



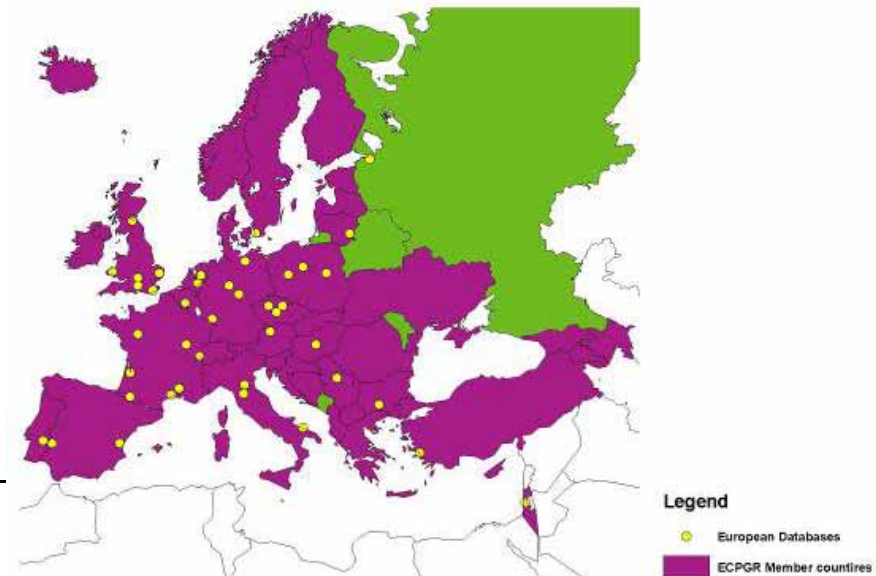
European Cooperation on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ECPGR - AEGIS)

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Bioversity International

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ECPGR

- A network among European countries
 - To facilitate conservation and use of PGRFA
 - To increase cooperation and joint activities
 - To share responsibilities





ECPGR

- Started in 1980 as a UNDP project (East-West collaboration for agricultural development)
- Self-funded by the member countries as of 1987, using differential rates (today approx. € 550K/year)
- Secretariat hosted by IBPGR / IPGRI / Bioversity International

Why a Network (1+1=3)

Conservation and facilitated use can be more effective through collaboration:

- Sharing resources, knowledge, staff, facilities
 - Minimizing duplication of effort
 - Creating synergies
 - Linking isolated scientists
 - Producing public goods (publications, methodologies, standards, databases)
 - Mobilizing additional resources for jointly agreed work
 - Solving problems that are too complex or large for individual countries to solve alone (transnational character of PGR)
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ECPGR Structure

Steering Committee

Coordinating Secretariat

Cereals Network	Forages Network	Fruit Network	Oil and Protein Crops Network	Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops Network	Vegetables, Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Network	Documentation and Information Network	<i>In situ</i> and On-farm Conservation Network	Inter-regional Cooperation Network
NCG	NCG	NCG	NCG	NCG	NCG	NCG	NCG	NCG
Working Groups	Working Group	Working Groups	Working Group	Working Groups	Working Groups	• National Inventory Focal Points • European Central Crop Database Managers • EURISCO Advisory Group	• Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves Task Force • On-farm Conservation and Management Task Force	• Inter-regional Cooperation Task Force
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Avena</i> • Barley • Wheat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Malus/Pyrus</i> • <i>Prunus</i> • <i>Vitis</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grain Legumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Beta</i> • Fibre Crops (Flax and Hemp) • Potato 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allium</i> • <i>Brassica</i> • Cucurbits • Leafy Vegetables • Medicinal and Aromatic Plants • Solanaceae • Umbellifer Crops 			

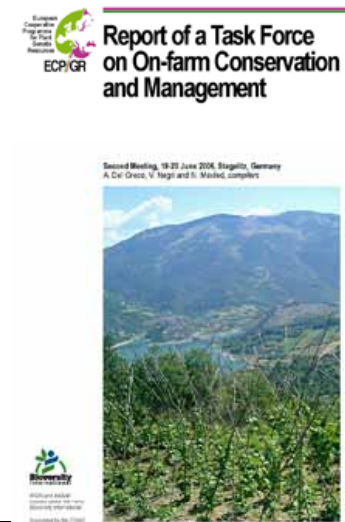
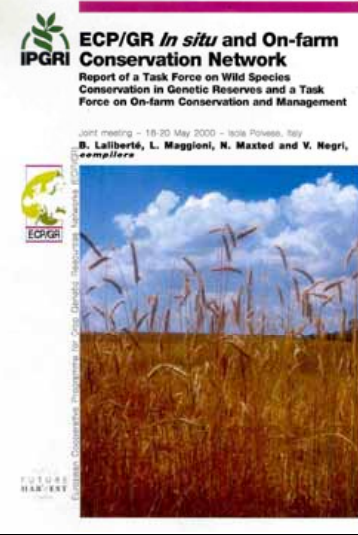
Crop Networks

