large ungulates, such as deer, bovidae, and wild boar may be highly efficient carriers of ticks for long distances, as long as there are no severe barriers to their migration (Handeland et al., 2013; Kriz et al., 2014). By contrast, transportation of ticks by migrating birds seems to be less efficient across contiguous landmasses (Hasle et al., 2009; Røed et al., 2016). Based on these findings, it is expected that *I. ricinus* populations should show a weak spatial genetic structure.

 Regarding previous works on population structure and dispersal of *I. ricinus*, Noureddine et al. (2011) found a clear differentiation between European and African populations using sequences from three nuclear and three mitochondrial markers. Regarding the results from that study, it was later suggested by Estrada-Peña et al. (2014) that those northern African samples could correspond to *Ixodes inopinatus*, a sibling species of the *I. ricinus* complex within the *Ixodes*subgenus. Considering only European populations, some studies showed weak to no differentiation, but an extensive genetic diversity was observed within each local population (Casati et al., 2008; Noureddine et al., 2011; Porreta et al., 2013; Carpi, 2016). Other investigations analysing the frequency of mitochondrial haplotypes showed a marked phylogeographical structure in northern Europe,

 notably when considering populations from the north of the UK (Scotland) and Scandinavia (Al Khafaji et al., 2019; Dinnis et al., 2014; Røed et al., 2016). Although none of the mitochondrial haplotypes was exclusive to any of those populations, their frequencies varied significantly between populations from different regions. Interestingly, the British clade identified by Røed et al. (2016) coincides with the occurrence of a particular subtype of the louping-ill virus, which is closely related to other Irish and Spanish subtypes. Other studies focusing on the genetic structure of *I. ricinus* populations were based on microsatellite loci (Kempf et al., 2009; Kempf et al., 2011). Microsatellite variations have led to the identification of significant levels of genetic structure at different spatial scales, deviation from panmixia in *I. ricinus* population*s* likely due to assortative mating and patterns of host use (see Araya-Anchetta et al., 2015 for a review). However, those studies have also assessed patterns of genetic variation from localised samples that cover only a subset of the species range and thus likely do not capture the entire species genetic structure at the continental level.

 Here, we aim to elucidate the population genetic structure of the tick *I. ricinus* based on single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs). To the best of our knowledge, no other study on the population genetic structure of *I. ricinus* throughout the Eurasian continent was based on the variation detected by this type of marker. Although generally having a weaker mutation rate than microsatellites, SNPs offers the possibility of building a larger range of markers and have been suggested to be more reliable markers for population genetic studies (Helyar et al., 2011; Smouse, 2010). Our main objective is to describe the genetic

 structure of *I. ricinus* populations to infer the geographical and environmental factors shaping this structure. Particularly we hypothesized that (i) *I. ricinus* from the western parts of Europe might have genetic similarities to the Great Britain lineage (Røed et al., 2016) while (ii) there should be a pronounced genetic differentiation between ticks south and north of the extensive mountain areas covering central Europe (i.e., the Eastern Alps, the Western Alps, the Carpathian Mountains, and the Balkan Mountains).

### **Materials and Methods**

*Sampling*

 A total of 28 tick populations from 20 countries were sampled covering most of the species' range, including populations close to the northern (Norwegian, Sweden, Ireland, and England) and southern (Iran, Spain, and northern Africa) range limit of *I. ricinus* (Figure 1). Samples were collected by flagging inside or near forest fragments from the ground vegetation and were preserved in alcohol. A significant subset of the sampled populations we used, covering 8 regions across Europe (southern and northern France; Belgium; western and eastern German; southern and central Sweden; and northern Estonia), originated from a single project (smallFOREST, BiodivERsA 2010-2011 Joint call: [https://www.biodiversa.org/491/download\)](https://www.biodiversa.org/491/download) and was sampled by the same person during the same year 2013 (See Ehrmann et al., 2018 for details). The remaining samples were collected for different projects (for details on those

 projects see Røed et al., 2016 for the Norwegian samples and Noureddine et al., 2011 for the remaining samples). The coordinates of the sampled populations are provided in Table S1 (see Supporting Information). Aside from smallFOREST samples, sampling dates varied among the sampled populations (Table S1).

 Ticks sampled for those projects were identified at the laboratory using standard morphological keys provided in Babos (1964), Hillyard (1996), or Perez- Eid (2007). As most samples we used were identified before the description of *I. inopinatus* (Estrada-Peña et al., 2014) and considering that it was impossible to re- evaluate the identification of samples based on morphological features, we conducted an *a posteriori* evaluation of the potential presence of *I. inopinatus* among our samples. To fulfil this aim, northern African *I. inopinatus* samples analysed by Noureddine et al. (2011) were included in the present study.

### *DNA extraction and SNP genotyping*

 Since ticks and DNA samples analysed in this study had different origins and therefore different storage methods, three different methods were used to ensure DNA extraction. Ticks were either: (i) frozen and crushed with a pestle in individual tubes before extracting DNA using DNeasyTM Tissue Kit (Qiagen); (ii) disrupted using a Tissue Lyser (Qiagen) before DNA extraction using the Wizard Genomics DNA Purification Kit (Promega, USA); or (iii) crushed with Lysing matrix H (MP Biomedicals, Santa Ana, USA) before extracting DNA with MagNA Pure LC Total Nucleic Acid Isolation Kit (Roche, Basel, Switzerland).

