

# European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks (ECP/GR)



## 2004 Progress Report

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### Summary

This first progress report of Phase VII (2004-2008) covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2004. The implementation of the new Phase started by sending Letters of Agreement to the National Coordinators and Focal Points of 44 potential member countries. A total of 26 countries have formalized their membership to Phase VII of ECP/GR. The composition of the Network Coordinating Groups (NCGs) for all the crop and thematic Networks was redefined. The NCGs were then engaged in developing proposals for the allocation of funds assigned to each Network. A document entitled: "Network's budget allocation for Phase VII" was approved by the Steering Committee. The NCGs also agreed on twelve Working Groups to be prioritized for funding during Phase VII, while the remaining six would still receive minimum support. In defining activities for Phase VII, NCGs decided to spend their funds for Working Group, *ad hoc* and Network meetings. Additionally, a proportion of the funds was allocated to actions. The choice to use funds for actions rather than for meetings has required a reduction of the previously agreed country quota.

Activities carried out within the crop Networks consisted in the organization of a number of meetings (*ad hoc* barley meeting; two *ad hoc* *Avena* meetings; *ad hoc* Solanaceae meeting; second meeting of the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Working Group). Within the thematic Networks, a joint meeting of the EURISCO Advisory Group and the Documentation and Information Network Coordinating Group was held in March. The EURISCO catalogue was maintained by IPGRI and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IPGRI and the National Focal Point (NFP) of the National Plant Genetic Resources Inventory, regarding collaboration on the development of EURISCO, was signed by all the 41 countries participating in EURISCO, for the period 2004-2009. The ECP/GR Web site was revised and entirely updated in order to reflect the new organizational structure. The Task Force for Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves continued to be involved in the EU-funded project on "European Crop Wild Relative Diversity Assessment and Conservation Forum – PGRForum".

Following an initiative taken by the ECP/GR Secretariat to strengthen collaboration between genebanks and the private sector for the regeneration of endangered vegetable accessions, several expressions of interest were obtained from breeders from Italy, the Netherlands and Spain. However, there were no corresponding requests from genebanks to use the services of the breeders.

Public awareness activities included the production of ECP/GR pens and a leaflet detailing the priorities and objectives of the Programme during Phase VII.

The AEGIS project for the establishment of a European Genebank Integration System was started, with the definition of an AEGIS Steering Committee, project partners and model crops. The first meeting of the AEGIS Steering Committee was held in March. A Project Manager was appointed and started working at IPGRI Headquarters in August. The start-up AEGIS meeting for the project partners was held in November at the Nordic Gene Bank in Alnarp, Sweden, with the aim to inform and update the project partners and for the project partners to prepare a workplan for the next two years.

Several ECP/GR Working Groups have been preparing project proposals for submission to the first call of Council Regulation (EC) 870/2004. Indeed, the text of the Regulation makes specific reference to ECP/GR. There is therefore a high expectation from the groups to be able to implement part of their workplans with funding from the EC.

Four reports of past ECP/GR Working Group meetings were published by IPGRI and several electronic documents reporting the results of the various meetings were made available. Plans for 2005 activities and publications are also detailed in the present report.

## 1. Introduction

This is the first progress report of Phase VII (2004-2008), covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2004. During the past year, the Secretariat has kept the Steering Committee informed on upcoming meetings, changes of National Coordinators and other developments through the “steering listserver” maintained by the Nordic Gene Bank. All the National Coordinators and representatives of the observer institutions (ESA, EUCARPIA, EuroMAB, FAO, IPGRI, NGB, NGOs) are subscribers to this “steering listserver”. Further to the information distributed through the listserver, this report aims at providing a comprehensive overview of the activities conducted within the framework of ECP/GR during the year 2004.

## 2. Implementation of Phase VII of ECP/GR

Following the endorsement by the Steering Committee of a new Phase of ECP/GR, which was proposed at its ninth meeting in Izmir, Turkey, in October 2003, Letters of Agreement were sent by the Secretariat in February 2004 to the National Coordinators and Focal Points of 44 potential member countries.

