

EURISCO Newsletter, No. 10

December 2020

The EURISCO Newsletter is a series of electronic bulletins that provide feedback to National Focal Points (NFPs) and serve as a dissemination vehicle for NFPs and other partners to put forward their contributions regarding plant genetic resources issues/themes. The EURISCO Newsletter is the successor of the previous EURISCO e-bulletin. In order to ensure that the EURISCO Catalogue is sustainable and meets the NFPs' and other users' needs, everyone is invited to contribute to this newsletter. Thematic papers, ideas, comments, suggestions and questions are all welcome.

I hope you are all well. 2020 was a year full of challenges. The still ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has caused a lot of turbulence, in the professional as well as in the private sphere. Many planned activities had to be postponed or could only take place to a limited extent. Even though the coming months will certainly not be easy, the hopeful news from the field of vaccine development at least makes an end of the pandemic foreseeable. We are all now looking hopefully to the time afterwards.

This newsletter is intended to give you an overview of EURISCO's activities in recent months.

Coverage of EURISCO

Since January 2020, the number of accessions documented in EURISCO increased by 23,843. A total of 2,043,257 accessions from 43 National Inventories and 404 individual holding institutions were documented by 3rd December 2020. They represent 6,719 genera and 45,131 species, respectively. The number of AEGIS accessions labelled in EURISCO rose by 788, reaching 57,606 in total.

Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) are increasingly accepted as unique identifiers in the field of plant genebanks. The number of accessions documented in EURISCO to which a DOI was assigned, increased by 166,289 to a total of 226,789. At present, DOIs from six countries are deposited in EURISCO: Azerbaijan, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Romania. Details can be found on the EURISCO website.

In 2020, the number of phenotypic data records rose by 31,149, reaching a total of 2,513,423. They are provided by nine countries and comprise 86,041 accessions. More data will be welcome anytime.

EURISCO-related activities

This year, there have been relatively few developments that are visible to the general public. The upload processes for EURISCO data providers are currently being completely revised. This is necessary because the technology previously used for this purpose is no longer supported.

Furthermore, a re-engineering of the web interface has been started with the aim of providing the interface with a new, more modern design and, in particular, significantly improving its use on mobile devices. The proven functionalities of the interface will be adopted.

The EURISCO team has been strengthened by the addition of a new developer since November. Ms Pragna Kotni studied Information Technology at JNT University, Kakinada, India, and has several years of professional experience in the field of database development. We welcome Ms Kotni and look forward to working with her.