 We genotyped 192 SNPs as described by Quillery et al. (2014). The list of SNPs, variant basis, and primers are presented in Table S2. All samples were amplified by whole genome amplification (WGA) before genotyping. The PEP-PCR WGA kit (LGC-Biosearch Technologies) was used for whole genome amplification of each sample. The WGA protocol associated with KASP genotyping has already been tested by Quillery et al. (2014) and showed a reduced number of "no-call" data (missing values) during genotyping. The WGA and genotyping steps were subcontracted by the GENTYANE platform (INRA, Clermont-Ferrand, France: http://gentyane.clermont.inra.fr/). The GENTYANE platform is an INRAE (French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment) research facility located in Clermont-Ferrand (France) which offers sequencing and genotyping services. Genotyping was conducted in a Biomark HD System (Fluidigm) and KASPar assays. The KASPar method is a KBiosciences competitive allele-specific PCR amplification. A PCR mix containing two allele-specific forward primers and one common reverse primer was carried out. Each forward primer had a 5' tail sequence homologous to universal secondary oligos labelled with a fluorophore (FAM or HEX). If a particular locus is homozygous, only one fluorescent signal is generated. Bi-allelic loci generate both fluorescent signals.

*Quality control*

 Data was filtered after genotyping and before statistical analysis. First, all invariant SNPs were removed. After this first filtering step, all individuals with more than 20% of non-amplified sites (missing data) were removed. Finally, all remaining SNPs with more than 20% missing data were also removed. The remaining dataset consisted

of both individuals and SNPs with less than 20% missing data. After quality control

steps, 125 SNP loci and 497 individuals were kept for further analyses.

*Cluster analysis and genetic structure*

 Two complementary clustering methods were used to access the genetic structure of *I. ricinus* populations. First, we investigated the genetic clustering by performing a discriminant analysis of principal components (DAPC, Jombart et al., 2010) with the package 'adegenet' (Jombart, 2008) in R (R Core Team, 2019). The optimal *k* number of clusters was identified by the *k*-means algorithm using the *find.cluster()* function based on BIC values. A maximum of 28 clusters was allowed, i.e. the total number of sampled populations. Next we performed a Bayesian analysis in STRUCTURE (Pritchard et al., 2000) with the parameter *K*, i.e. the optimal number of clusters, varying from 1 to 10, according to the results from 210 the DAPC. We used a non-admixture model with the sampling locations as prior. Twenty repetitions of 80,000 MCMC iterations with a burning length of 20,000 iterations were run for each value of *K*. The results were analysed with Structure Harvester (Earl and vonHoldt, 2012). The best *K* value for the optimal number of clusters was identified by comparing the estimates of log probabilities of the data (i.e. ln[Pr(*X*|*K*)]) for each *K* value as well as Evanno's delta *K* method (Evanno et al., 2005)*.* Pritchard et al. (2007) suggested aiming for the smallest value of *K* that captures most of the genetic structure in the data. Assigning probabilities for individuals and populations across repetitions were then averaged in CLUMPP (Jakobsson and Rosenberg, 2007). We applied a hierarchical clustering analysis (e.g. Vähä et al., 2007) in each identified cluster to detect more refined patterns of

 genetic structure. Hierarchical analysis in STRUCTURE was realised with ten repetitions and the same other parameters as the first round of analysis. We realised a similar analysis for each cluster identified by DAPC.

224 To test our data for isolation by distance (IBD), pairwise  $F_{ST}$  values were estimated with the package 'hierfstat' (Goudet and Jombart, 2018) in R (R Core Team, 2019) as Weir and Cockerham unbiased parameter θ (Weir and Cockerham, 1984). The IBD pattern was first tested across all pairs of Eurasian samples and second only between pairs of samples collected during the same year to avoid potential biases due to temporal variability in dispersal and genetic structure. Those corresponded to samples from southern and northern France, Belgium, western and eastern German, northern Estonia, southern and central Sweden, a total of 8 samples (28 pairs). Since the 25 Eurasian samples are distributed across a large continental extent, pairwise geographical distances were calculated with the 'geosphere' package (Hijmans, 2017) in R (R Core Team, 2019) to account for the curvature of the Earth. The strength of the IDB was evaluated as the relationship 236 between  $\theta/(1 - \theta)$  and the natural logarithm of the geographic distance as described by Rousset (1997). In a two dimensions population, the slope parameter *b* of the linear regression  $\theta/(1 - \theta) = a + bD_{Geq}$  is inversely proportional to the 239 average neighbourhood size  $Nb=1/b$ , and  $b=1/(4D_e\pi\sigma^2)$ , where  $D_e$  is the sub-240 population density and  $\sigma^2$  is the averaged square axial distances between adults and their parents and *σ* is half the average adult-parent distance (Séré et al., 2017). 242 In this case, a proxy of dispersal can be calculated as  $\delta \approx 2 * \sqrt{(4\pi Deb)}$ 243 (Manangwa, 2018). The population density was calculated as  $D_e = N_e/S\pi$ , where

 *S* is the smallest distance between sites considered and included in the IBD analysis. We used NeEstimator version 2.1 to calculate effective population sizes (*Ne*) by applying two different methods, one based on linkage disequilibrium and another based on molecular co-ancestry (Do et al, 2014). We calculated the mean of *Ne* estimated with these two methods after the exclusion of 'infinity' results. The 249 obtained mean value was weighted by the number of times one of the two methods generated a non-infinity value. The significance of the IBD pattern was assessed by Mantel tests as implemented in the 'vegan' package (Oksanen et al., 2019) in R (R Core Team, 2019).

*Genetic diversity*

 For each locus, we estimated the observed heterozygosity (Ho), the gene diversity 255 (Hs), and Wright's fixation indices  $F_{1S}$ ,  $F_{ST}$ , and  $F_{1T}$ . Wright's statistics measure 256 inbreeding in three levels of population structure:  $F_{1S}$  is the inbreeding coefficient 257 of individuals relative to subpopulations;  $F_{ST}$  is the inbreeding coefficient of 258 subpopulations relative to populations; and  $F_{IT}$  is a measure of the inbreeding of individuals relative to populations. All metrics were calculated with the package 'hierfstat' (Goudet and Jombart, 2018) in R (R Core Team, 2019). A Monte-Carlo permutation test (999 replicates) was conducted to test for the significance of the 262 differences of mean gene diversity and *F*<sub>IS</sub> values over loci between pairs of genetic clusters identified. For each replicate, individuals were randomly assigned to one genetic cluster and the simulated statistics were calculated. We ran the *randtest()* function from the 'ade4' package (Dray and Dufour, 2007) to access 266 the significance of the observed differences.