As of the end of April 2005, a total of 26 countries have formalized their membership to Phase VII of ECP/GR. Five other countries have not signed the Letter of Agreement, but their annual contributions were regularly paid. Georgia joined ECP/GR in 2004 and Azerbaijan in 2005. Specific efforts were made to invite new countries to become members. In particular, missions were organized or direct contacts were established with Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Expectations that Belarus and Bosnia and Herzegovina will soon join ECP/GR are high. The list of member countries is kept updated online at <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/AboutECPGR.htm/>.

As a first step in the implementation of the new Phase of ECP/GR, the Secretariat prepared a document called “Terms of reference for the operational bodies of ECP/GR”, summarizing the role and function of the National Coordinators, the Steering Committee, the Coordinating Secretariat, the Networks, the Network Coordinating Groups (NCGs) and the Working Groups (WGs). This document is based on the practice and decisions accumulated over the years for the operation of the ECP/GR Programme, and it was approved by the Steering Committee in April 2004. Considering that ECP/GR is a flexible programme, this text may need frequent revision by the Steering Committee and it is therefore considered as a permanent Working Document, available online at [http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/ToRs\\_PhaseVII.doc/](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/ToRs_PhaseVII.doc/).

The composition of the NCGs for all the crop and thematic Networks was redefined in 2004. Following approval by the Steering Committee of specific budget allocations defined for each Network, the NCGs were engaged in developing proposals, in consultation with the WG, for the allocation of funds assigned to each Network within the new Phase, including meetings, and publications or other actions. This process was expected to be concluded by June 2004, but it was eventually completed only in November 2004 with the approval by the Steering Committee of a document entitled: “Network’s budget allocation for Phase VII” ([http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/Budget\\_PhaseVII.pdf](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/Budget_PhaseVII.pdf)).

The NCGs also agreed on twelve WGs to be prioritized for funding during Phase VII, while the remaining six WGs would still receive minimum support.

High priority WGs:

1. *Avena*
2. Wheat
3. Forages
4. *Malus/Pyrus*
5. *Prunus*
6. Grain legumes
7. *Beta*
8. Fibre crops (flax and hemp)
9. Cucurbits
10. Leafy vegetables
11. Medicinal and Aromatic Plants
12. Umbellifer crops

Lower priority WGs:

1. *Allium*
2. *Brassica*
3. Barley
4. Potato
5. Solanaceae
6. *Vitis*

In defining activities for Phase VII, NCGs decided to spend their funds for Working Group, *ad hoc* and Network meetings. Additionally, a proportion of the funds was allocated to actions such as laboratory production of microsatellites (Fruit Network), employment of a scientist to upgrade databases (Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops Network), publications and collecting missions (wild oats and *Aegilops*).

The choice to use funds for actions rather than for meetings has required a reduction of the previously agreed country quota (number of WG meeting participants per country, funded by ECP/GR during Phase VII). In other words, the country quotas were originally granted to the countries on the assumption that most of the funds would be used for meetings. As it turned out that a significant proportion of funds would be used for actions, funds allocated to meetings would no longer be sufficient to cover the cost of participation of as many WG members as allowed by the original country quota. Therefore, the Secretariat proposed to reduce the quota by about 30%. Following consultation with the Steering Committee on the listserver, the proposal from the Secretariat was provisionally accepted, with the request to reconsider the whole issue at the Mid-Term Steering Committee meeting.

The proposed changes in country quota are summarized below:

- **Category A** (Armenia, Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia FYR, Malta, , Serbia and Montenegro): **Reduced from 10 to 7.**
- **Category B** (Cyprus, Croatia, Iceland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia): **Reduced from 11 to 8.**
- **Category C** (Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Poland, Portugal, Turkey): **Reduced from 13 to 9.**
- **Category D** (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain Sweden, Switzerland): **Reduced from 15 to 11.**
- **Category E** (France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom): **Reduced from 18 to 13.**

### 3. Activities carried out within the Networks

#### 3.1 Cereals Network

The **Cereals Network Coordinating Group** was defined, consisting of seven members. It represents the three main crops *Avena*, barley and wheat, and the activities on rye and triticale. Its members are Helmut Knüpfner, Gatersleben, Germany (Network co-Chair, barley); Annick Le Blanc, Surgères, France (Network co-Chair, wheat); Christoph Germeier, Braunschweig, Germany (*Avena*); Marja Jalli, Jokioinen, Finland (barley); Andreas Katsiotis, Athens, Greece (*Avena*); Gert Kleijer, Nyon, Switzerland (wheat, triticale); Wieslaw Podyma, Radzików, Poland (*Avena*, rye); Iva Faberová, Prague, Czech Republic (reserve candidate).