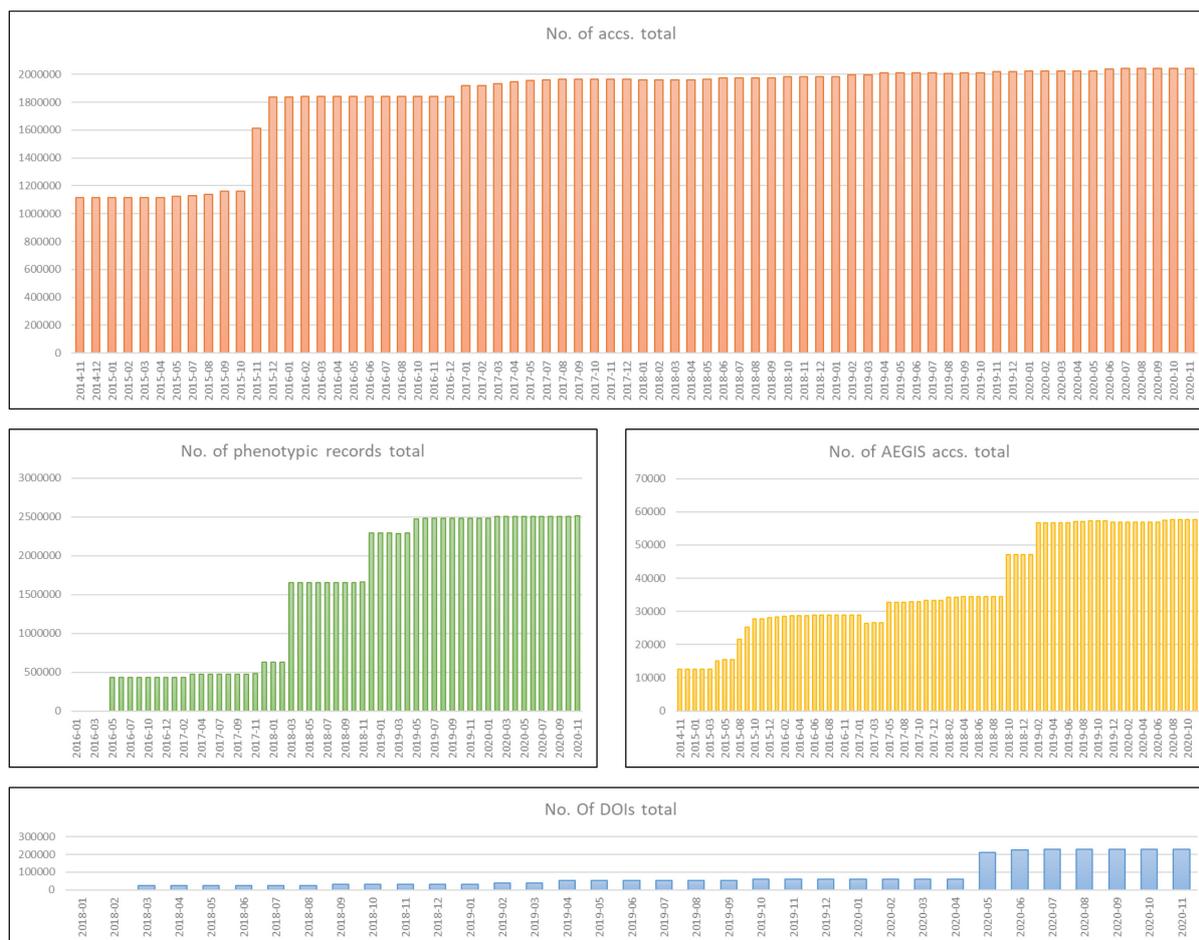


Figure 1: Overview of the EURISCO dataset.

A major focus of this year's activities has been to participate in projects involving EURISCO, including several Horizon 2020 projects such as GenRes Bridge, Farmer's Pride and EUCLEG.

Particular attention was also paid to the AGENT project, in which EURISCO plays a central role for the storage of new data deriving from the European wheat and barley collections.

In addition, the EURISCO coordination is involved in the European Evaluation Network (EVA) of the ECPGR. In the last few months, it has been involved in the creation of data templates and supported the collection/adaptation of existing C&E data on wheat, barley and maize for upload into EURISCO.

Filling the position of an EVA software developer proved difficult, but ultimately successful. A new developer will start work in January 2021 on creating special EURISCO functionalities for the EVA networks.

We will continue to actively participate in the preparation of further project proposals aimed at acquiring additional funding for developing certain aspects of EURISCO.

Dissemination

A presentation on EURISCO was given at the workshop *First Meeting of the ECPGR Berries Working Group*, Dresden, Germany, 14–16 January 2020.

Another talk was given by video conference at the ad hoc action meeting *Development of specifications for a modern gene bank documentation software (CryoWEB 2.0)*, Madrid, Spain, 11–12 March 2020.

In addition, EURISCO was presented in a webinar given in the frame of the European, Middle Eastern & African Society for Biopreservation and Biobanking (ESBB), 15 December 2020.

EURISCO was mentioned in a paper in *Plants* (DOI [10.3390/plants9081050](https://doi.org/10.3390/plants9081050)) as well as in a book chapter of the *Handbook of Plant Breeding* series (DOI [10.1007/978-3-030-38792-1_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38792-1_1)).

The annual EURISCO training workshop should have taken place this year in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, jointly organised with the Institute for Plant Genetic Resources "K. Malkov" and in the framework of the GenRes Bridge project. Unfortunately, the workshop had to be postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An exact date cannot be given at present due to the existing uncertainties.

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