### **Results**

#### *Clustering analysis, genetic differentiation and isolation by distance*

 The DAPC analysis identified two possibilities for the number of clusters, one suggesting three different genetic clusters and the other suggesting four genetic clusters (the BIC difference is 0.842 between *K* = 3 and *K* = 4, Figure S1). Choosing *K*  $=$  4 clusters created two overlapping groups, while  $K = 3$  grouped individuals into 3 well-separated clusters (Figure 2). Hence, we decided to set the number of clusters 296 to  $K = 3$  with the DAPC approach. Bayesian analysis performed with STRUCTURE also identified a *K* = 3 differentiated genetic clusters (Figure 2b and Figure S2) whose compositions are very similar to the three clusters retained with the DAPC approach. In both analyses, northern African (yellow colour in Figures 2 and 3) and Eurasian populations (the other colours) were highly differentiated. Two main groups were identified within Eurasia, one corresponding mainly to northern and continental middle European populations (grey colour in Figures 2 and 3), the other corresponding mainly to southern and western populations in Eurasia (blue colour in Figures 2 and 3). The DAPC approach separated northern African populations from Eurasian ones along the first axis, while Eurasian clusters were mostly separated along the second axis (Figure 2a). Regarding clustering analyses with STRUCTURE, individual probabilities of different *K* values ranging from 2 to 10, excepted for *K* = 3 which is already depicted in Figure 2b, are presented in the Supporting Information (see Figure S3).

 Finer genetic structure was identified from our hierarchical analyses (Figures S4 and S5). These analyses, either carried out with DAPC (Figure S4) or the STRUCTURE approach (Figure S5), were able to isolate Iran and/or Turkey from the other sampled sites within the southern Eurasian cluster. Atlantic sites (Spain, southern and western France, Ireland, and England) were further isolated from the remaining sites in this group (Italy, Romania, Hungry, and Slovakia). The northern European sites showed a more admixture structure, and separation in further clusters varied between the DAPC and STRUCTURE approaches (see the 'Hierarchical analysis' section in the Supplementary Information for more details).

 A pattern of isolation by distance (IBD) was observed across all sampled populations (Mantel r = 0.726, *p* < 0.001). Restricting the IBD analysis to the set of sites sampled during the same year, we found an even stronger pattern of IDB (Mantel r = 0.870, *p* < 0.0001, Figure 4). In the latter case, the coefficient estimate of the slope parameter (*b*) in the regression was *b* = 0.01 with a 95% confidence interval (CI) ranging from 0.007 to 0.013. Neighbourhood size (*Nb*) reached *Nb* = 99 individuals, on average (95% CI = [71-140]), and immigration rate (*Nem*) was 326 estimated to reach  $N_e m = 16$  (95% CI = [11-22]) individuals per generation and subpopulation.

 We found a mean effective population size of 62 individuals. The closest 329 sampled sites were North France and Belgium, separated 119 km from one another. 330 We found surface and population densities to reach, on average,  $S^2 = 11.3$  km<sup>2</sup> and

331 *De* = 5.4 individuals/ $m^2$ , respectively. We found the dispersal rate to reach, on 332 average,  $\delta \approx 76$  km/generation (95% CI = [65-90]).

333 *Genetic diversity*

334 The observed heterozygosity (*Ho*), gene diversity (*Hs*), and *F*<sub>IS</sub> were highly variable 335 across loci (Table S3). The observed  $F_{ST}$  values were, however, more constant than 336 F<sub>IS</sub> ones. For most loci, gene diversity was higher than the observed heterozygosity. 337 Consequently, the overall gene diversity across all loci was significantly higher than 338 the observed heterozygosity (Wilcox Signed-Rank Test, V = 6959, *p* < 0.0001). The 339 mean gene diversity per sampled population was still higher than the observed 340 heterozygosity (Wilcox Signed-Rank Test,  $V = 406$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ) and mean  $F_{1S}$  was 341 always positive. Mean values of observed heterozygosity, gene diversity, and F<sub>IS</sub> for 342 each population are shown in Figure S6 (Supporting Information). The highest mean 343 gene diversity and *F*<sub>IS</sub> values over loci were identified in the southern Eurasian 344 cluster (Hs =  $0.355$ ,  $F_{1S}$  =  $0.275$ ), followed by the northern European cluster (Hs = 345 0.340,  $F_{1S} = 0.2708$ ) and the cluster from northern Africa (Hs = 0.171,  $F_{1S} = 0.191$ ) 346 (Figure 5). The Monte-Carlo test showed a significant difference in gene diversity 347 values for all pairs of clusters ( $p = 0.001$  for all three comparisons), but none for  $F_{1S}$ 348 values ( $p = 0.199$  and 0.239 when comparing northern Africa to the northern 349 European cluster and northern Africa to the southern Eurasian cluster, respectively; 350 while  $p = 0.644$  when comparing the southern Eurasian cluster to the northern 351 European cluster). Populations from northern Africa showed a high deficit in 352 heterozygosity, of which 71 out of 125 loci with *Hs* values of zero.

 After *p*-value correction (Benjamini and Yekutieli, 2001), no pair of locus showed significance values of linkage disequilibrium. No correlation was found 355 between  $F_{1S}$  and  $F_{ST}$  ( $\rho = -0.0206$ ,  $\rho = 0.8198$ ) and missing data were positively 356 correlated to *F*<sub>IS</sub> values (ρ = 0.5804, *p* < 0.001). The linear regression of *F*<sub>IS</sub> against 357 the number of missing data estimated an adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.19, suggesting that 358 around one-fifth of  $F_{IS}$  variance is explained by the number of missing data. Finally, StrdErrFIS was around 4 times bigger than StrdErrFst (0.033 and 0.008, respectively).