The NCG prioritized the *Avena* and Wheat WGs for Phase VII. The Barley WG is a lower priority.

Phase VI funds were used to organize an *ad hoc* **Barley meeting** in conjunction with the ninth International Barley Genetics Symposium (IBGS), Brno, 20 June 2004. Ten participants from the WG finalized its priorities in relation to four priority areas:

- Characterization and evaluation: completion and study of the Barley Core Collection using molecular markers, pre-breeding and base-broadening; ring test or net blotch;
- Task sharing: identification of duplicates; safety-duplication;
- *In situ* and on-farm conservation: coordination with the EU project PGRForum;
- Documentation and Information: development of the ECP/GR Barley Database, also in the context of international cooperation.

Some of these priority actions were channelled into initiatives during the following IBGS workshop, in which a group was formed to prepare a strategy concept note on pre-breeding and base-broadening, to be submitted to FAO for funding. The aim to create a “one-stop shop” for barley germplasm information worldwide was strengthened by the decision of the European Barley Database (IPK), the Barley Genetic Stocks Database (NGB) and the Global Inventory of Barley Genetic Resources (ICARDA) to join forces. A meeting of database managers to establish links between these databases is planned for 2005.

An *Avena* WG *ad hoc* meeting was held in conjunction with the VII<sup>th</sup> International Oat Conference in Helsinki, Finland, 17-22 July 2004, which was attended by a number of *Avena* WG members. Issues discussed included the possibility of having areas of primary habitat for three rare oat species (*Avena maroccana*, *A. murphyi* and *A. insularis*) in Morocco, Spain and Italy respectively preserved for *in situ* conservation. The country representatives would need to pursue this with their respective government agencies. Further to this, ECP/GR funds were allocated by the Network to collect the former three species during 2005. The Group started discussion for the preparation of a project proposal to be submitted for funding under Council Regulation 870/2004, as a follow-up to the project on “Evaluation and enhancement of *Avena* landrace collections for extensification of the genetic basis of *Avena* for quality and resistance breeding”, which was funded under Council Regulation 1467/94. The Chair of the *Avena* Working Group, Mike Leggett, announced his retirement in December 2004 and the Group selected Andreas Katsiotis of the Agricultural University of Athens as interim Chair, to be confirmed at the next full *Avena* WG meeting.

An *Avena* *ad hoc* meeting to advance the preparation of the above-mentioned project proposal for Council Regulation 870/2004 was held on 28 November 2004 at the Nordic Gene Bank in Alnarp, Sweden. The meeting, attended by six participants, laid the basis for the preparation of a project proposal to further evaluate *Avena* accessions, as a follow-up to the GenRes project that was recently concluded. The new proposal will probably focus on a larger subset of European *Avena* accessions, including landraces from countries that were under-represented in the previous project (Italy, Portugal, Spain, etc.) and wild accessions such as *A. strigosa* and *A. abyssinica*. Evaluations would focus on quality aspects such as mycotoxins, protein content, fibres,  $\beta$ -glucans, fatty acids, antioxidants, phytosterols, phytates, cadmium and heavy metals. Potential partner institutions wishing to join the project can request further information from the project coordinator, A. Katsiotis (email:katsioti@aua.gr).

The **Cereals News Bulletin**, an initiative of the Cereals Network to exchange information on work related to cereals, was developed and launched on-line on the Cereals Web pages section. The event was also announced in *Plant Breeding News* (an Electronic Newsletter of Applied Plant Breeding), issue 152 of 21 December 2004.

