



Minutes of the 20th ECPGR Executive Committee meeting

27 April 2022 (h10:00-13:00)
Online (Teams)

Present:

Marianne Lefort (Chair)
Vojtěch Holubec (Czech Republic)
Birgitte Lund (Denmark)
Benvindo Martins Maçãs (Portugal)
Beate Schierscher (Switzerland)
Lorenzo Maggioni (ECPGR Secretariat)

1. Genetic Resources event under the French Presidency of the European Union

M. Lefort informed the ExCo about the progress for the preparation of the meeting of the EU Working Party on genetic resources on 20 June 2022, during which M. Bozzano, Coordinator of Genres Bridge, has been invited to give a presentation on the Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe (GRSE); the presentation will be short and will also include one slide specific to each domain strategy. The three genetic resources communities (animal, plant and forest) are collaborating in the preparation of the presentation, with the aim of raising policymakers' awareness of the need to implement the GRSE with the support of the EU.

This specific meeting has been organized with the support of the French Ministry in charge of agriculture under the French presidency of the EU, and the ambition is to pursue this type of action under the next Czech Republic and Swedish presidencies to ensure it finally arrives at a final discussion at the EU Council level.

2. Preparation for the Mid-Term Steering Committee meeting

M. Lefort presented the draft agenda for the Steering Committee (SC) meeting, which was approved with small changes and the definition of the Chairs of the various sessions. She also reminded the ExCo that they should finalize together a presentation about the ExCo activities undertaken during the first part of Phase X.

L. Maggioni presented a table matching objectives and outputs of ECPGR Phase X with objectives and targets of the PGR Strategy for Europe. Columns were added indicating, for each item, the responsible bodies, the ECPGR type of action that could be undertaken in Phase XI and the potential funding source. This table could be used during the SC meeting as a starting basis for the 2-hour discussion in separate subgroups, to identify specific priority actions and budget lines for ECPGR in Phase XI.

The ExCo agreed on the use of this table and suggested adding an empty column for the subgroups to suggest a level of priority to each item to be then discussed in plenary with the entire SC. They also agreed to create subgroups composed of people from the same subregion, and to give instructions for each subgroup to start working on different subsections, so that all objectives under section 2 could be covered by at least two subgroups during the two hours discussion.

L. Maggioni gave a short presentation on the options that could be proposed to the SC for the mode of operation of Phase XI, also in this case to promote discussion during the SC meeting. The ExCo appreciated the presentation as suitable for the purpose, with a few amendments.

Both the table and the presentation will be uploaded in revised form among the background documents for the Steering Committee meeting.

3. Other business

The ExCo took into consideration the revised version and budget of the Grant Scheme proposal 'BiDifferent', provided by the Activity Coordinator R. Vögel. The proposal was approved.

A request made by the Bulgarian genebank for support for the regeneration of soybean accessions was also considered. The accessions, foreign varieties used for breeding in the 1980s in Bulgaria, have become difficult to regenerate and the Secretariat had obtained an offer from experts in Romania to help in this task. The ExCo agreed that ECPGR could provide support, depending on the actual costs, and provided that the regenerated accessions would be included as part of AEGIS.

L. Maggioni informed the ExCo of the recent establishment of an informal group of support for the Ukrainian genebank, promoted by the German National Coordination office and including the ECPGR ExCo Chair and Secretary, National Coordinators from the Netherlands, Sweden and UK, NordGen, FAO ITPGRFA-Secretariat and the Crop Trust. Its intention is to organize funding support for both emergency needs related to the safety of staff and genetic material, and a medium-term plan for the replacement of damaged or lost equipment and facilities. The group solicited a first donation of €5,000 from ECPGR to be used for staff support and provision of essential items (fuel, food and medicines). A second donation for the same amount will also be solicited shortly after the successful delivery of the first one. A detailed Plan of Action is expected to be established together with other donors, also thanks to information gathered by an FAO emergency mission in Ukraine. The use of complementary funds that ECPGR could provide will be discussed at the next SC meeting.

V. Holubec informed the ExCo about options for his replacement as ExCo member of the East region. He suggested that Pavol Hauptvogel from Slovakia could be a good candidate and that he would be open to considering becoming an ExCo member. The ExCo agreed to contact Pavol and submit his candidature to the SC for approval.