**Discussion**

 We investigated the genetic structure of populations from the tick *I. ricinus* in much of its range, *i.e.* in Eurasia and in northern Africa. In addition to a strong and expected divergence between northern African and Eurasian populations, the two Eurasian genetic clusters described here showed clear spatial patterns. The isolation by distance patterns we found, either throughout the entire dataset or restricted to samples from the same period, suggest an association between the genetic structure of *I. ricinus* populations and the geographical location of these populations. Hierarchical analyses confirmed the genetic affinity between western European populations, from the UK and Ireland in the north to Spain in the south, supporting our first hypothesis regarding genetic similarities in western continental Europe and the British Isles. Also consistent with our second hypothesis stating a genetic signature of central European mountains, we found a clear differentiation between populations from southern Eurasia and populations from northern

 Europe. Indication of migration of individuals between the two clusters is suggested by the different degrees of affinity from central Europe with one cluster or another (e.g. in Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Moldova).

 *Ixodes ricinus* and *I. inopinatus* have recently been suggested to be sympatric both in northern Africa (Younsi et al., 2020) and in Europe (Estrada-Peña et al., 2014; Chitimia-Dobler et al., 2018). Our results are clear concerning the genetic identity of northern African samples. According to the resultsfrom both the DAPC and STRUCTURE analysis, there is no possibility of any individuals from those populations to belong to any other genetic clusters. Also, no individual from Eurasia had any probability of identity with the northern African cluster. Converging results of both analyses indicate with a great deal of certitude that: (i) all samples from northern Africa belong to the same species and have the same ancestry; (ii) no sample in Eurasia share ancestry with northern African ones. Northern African samples were also a particular case as more than half loci were monomorphic across all three populations, which was not found in Eurasian populations. Again, it is important to note that individuals from the three northern African populations analysed here were identified before the description of *I. inopinatus* (Estrada-Peña et al., 2014). If *I. inopinatus* was present in the Eurasian samples, we would expect at least small probabilities of identity of Eurasian samples with the northern African cluster, which was not the case. The clear-cut genetic differentiation we obtained between Eurasian and northern African populations strongly suggests that all the individuals from the three northern African populations analysed here correspond

 to *I. inopinatus.* Those results also illustrate the potential of using some of the SNPs analysed here to differentiate at a molecular level the two *Ixodes* species.

 Two previous studies covering a large spatial extent of *I. ricinus'* range (Noureddine et al., 2011; Porreta et al., 2013) did not find such a clear geographical structure between Eurasian populations. Several reasons may explain this difference. First, a somewhat reduced number of individuals per population (sometimes a single individual per population in Nourredine et al., 2011) may explain a lack of spatially structured signal in former studies. Second, those former studies were based on mitochondrial and nuclear sequences. This said, a marked genetic differentiation into two distinctive clades has already been reported (Dinnis et al., 2014; Røed et al., 2016), suggesting a split in *I. ricinus* populations between northern continental Europe and Great Britain. Our results confirm and extend this pattern to most of the Eurasian range of the species by suggesting that Scandinavian populations are genetically closer to the populations from the north- eastern continental parts of Europe. Although there is a certain degree of gene flow between the two clusters, the north vs. south-eastern exchange may be hampered by mountain areas in central Europe. This reinforces the argument that large animals efficiently maintain high gene flow between tick populations across contiguous and permeable landscapes, while intense transportation by birds, during spring and autumn migration across sea or mountains (Hasle et al., 2009; Røed et al., 2016), may not be as sufficient to break down boundaries between established genetic entities.

 Surprisingly, we found a close genetic affinity between all Atlantic samples (i.e. Ireland, England, western and southern France, and Spain) and the geographically separated populations from Turkey and Iran. This genetic affinity among distant populations in Eurasia was supported by the two different clustering methods we used (DAPC and STRUCTURE). Besides these results, the refined hierarchical analyses isolated Iran and Turkey in their particular clusters in the first (DAPC) and second (STRUCTURE) round of hierarchical clustering analyses. This suggests that an east-west transport of ticks across southern Eurasia must be sufficient to maintain a genetically identifiable cluster across this extensive area. Interestingly, louping-Ill like viruses are also known from Greece and Turkey (Gao et al., 1993; Marin et al., 1995), which might further support our findings and a link between tick lineages and *Flavivirus*, although the causation is not known.

 Since migratory birds carry *I. ricinus* across long distances, different migratory routes could also contribute to the north-south genetic differentiation we observed (Hasle et al., 2009; Røed et al., 2016). However, birds mainly carry larvae and nymphs. Since surviving rates between development states are low, the overall reproductive success of tick transported by birds is likely smaller than that of adult ticks carried by large mammals. This may explain the maintenance of genetic differentiation e.g. between the UK and Norway despite massive transport of ticks' larvae in both directions (Røed et al., 2016).

