



## THE EUROPEAN COOPERATIVE PROGRAMME FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

Promoting conservation, management  
and sustainable use of plant genetic  
diversity in Europe

The European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) brings together European countries to promote the **long-term conservation and increase the use of plant genetic resources in Europe for sustainable agriculture, food security and food quality**. Plant genetic resources are a fundamental asset to selecting or breeding crops that are more nutritious, productive and resilient to pests, diseases and climatic changes, and to reducing pressure on the environment.

Founded in 1980 on the recommendations of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Genebank Committee of the European Association for Research on Plant Breeding (EUCARPIA), ECPGR's network is composed of more than 800 scientists from about 40 European countries who work together to achieve the following objectives (2024–2028):

- **Consolidate and sustain *ex situ* conservation** of plant genetic resources by improving the efficiency and efficacy of the European genebank infrastructure
- **Strengthen the plant genetic resources information system** by improving the quality and quantity of data publicly available in the European Search Catalogue for Plant Genetic Resources (EURISCO)
- **Expand *in situ* conservation** of crop wild relatives, wild food plants and promote conservation and management of **on-farm diversity**
- **Promote sustainable use** of genetic diversity by facilitating access to and increasing knowledge on crop diversity, supporting participatory use and evaluation of genetic resources.

[www.ecpgiar.cgiar.org](http://www.ecpgiar.cgiar.org)



# ECPGR achievements and initiatives

Since its inception more than 40 years ago, ECPGR has strived to establish and improve collaboration among European countries on safeguarding plant genetic resources, improving access and promoting their sustainable use in Europe. Its initiatives, largely promoted and implemented by crop and thematic Working Groups, include the development of databases, quality standards for conservation, descriptors and protocols for characterization and evaluation, training workshops, sharing knowledge and know-how on plant genetic resources, as well as participation in EU projects through successful consortia. All the achievements have been possible thanks to the support and collaboration of the ECPGR member countries and their numerous public experts as well as cooperation with private sector and non-governmental organizations.



## AEGIS – A European Genebank Integrated System

AEGIS connects European genebanks to efficiently conserve and provide access to unique germplasm in Europe through the establishment of the European Collection. The accessions in the European Collection are conserved under high-quality standards and are made available following the terms of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.



## EURISCO – The European Search Catalogue for Plant Genetic Resources

EURISCO is a European online database that provides information on crop plants and their wild relatives preserved by more than 400 institutes in 43 European countries, as *ex situ* accessions or *in situ* populations. With more than 2 million accessions, including over 6,200 genera and 41,600 species, EURISCO is one of the largest contributors to global public databases of plant genetic resources.

Eurisco is maintained at the Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK), Germany, on behalf of ECPGR and in collaboration with National Focal Points.



# EVA

European Evaluation Network



## EVA – The European Evaluation Network

To translate the full potential of the plant genetic resources maintained by genebanks into breeding and cultivation practices, in 2019 ECPGR established the European Evaluation Network (EVA). Through public-private partnerships, EVA has been testing in multilocation trials all over Europe thousands of accessions of carrot, lettuce, maize, pepper, wheat and barley available in European genebanks. The evaluation as well as genetic data are made publicly available from EURISCO after a 3-year embargo period. The EVA establishment was funded by the German Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture; the EVA Wheat and Barley network also received support through the EU-funded 'AGENT' project.

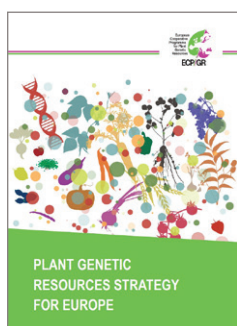


Genetic  
Resources



## Genetic Resources Journal

Launched in 2020 in the context of the EU-funded 'GenResBridge' project, Genetic Resources is a full open-access and free-to-publish peer-reviewed journal disseminating global knowledge and tools used by the community of practitioners of plant and animal genetic resources. It publishes research, methods, case studies as well as reviews and opinion papers and is managed by the ECPGR Secretariat, with the support of the European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources (ERFP).



## The Plant Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe

Published by ECPGR in 2021, the *Plant Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe* is the result of a 3-year consultation with a wide range of experts and stakeholders in the context of the EU-funded 'GenResBridge' project. The *Plant Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe* is a foundational document that draws up a strategic vision to secure plant genetic resources and urges the European region towards a firm political commitment to meet its obligations to global policy frameworks and instruments, tightly linked and complementary to the European Green Deal. ECPGR's work for the next five years is built in alignment with the 2030 targets of the Strategy.

Illustrations: Fernando Luque Cuesta



# Looking ahead: ECPGR in the next five years (2024–2028)

The ECPGR Steering Committee agreed in June 2023 to launch a new phase of ECPGR (2024–2028) to consolidate its achievements and collaborate towards new challenges and priorities in line with the *Plant Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe*, inter alia:

- Expand regional knowledge on crop wild relatives distribution and management through webinars and web portals and facilitate their use through the provision of *in situ* population data to EURISCO;
- Through an ECPGR portal, improve knowledge of existing national on-farm conservation and management strategies, programmes and initiatives and carry out surveys to identify and describe ongoing on-farm plant genetic resource conservation and use examples at national and regional levels;
- Develop a blueprint for a genebank quality certification system in collaboration with the EU-funded ‘PRO-GRACE’ project and implement a genebank review system, as well as organize capacity-building services within the framework of the Genebank Managers Network; support countries to identify and include material into AEGIS, including regeneration and safety-duplication;
- Extend compilation and transfer of *ex situ* and *in situ* passport and phenotypic data to EURISCO and maintain national inventory focal points well trained;
- Continue the activity of existing EVA Networks and support the creation of other crops’ public–private partnerships, such as for legumes, fruit trees, etc.

## ECPGR Structure

ECPGR is funded by the participating countries and is guided by a Steering Committee (SC), consisting of the National Coordinators of the member countries. The SC nominates an Executive Committee composed of four SC members and a Chair, to plan and execute the ECPGR activities, as decided upon by the SC.

The Secretariat coordinates the implementation of the programme, which is organized into 20 crop and 4 thematic Working Groups. In 2023, ECPGR established a pilot Genebank Managers Network to strengthen and improve the management of European genebanks through the exchange of knowledge, cooperation and capacity building.



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