

ENDANGERED EUROPEAN ACCESSIONS/COLLECTIONS: POTENTIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ROLE OF ECPGR?

M. Lefort, ExCo Chair

Oeiras, May-June 2023



A new issue that ExCo had to deal with...

- A new and specific request from a genebank in one ECPGR country
- The need to explore what are the current practices at the International level and namely under the ITPGRFA
- Few important strategic questions raised by ExCo

→ Need to interact with SC members before going further

The specific request of Bulgaria

Request for ECPGR support to regenerate 200 soybean accessions at risk of being lost (loss of viability) → €5,000

- Will to outsource the regeneration to Serbia (Inst. of Field and Vegetable Crops) due to lack of internal competence
- Accessions largely of foreign origin acquired between 1954 and 1983, characterized mainly through accession name (1/3 *'potentially' present in other European Genebanks?*)

→ *A case study with limited information that should not preclude the SC from defining a **policy/strategy** in case of demands for support of **European unique and original endangered accessions.***



Current practices at the international level and namely under the ITPGRFA

- **“Art.15 of the ITPGRFA*** and the agreements concluded under it, mandate the Secretary to respond to situations where the orderly maintenance of a collection is at risk due to unforeseen events. In particular, the Secretary must seek to intervene or provide assistance when a collection is threatened. This includes providing technical support and assistance for the evacuation or transfer of a threatened collection, as may be required.”
- No dedicated resource available
- In 2021, establishment of the ‘**Emergency Reserve for Genebanks**’, jointly by the **ITPGRFA Secretariat** and the **Crop Trust**.

* This article deals with ex situ collections of global and regional importance held by a number of international institutions

The Emergency Reserve for Genebanks (1/2)

- The FAO/CropTrust '**Emergency Reserve**' will provide rapid, short-term, urgent support:
 - To **unique** *ex situ* collections (including field ones) in the **Multilateral System**
 - Where there is **imminent threat to the collection**
 - In case **no alternative financial support is available**

The Emergency Reserve (2/2)

- The FAO/Crop Trust '**Emergency Reserve**' will accelerate interventions to safeguard international and national collections through:
 - Repairing or procurement of equipment or supplies
 - Evacuation or temporary relocating of a collection
 - Mitigation of the effects of war or civil unrest
 - Duplication of materials under threat
- *Associated operational framework includes a long **list of disbursement principles and eligibility criteria** among which the location in a developing country**

* As defined by the OECD DAC/ODA list of developing countries

Potential responsibility of – and/or solidarity within – ECPGR country members vis-à-vis the European endangered collections/accessions (1/3)

The International Treaty:

- **Art. 5.1** “Each Contracting Party (CP) shall, subject to national legislation, and in cooperation with other CPs where appropriate, promote an integrated approach to the exploration, conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA...
(e) **Cooperate** to promote the development of an efficient and sustainable system of ex situ conservation...”
- **Art. 5.2** “The CPs shall, as appropriate, take steps to minimize or, if possible, eliminate threats to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.”
- **Art. 7 – National commitments and International Cooperation** “Each CP shall, ..., **cooperate** with other CP in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA”
- **Art.8 – Technical assistance** “ The CPs agree to promote the **provision of technical assistance to CPs**, especially those that are developing countries or countries with economy in transition”...to facilitate Treaty’s implementation.

Potential responsibility of – and/or solidarity within – ECPGR country members vis-à-vis the European endangered collections/accessions (1/3)

The International Treaty:

Art. 5.1 “Each Contracting Party (CP) shall, subject to national legislation, and in cooperation



A responsibility of ECPGR in promoting cooperation among European country members in the international context?

- *Art.8 –Technical assistance “ The CPs agree to promote the provision of technical assistance to CPs, especially those that are developing countries or countries with economy in transition”...to facilitate Treaty’s implementation.*



Potential responsibility of – and/or solidarity within – ECPGR country members vis-à-vis the European endangered collections/accessions (2/3)

NO

ECPGR individual countries' responsibility reaffirmed in a global world

Eligible countries'* requests should be addressed to the *Emergency Reserve*.

Other ECPGR countries can't solicit support of ECPGR

Maybe

ECPGR countries' solidarity recognized as part of intl. cooperation with interest to safeguard unique accessions of the European collection, potentially important for European agriculture

- Scope of ECPGR intervention
- Type of support
- Conditions to be funded
- Funding mechanism



Potential responsibility of – and/or solidarity within – ECPGR country members vis-à-vis the European endangered collections/accessions (3/3)

Maybe / YES (contd)

Scope of ECPGR intervention:

- Limited to developing countries or countries with economy in transition?
- Limited to short-term support or extended to medium-term vulnerable accessions?

Type of support:

- Expertise to assess the status of collection
- Rescue regeneration project
- Small laboratory equipment and consumables
- Training and capacity building, etc

→ *A potential accompaniment of relevant WG experts and the future Network of Genebank Managers?*

Potential responsibility of – and/or solidarity within – ECPGR country members vis-à-vis the European endangered collections/accessions (3/3)

Maybe (*contd*)

Conditions to be funded/eligibility criteria:

- Aligned or not to the Emergency reserve ones for short-term support
- Reconsidered for medium-term support where potential vulnerability can be anticipated over few years, ...

Funding mechanism

- ECPGR Grant scheme dedicated budget line?
- External funding from various sources???

→ *ECPGR SC to set up a Task Force to elaborate a strategy for ECPGR with clear ToRs*

A photograph of a person's hands typing on a keyboard at a desk. The image is overlaid with a large, white, bold 'THANK YOU' text. Below the text is a horizontal bar with a color gradient from green to yellow to orange to pink. The background is a blurred office setting with a desk, keyboard, and a window.

THANK YOU



THANK YOU