 Regarding the population structure observed within samples, the deviation from Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium we found is in agreements with previous studies on population genetics of *I. ricinus* based on SNPs (Quillery et al., 2014) and

 microsatellites (Kempf et al., 2009; Kempf et al., 2011; Røed et al., 2006), as well as other tick species (Dharmarajan et al., 2011). Possible causes of the observed deviation from the Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium are assortative mating (or assortative pairing), Wahlund effect, or errors in the genotyping. A tendency of mating between phenotypically or genetically similar individuals may effectively increase the inbreeding and thus heterozygote deficiency within populations (Jiang et al., 2013). Kempf et al. (2009) suggested that assortative mating might occur in *I. ricinus*, mostly via host selection (Kempf et al., 2011). Inbreeding in ticks could be a result of host infestation by related individuals, which leads to high breeding success of sibling groups (Araya-Ancheta et al., 2015). The highly aggregated egg masses in *I. ricinus* (1000 to 3000 eggs) and the limited active dispersal of larvae and nymphs may lead to a high likelihood of mating between related individuals and thus inbreeding. Finally, the parasite-host relationship specificities could also play an important role in establishing or maintaining population structure in *I. ricinus*. If different host populations are present locally and exhibit behaviours favouring mating within (and not between) each host population, this may induce a Wahlund effect and explains the heterozygote deficiency observed. The existence of such a host population behaviour has been characterized in *I. uriae*, a tick associated with sea birds (Mc Coy et al., 2001) but also suggested in *I. ricinus*(Kempf et al., 2009, 2011). Even though we did not conceive this study to test for such a hypothesis, our results support at least partially non-random mating in *I. ricinus* populations and the consequent Wahlund effect. Dharmarajan et al. (2011) facing a similar result for the American species *I. texanus* showed that subdivided  breeding groups and high variance in individual reproductive success can correctly explain Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium deviation.

 It is widely acknowledged that more or less isolated populations could develop particular adaptations in response to environmental differences between habitats. Nonetheless, very few studies to date have clearly observed phenotypic variations among *I. ricinus* populations from different geographical origins. In Estrada-Peña et al. (1996 and 1998), differences in cuticular hydrocarbon composition among European populations of *I. ricinus* were observed according to the geographical origin of those populations. Interestingly, the multivariate phenotypic analysis presented in those studies showed a somewhat similar pattern to our hierarchical genetic clustering analysis, notably concerning what the authors call 'peripheral populations'. Aside from chemical differentiation, behavioural differences between ticks' populations have also been documented, such as mismatches in questing peaks (Schulz et al., 2014) and questing responses to temperature (Gilbert et al., 2014; Tomkins et al., 2014). In controlled conditions, Gilbert et al. (2014) and Tomkins et al. (2014) showed that *I. ricinus* nymphs from cooler climates begin questing at lower temperatures than nymphs from warmer climates. They also start questing sooner when the temperature was kept constant. In any case, local adaptations could impact the spatial redistribution of the species range in response to changes in abiotic conditions. In a global changing context, such consequences could be explored by environmental niche modelling to identify areas of potential future expansion. It remains to be investigated if the different

 clusters we identified here could pose different threats for human health and the potential risk of tick-borne disease transmission to humans.

 Our findings on isolation by distance suggest small population densities and large dispersal distances among the sampled populations. The large dispersal distance is not a surprising result since ticks can parasitize highly mobile species. In a changing climate context, this result indicates that ticks could easily colonize new suitable habitats outside the current limits of the species geographical range in a few generations.

 Despite being a generalist ectoparasite, our results highlight geographically distinct and genetically structured populations in *I. ricinus*. More research on host preference and dispersal capacity is needed to better understand those patterns. The differentiation of Eurasian populations into two geographically distinct clusters (northern Europe vs. southern Eurasia) could have important implications for the redistribution of *I. ricinus* in response to anthropogenic climate change. Ticks from a given genetic cluster could be more or less prone to increase in abundance in some regions. Combining tick and pathogen population genetics with knowledge on host distribution could help in the early detection of the spread of tick-borne diseases and thus improve the responsiveness of public authorities to limit major public health concerns.

**Acknowledgements**

 We thank all the invaluable contribution of Dr. Brigitte Degeilh (Laboratory of Parasitology and Mycology, Rennes University Hospital, France), Dr. Francesco

 Nazzi (Università Degli Studi di Udine), Dr. Mohammad Abdigoudarzi (Razi Institute, Iran), Dr Ali Bouattour (Institut Pasteur de Tunis, Tunisia), Dr Loubna Dib (Institut Vétérinaire, Centre Universitaire El Tarf, Algeria), M'hammed Sarih (Institut Pasteur du Maroc, Morocco), Dr. Irina Golovljova (National Institute for Health Development, Estonia), Nicole Voss (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany), Dr. Zati Vatansever (Kafkas University, Turkey), Dr. Eoin Healy (University College, Ireland), Dr. Davide Sassera (University of Pavia, Italy), Dr. Albert Agoulon (Oniris, France), Dr. Ionut Pavel (Regional Institute of Oncology, Romania), Dr. György Csóka (Hungary Forest Research Institut, Hungary), Dr. Elena Kocianová [\(Slovak Academy](https://www.researchgate.net/institution/Slovak_Academy_of_Sciences)  [of Sciences,](https://www.researchgate.net/institution/Slovak_Academy_of_Sciences) Slovakia), Dr. Alexandru Movila (Academy of Sciences of Moldova, Moldavia) for sharing some of the samples used in this study. We thank Dr. Michael Scherer-Lorenzen (Freiburg University, German) for the general smallFOREST study design, from which many samples were made available. The smallFOREST project was funded by the ERA-Net BiodivERsA, via the national funders ANR (France), FORMAS (Sweden), ETAG (Estonia), DFG (Germany), BELSPO (Belgium) and the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (the EcolChange Centre of Excellence). We thank the Centre de Ressources Régionales en Biologie Moléculaire (CRRBM) from the Université de Picardie Jules Verne. This work was also supported by the Région Hauts-de-France, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, INEE) and the European Regional Development Fund.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