Thematic Networks



ECPGR – funded activities

- 5-year budget: 2.7 Mo. Euro (current VIII Phase, 2009 – 2013)
 - Coordinating Secretariat at Bioversity
 - Working Group and Network meetings
 - Publications
 - *Ad hoc* actions
 - EURISCO
 - AEGIS





ECPGR

(Inter-regional cooperation Network)

- ~ 5 % of Network operations' budget
- Inter-regional meetings in support of the implementation of the International Treaty

ECPGR achievements

- Information system (National inventories, Central Crop Databases, EURISCO)
- Sharing information (publications)
- Standards (descriptors, conservation, regeneration method.)
- EU-funded projects
- Collaborative activities (collecting, collections, regeneration, safety-duplication, etc.)



The Establishment of **A** **E**uropean **G**enebank **I**ntegrated **S**ystem



Current situation

- Approx. 500 collection holdings in Europe
- Approx. 2 million accessions (high level of duplication) of numerous crops
- 45 countries = wealth of expertise, capacities, different environments

International obligations

- Countries' obligations to conserve and make available biodiversity (CBD)
- Need to increase efficiency of conservation and to reduce duplication of efforts (GPA 1996)
- Enhance national commitment and international cooperation – Multilateral System (IT 2001)

Reported difficulties with the current situation

Difficulties reported to properly maintain PGR:

- Lack of long-term conservation facilities
- Insufficient safety-duplication
- Regeneration backlogs
- Lack of well-defined technical standards

Difficulties reported to better utilize PGR:

- Relative isolation of genebanks from users' community
- Germplasm insufficiently evaluated
- Inhomogeneous quality of material and information
- Variable germplasm exchange conditions

Why AEGIS ?

- *Ex situ* conservation in Europe can be more efficient and more effective through a regional approach
(estimate of overall level of duplication is at least 50 %)
- No country or sub-region is self-sufficient as regard the need or opportunity to use PGR
- Efficient regional system can contribute to a global effort to conserve GR with a benefit-sharing approach

AEGIS main objectives

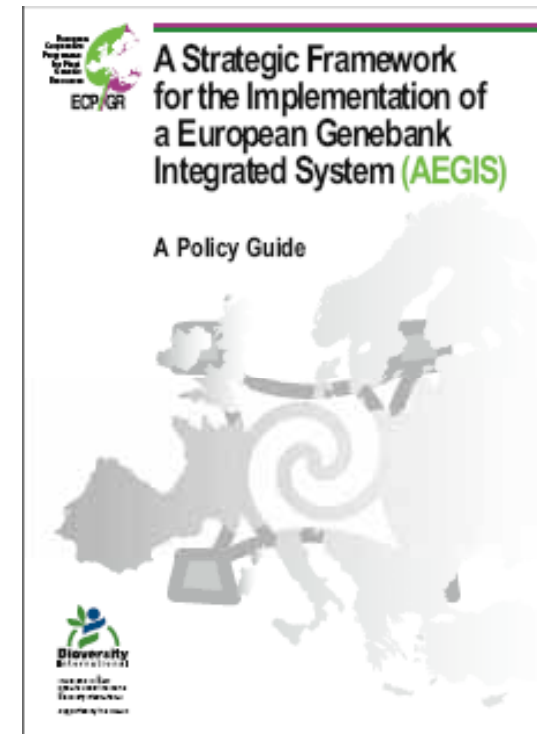
- Establishing a more efficient regional system of conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA through the setting up of a **European Collection**
- Provide a mechanism for regional cooperation in the **implementation of the Treaty** in the European region

Expected AEGIS achievements

- Establishment and operation of an **effective and cost-efficient system**
- Conservation commitment **secured** (long-term)
- Quality standards adequately **defined and raised**
- Access to PGRFA and related information **guaranteed**

Agreements

- Strategic Framework / Policy Guide
- Memorandum of Understanding, incl. Associate Membership Agreements