## **References**









 Marin, M.S., McKenzie, J., Gao, G.F., Reid, H.W., Antoniadis, A., Gould, E.A., 1995. The virus causing encephalomyelitis in sheep in Spain: a new member of the tick-borne encephalitis group. Res. Vet. Sci. 58, 11–13. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0034-5288\(95\)90081-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0034-5288(95)90081-0) Mccoy, K.D., Boulinier, T., Tirard, C., Michalakis, Y., 2001. Host specificity of a generalist parasite: genetic evidence of sympatric host races in the seabird tick *Ixodes uriae*. J. Evol. Biol. 14, 395-405. [https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1420-](https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1420-9101.2001.00290.x) [9101.2001.00290.x](https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1420-9101.2001.00290.x) Medlock, J.M., Hansford, K.M., Bormane, A., Derdakova, M., Estrada-Peña, A., George, J.-C., Golovljova, I., Jaenson, T.G., Jensen, J.-K., Jensen, P.M., 2013. Driving forces for changes in geographical distribution of *Ixodes ricinus* ticks in Europe. Parasit. Vectors 6, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1756-3305-6-1> Norte, A.C., de Carvalho, I.L., Ramos, J.A., Gonçalves, M., Gern, L., Núncio, M.S., 2012. Diversity and seasonal patterns of ticks parasitizing wild birds in western Portugal. Exp. Appl. Acarol. 58, 327–339[. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10493-012-](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10493-012-9583-4) [9583-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10493-012-9583-4) Noureddine, R., Chauvin, A., Plantard, O., 2011. Lack of genetic structure among Eurasian populations of the tick *Ixodes ricinus* contrasts with marked divergence from north-African populations. Int. J. Parasitol. 41, 183–192. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpara.2010.08.010> Oksanen, F., Blanchet, F. G., Friendly, M., Kindt, R., Legendre, P., McGlinn, D., Minchin, F., O'Hara, R. B., Simpson, G. L., Solymos, P., Stevens, H.,Szoecs, E., Wagner, H., 2019. vegan: Community Ecology Package. R package version 2.5- 5[. https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=vegan](https://cran.r-project.org/package=vegan) Pecl, G.T., Araújo, M.B., Bell, J.D., Blanchard, J., Bonebrake, T.C., Chen, I.-C., Clark, T.D., Colwell, R.K., Danielsen, F., Evengård, B., Falconi, L., Ferrier, S., Frusher, S., Garcia, R.A., Griffis, R.B., Hobday, A.J., Janion-Scheepers, C., Jarzyna, M.A., Jennings, S., Lenoir, J., Linnetved, H.I., Martin, V.Y., McCormack, P.C., McDonald, J., Mitchell, N.J., Mustonen, T., Pandolfi, J.M., Pettorelli, N., Popova, E., Robinson, S.A., Scheffers, B.R., Shaw, J.D., Sorte, C.J.B., Strugnell, J.M., Sunday, J.M., Tuanmu, M.-N., Vergés, A., Villanueva, C., Wernberg, T., Wapstra, E., Williams, S.E., 2017. Biodiversity redistribution under climate change: Impacts on ecosystems and human well-being. Science 355, eaai9214. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aai9214> Pérez-Eid, C., 2007. Les tiques - Identification, biologie, importance médicale et vétérinaire. Lavoisier, Provigny. Portillo, A., Santibáñez, P., Palomar, A.M., Santibáñez, S., Oteo, J.A., 2018. '*Candidatus* Neoehrlichia mikurensis' in Europe. New Microbes New Infect. 22, 30–36[. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nmni.2017.12.011](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nmni.2017.12.011) Pritchard, J.K., Stephens, M., Donnelly, P., 2000. Inference of population structure using multilocus genotype data. Genetics. 155, 945-959. <https://www.genetics.org/content/155/2/945>



 Vähä, J.-P., Erkinaro, J., Niemelä, E., Primmer, C.R., 2007. Life-history and habitat features influence the within-river genetic structure of Atlantic salmon. Mol. Ecol. 16, 2638–2654.<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-294X.2007.03329.x> Van Zee, J., Piesman, J.F., Hojgaard, A., Black IV, W.C., 2015. Nuclear Markers Reveal Predominantly North to South Gene Flow in *Ixodes scapularis*, the Tick Vector of the Lyme Disease Spirochete. PLOS ONE 10, e0139630. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0139630> Weir, B.S., Cockerham, C.C., 1984. Estimating F-Statistics for the Analysis of Population Structure. Evolution 38, 1358‐1370. [https://doi:10.1111/j.1558-](https://doi:10.1111/j.1558-5646.1984.tb05657.x) [5646.1984.tb05657.x](https://doi:10.1111/j.1558-5646.1984.tb05657.x) Younsi, H., Fares, W., Cherni, S., Dachraoui, K., Barhoumi, W., Najjar, C., Zhioua, E., 2020. *Ixodes inopinatus* and *Ixodes ricinus*(Acari: Ixodidae) Are Sympatric Ticks in North Africa. J. Med. Entomol. 57, 952–956. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jme/tjz216> Welinder-Olsson, C., Kjellin, E., Vaht, K., Jacobsson, S., Wenneras, C., 2010. First Case of Human "*Candidatus* Neoehrlichia mikurensis" Infection in a Febrile Patient with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia. J. Clin. Microbiol. 48, 1956–1959. <https://doi.org/10.1128/JCM.02423-09> Wessels, C., Matthee, S., Espinaze, M.P.A., Matthee, C.A., 2019. Comparative mtDNA phylogeographic patterns reveal marked differences in population genetic structure between generalist and specialist ectoparasites of the African penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*). Parasitol. Res. 118, 667–672. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00436-018-6150-x> Wonham, M.J., Lewis, M.A., Renclawowicz, J., van den Driessche, P., 2006. Transmission assumptions generate conflicting predictions in host-vector disease models: a case study in West Nile virus. Ecol. Lett. 9, 706–725. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1461-0248.2006.00912.x>



 **Figure 1**. Distribution of the sampled populations of *Ixodes ricinus* across its putative range. The range of *I. ricinus* is displayed in dark orange on the map and was adapted from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control – ECDC (January 2019). The size of each blue dot on the map is proportional to the sample 812 size of each sampled population.



 **Figure 2**. Cluster assignment analysis results based on either the DAPC scatter plot 815 of individual memberships for  $K = 3$  (a) or the STRUCTURE individual membership 816 probabilities for  $K = 3$  as described by Evanno et al. (2005) (b). The sampled populations are coded as follows: MAR: Morocco; DZA: Algeria; TUN: Tunisia; ESP: Spain; IRN: Iran; TUR: Turkey; FRA-W: West France; IRL: Ireland; FRA-S: South France; GBR-BP: England Blue Pool; GBR-BR: England Bristol; ITA-D: Italy Domodossola; ITA-V: Italy Varese; ROU: Romania; HUN: Hungary; SVK: Slovakia; MDA: Moldavia; FRA-N: North France; DEU-W: West Germany; BEL: Belgium; EST- S: South Estonia: DEU-E: East Germany; DEU-S: South Germany; SWE-S: South Sweden; SWE-C: Central Sweden; NOR-So: Norway Søgne; NOR-Gr: Norway



Grønnsundfjellet; EST-N: North Estonia. Coordinates of sampled populations are



 **Figure 3.** Distribution of the relative importance of each cluster on each sampled population (see Figure 2 for the groups which colors are matching). Results are provided for both the DAPC (a) and the STRUCTURE (b) analysis.





 **Figure 4**. Isolation by distance between all Eurasian samples. Red triangles represent the pair of samples from the same year: South and North France, Belgium, West and East German, North Estonia, South and Central Sweden. The regression line (plain line), 95% confidence interval (CI) calculated by bootstrap (dashed lines), Mantel test significance and regression equation corresponds only

836 to red triangles pairs of samples are also shown. Black points correspond to all other

837 pairs of samples not used for further IBD analysis.



839 **Figure 5.** Values of gene diversity (a) and  $F_{1S}$  (b) for each of the three genetic clusters 840 identified by DAPC. Yellow: northern Africa cluster; Blue: southern Eurasia; Grey: 841 northern Europe. Permutation test (Monte-Carlo test, 999 replicates) between all 842 pairs of clusters was significant for gene diversity (*p* = 0.001) but no significance was 843 identified for *F<sub>IS</sub>*. Eurasian clusters show a more pronounced heterozygote excess 844 than the northern African one. A variation of  $F_{IS}$  values across loci was observed in

- the three clusters, even though this variation was much larger in the northern
- African cluster.

## **Supporting Information for:**

## **Strong genetic structure among populations of the tick Ixodes ricinus across its range: insights from population genetics**

Pedro Poli, Jonathan Lenoir, Olivier Dr. Plantard, Steffen Ehrmann, Knut H. Røed, Hans Petter Leinaas, Marcus Panning, Annie Guiller



## **Materials and Methods**

Table S1. Sample coordinates. The Reference column indicates from which source samples were made available. PC = Personal collection.





<b>locus</b>	variant	<b>Primer1-specific to allele1</b>	Primer2-specific to allele2	Primer3-common to both alleles
1133	T/C	GCTTGGCCACTTCCACTGCTTT	GCTTGGCCACTTCCACTGCTTC	ACAACAGAGAAGGCAGCCCACA
3705	A/C	AGCATGGCGCACTGTGAAAGCTC	AGCATGGCGCACTGTGAAAGCTA	TCCTAGTCGGCTGGCTGGAG
6283	T/C	AATGAGGCGTCAGTGACAGCATAAC	AATGAGGCGTCAGTGACAGCATAAT	CGTGACGTCAAGGCAGAATGCTAT
6363	A/G	TCGTCCTCCGTCACGTAGCCG	TCGTCCTCCGTCACGTAGCCA	CCATTGAACCCTGGTGGGTCATCA
10041	A/G	GTTGTTCCCTTGGCAGACG	GTTGTTCCCTTGGCAGACA	AACATACCCGAGACTGTCAAC
19998	A/G	CAGAAGTGGAGATTGTTGCGTGTG	CAGAAGTGGAGATTGTTGCGTGTA	TACATACATTGAGCATCGACCAA
				AGGCACGTAGATCACGAGAATTATT
21130	C/T	GCTGCTGCAACCGGTTTATCTTC	GCTGCTGCAACCGGTTTATCTTT	TC
30736	C/G	GCTAGGTGACGAGGACTGGACG	GCTAGGTGACGAGGACTGGACC	GTTGTTCCACCTTTCGCAGGAGAT
31200	A/G	CGTTCAGGTTGACCGAGAAGTAA	GTTCAGGTTGACCGAGAAGTAG	GCCTCTCGTTACTGTCGTATC
		GACTAATCACCAGGAAATCCATTCTG	GACTAATCACCAGGAAATCCATTCTG	
32114	C/T	$\mathcal{C}$	Т	GGCTATACTCGGACGTATGTTGA
32551	T/C	TTCGGTGGCAACAGCTCGTCCATC	TTCGGTGGCAACAGCTCGTCCATT	CCAGCCTCATAGCCGAGCACCA
34502	G/A	CGGATTCGAACCAGTTATCAATGGG	CGGATTCGAACCAGTTATCAATGGA	GCCTCTCTAGAAAACAGTTGCTCTC
42351	A/G	CTTGTAGGAATGGAGGTCATCTTCG	CTTGTAGGAATGGAGGTCATCTTCA	CTTCTGTGTCGCAGGTGGCATCAT
				ACGTGACAACACTTACACGGCATTT
57206	C/G	GCACTATGAGCCATCGAAGCCAAG	GCACTATGAGCCATCGAAGCCAAC	$\mathcal{C}$
60684	C/T	TGCACATAGTCGCGCAATACGTTC	TGCACATAGTCGCGCAATACGTTT	CGAGCCGTTGCAACCGATCCG
61606	G/A	ACATAGGACATCTCAAGGTCATTCG	ACATAGGACATCTCAAGGTCATTCA	GAAGAAACCGAGGATGAGTGTCATG
66390	C/T	GCCGAACAGCCGTGCAACCC	GCCGAACAGCCGTGCAACCT	TCGCTGCTGTATACCCATTG
				TAGAGGTTTCCCAAGTATTTATCGT
68328	G/C	CAGGCAGTTTGCGGTTCACAG	CAGGCAGTTTGCGGTTCACAC	Α
68391	A/G	CAGCGTCAAGTTGTGGTGTT	CAGCGTCAAGTTGTGGTGTC	GCATCGCGTGACATTAGTTACA
72226	G/A	GAGGTTCCTGACATGCAGGAAACG	GAGGTTCCTGACATGCAGGAAACA	GCTCTGCAGATGCAAGTTCCAA
77668	G/A	GGAACGTCGTGACAGCCGTAG	GGAACGTCGTGACAGCCGTAA	GGATGGCTTCGAGTTGGACTACTA
78934	G/C	AAAGAAGCGTTTCCCGGTCG	AAAGAAGCGTTTCCCGGTCC	TCTGGCAAAGCAAGCACTCACC
81501	T/C	GTCCTTTCGAAGGTGTATGCATTC	GTCCTTTCGAAGGTGTATGCATTT	ACGATGCTAGTTTGTCAAATAGTG