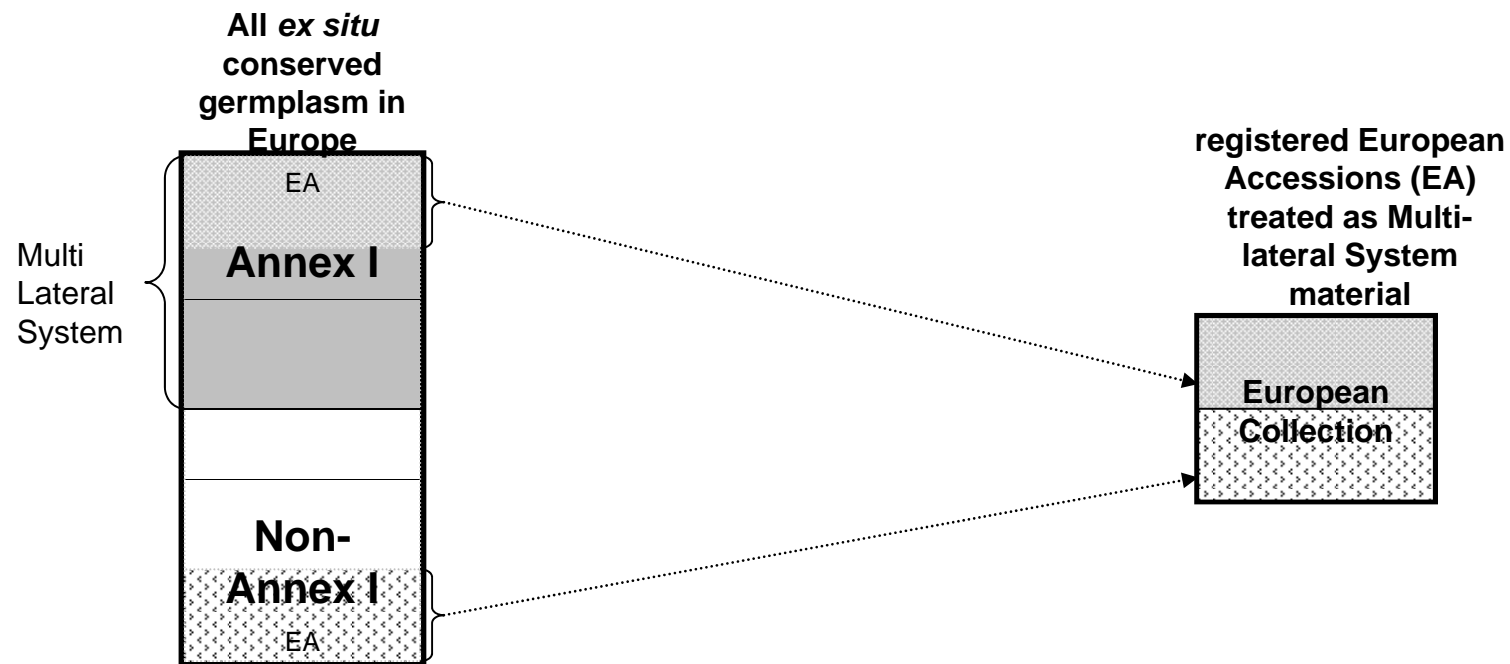
Memorandum of Understanding

- Establishment of AEGIS
- Eligibility
- Objectives
- Relationship AEGIS – ECPGR
- Responsibilities of members / national coordinators /
- General principles applicable to European accessions
- Associate Membership of AEGIS

Scope of European Collection

- Material **under the management and control** of the member countries and their associate members, **in the public domain** and offered by the associate members for inclusion into AEGIS
- **Genetically unique** within AEGIS, to the best available knowledge (i.e. genetically distinct accessions; assessment based on available data and/or on the recorded history of the accession)
- **Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture** as defined in the International Treaty as well as **medicinal and ornamental** species
- **European origin or introduced** germplasm that is of actual or potential importance to Europe (for breeding, research, education or for historical and cultural reasons).

Creation of a European Collection





Establishment of the European Collection

- AEGIS Members propose European Accessions
- Working Groups analyze proposals and recommend the Most Appropriate Accessions
- AEGIS Members register accessions as European Accessions into EURISCO



AEGIS Quality System (AQUAS)

- Quality assurance based on the principles:
 - Say what you do
 - Do what you say
 - Let an independent body check that you do what you say
 - Correct and improve what you say you do

AQUAS principles

- Consensus
- Agreed minimum standards
- Capacity building
- As little bureaucratic as possible
- Monitoring system (not police, but guiding and advisory approach)

Management of the European Collection

- Management Standards to be proposed for each crop by respective Working Group and approved by ECPGR Steering Committee
- Associate Members of AEGIS to perform activities according to agreed standards
- Public domain accession-level information as well as non-confidential characterization and evaluation data, to be made available
- Each European Accession to have identified safety-duplicate stored under the same or better conditions than the original

Transfer of germplasm

Standard Material Transfer

Agreement (SMTA) to be used for
the transfer of **Annex I crops**
AND of **Non-Annex I crops**, under
the same terms and conditions,
with explanatory note

AEGIS bodies

- ECPGR Steering Committee (overall responsibility)
- AEGIS Advisory Committee (4-5 technical advisors)
- ECPGR Secretariat (coordination)
- ECPGR Working Groups (crop level management)
- AEGIS Associate members (genebanks, research institutes, etc.) (conservation, research and management units)
- ECPGR Doc & Info Network (Information infrastructure)

AEGIS sustainability

- Self-funded (time, facilities and services) by European national programmes (also part of their commitment to implement the International Treaty)
- ECPGR funds
 - Secretariat
 - Small Grant Scheme
- Project funds
 - Submission of proposals to EU

Conclusion

- AEGIS is the mechanism for regional cooperation in the implementation of the International Treaty in the European region
- In principle, Europe will be committed to conserve and share ALL crop PGRFA according to a fair and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from their use



Thank you



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