Table S2. List of SNPs, variant basis and primers used in the study (from Quillery et al., 2014)















## **Results**

Table S3. Basic statistics per locus.











Figure S1. Discriminant analysis of principal component (DAPC) of *Ixodes ricinus* based on 497 individuals using 125 SNPs. A. BIC values as a function of the number of clusters *k*. The difference in BIC values between *k* = 3 and *k* = 4 is 0.842. B. Scatterplot of individuals on the two principal components of DAPC. The graph represents the individuals as dots and the groups as inertia ellipses. Two of the clusters overlap, while when *k* = 3 we identify 3 well separated groups (figure 3). Red : North African cluster; yellow : only individuals from southern Eurasian cluster; green : only individuals from the Northern European cluster; blue: admixture cluster with mainly individuals from the northern European cluster in fugure 3.

![](_page_54_Figure_0.jpeg)

Figure S2. Probabilities ln P(*X*|*K*) for each level of hierarchical analysis. First round of analysis: a); Second round: b) southern Eurasian cluster and c) northern European clusters; Third round: d) Southern European cluster without Iran, e) Central Sweden, Norwegian West and East and North Estonia, f) Moldavia, North France, West German, Belgium, South Estonia, East German, South German and South Sweden; Forth round: g) Atlantic samples (Spain, South and West France, Ireland and England, h) South-west samples (Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary), i) and i): fourth round of analysis. Details of each level of Hierarchical analysis are present in the corresponding session.

![](_page_55_Figure_0.jpeg)

Figure S3. STRUCTURE Individual probabilities for each value of *K* from 2 to 10.

### **Hierarchical analysis**

Finer genetic structure was identified from hierarchical analysis (Figure S6 and S7 for STRUCTURE and DAPC analysis, respectively). The southern Eurasian cluster was further separated into two differentiated clusters, irrespective of the approach used (STRUCTURE or DAPC). The STRUCTURE approach separated Iran from the remaining samples, while the DAPC approach assigned most individuals from both Iran and Turkey samples to the same cluster (violet). The northern European cluster was further separated into two to three clusters depending on the methods, DAPC and STRUCTURE, respectively. Clusters identified by the DAPC approach were distributed almost equally among the different sampled locations. Of the three clusters identified by STRUCTURE, the orange and green ones showed a clear affinity to certain sample locations, while the grey cluster was represented in all sampled locations. No further structure was identified for the African cluster in both methods.

The DAPC's third round of analysis was unable to identify further genetic structure in the northern European cluster. It did however identify two groups inside the southern Eurasian cluster (without Turkey and Iran as a result of previous analyse). It appears that individuals from Spain, Western France and Ireland were mainly assigned to one (light blue) cluster. No other cluster was identified by the DAPC approach regarding refined hierarchical analysis. The STRUCTURE's third round of analysis was able to identify a K = 4 in the southern European cluster. Individuals from Turkey were assigned to an exclusive cluster (grey). Individuals from southwestern Europe and from Italy were mainly assigned to one cluster (orange), while those from Spain, West France and Ireland were grouped in a different cluster (blue). The fourth cluster (green) was distributed across all sampling locations with few individuals (11 out of 179) exhibiting more than 50% of assigning probability. In the northern European cluster, for this third round of hierarchical analysis, individuals were regrouped according to population probabilities *of the two almost exclusive clusters from last step, green and orange ones. From this third round until the last one, Evanno's method (*Evanno et al. 2005) always identified two clusters, but the analyses of  $\ln[\Pr(X|K)]$  was not clear in identifying those clusters (Figure SX). Also, individual probabilities of inside those K = 2 clusters show very mixed populations. The results for those subsequent rounds with a K = 2 are presented in Supplementary Information (figure SXX). We did a fourth and last round of hierarchical analysis for the two main southern Eurasian clusters identified in the previous round: (i) one cluster composed of Spain, West and South France, Ireland and England samples and (ii) the other cluster composed of Italy, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia. For the first one, Evanno's method identified  $K = 6$ , but the analysis of  $ln[Pr(X|K)]$  does not indicate any structure. For the later, both methods clearly identified a K = 7 structuring. In both cases, clusters are mainly distributed in all sample sites and very rarely a single individual had ~100% probability of being assigned to a particular cluster. The exceptions were individuals from West France and Ireland for which probability values to be assigned to the same cluster reached one.

![](_page_58_Figure_0.jpeg)

Figure S4. DAPC Hierarchical analysis. Each column corresponds to one level of analysis.

![](_page_59_Figure_0.jpeg)

![](_page_59_Figure_1.jpeg)

![](_page_60_Figure_0.jpeg)

Figure S6. Mean gene diversity, observed heterozygosity, and *F*is per population. Mean population gene diversity was always greater than the observed heterozygosity and *F*is was always positive.