**Plans for the Cereals Network activities in 2005** include missions to collect wild oats in Italy, Morocco and Spain and rare *Aegilops* in Israel. The **second meeting of the Wheat Working Group** is planned in La Rochelle, France, on 22-24 September. Topics of the agenda include an update on the status of national collections, reviewing the progress of the central database, exploring possibilities for the preparation of a collaborative project proposal, etc.

### 3.2 Forages Network

The **Forages Network Coordinating Group** was defined, consisting of seven members: Beat Boller (Network coordinator), Zürich, Switzerland; Evelin Willner, Malchow/Poel, Germany; Petter Marum, Ilseng, Norway; Lajos Horváth, Tápiószéle, Hungary; Magdalena Ševčíková, Zubří, Czech Republic; Valeria Negri, Perugia, Italy; Loek van Soest, Wageningen, The Netherlands.

The Forages Working Group is considered a priority Group for Phase VII.

A description of the regeneration standards used for forage species in each country's respective genebank was collected by the Group. These standards are available from the Forages Working Group Web site at: [http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Workgroups/forages/Forages8\\_AppendixI.pdf/](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Workgroups/forages/Forages8_AppendixI.pdf/).

**Plans for the Forages Network activity in 2005** include a **meeting of the Network Coordinating Group, jointly with some forage central database managers**. The meeting was held in Lindau, Switzerland on 21-22 April. Main objectives were to discuss progress made by the Working Group and review the workplan for the remainder of the Phase. A practical session was held with the intention of analyzing central databases and identifying the Most Original Samples. This exercise allowed the content of the databases to be improved through addition of new data exchanged during the meeting, and also allowed the identification of practical problems and possible solutions for database analysis. The database managers of the *Dactylis*, *Festuca*, *Lolium*, *Medicago*, *Phleum*, *Poa* and *Trifolium* databases should soon be in a position to make a proposal for "holders of primary collections". The intention to submit a project proposal to the EU was developed into a decision to prepare a project proposal on *Medicago* genetic resources, including the identification of a core collection. The status of safety-duplication and the table of regeneration standards adopted by the forage genebanks were reviewed. A fairly complete list of regeneration methodologies currently in use has already been published on the Forages WG Web site and is planned to be further improved, thereby considerably enhancing transparency of genebank operations.

The report of the eighth meeting of the Working Group on Forages, Linz, Austria, March 2003 was published by IPGRI in early 2005.

### 3.3 Fruit Network

The **Fruit Network Coordinating Group** was defined, consisting of five members: Ken Tobutt (Network Coordinator), East Malling, UK; Stein Harald Hjeltnes, Leikanger, Norway; Erika Maul, Siebeldingen, Germany; Marc Lateur, Gembloux, Belgium; and Jesus Ortiz, Madrid, Spain.

The NCG prioritized the *Malus/Pyrus* and the *Prunus* Working Groups for Phase VII. The *Vitis* WG was assigned lower priority.

It should be noted that the former database manager of the ECP/GR *Prunus* Database, Anne Zanetto, left her position at INRA, Bordeaux and moved to INRA, Montpellier, where she is now working on maize genetic resources. The new *Prunus* database manager appointed at Bordeaux is Emilie Balsemin. The Working Group on *Prunus* is looking forward to rapid progress in the development of the ECP/GR *Prunus* Database, which is currently the limiting factor slowing down further progress in the Group's activities.

The report of the second meeting of the Working Group on *Malus/Pyrus*, Dresden-Pillnitz, Germany, May 2002, was published by IPGRI.

**Plans for the Fruit Network activity in 2005** include the organization of an *ad hoc* meeting for the preparation of an EU project proposal together with members of EUFORGEN. This meeting took place in Gembloux, Belgium, 18 February 2005 and was attended by the Chairs and vice-Chairs of the *Malus/Pyrus* and the *Prunus* Working Groups, as well as by two representatives of the EUFORGEN Noble Hardwood Network. Draft elements were laid down for a project proposal dedicated to sustainable management of European fruit and forest tree biodiversity and enhancement of its practical uses. Marc Lateur from the Agricultural Research Center, Gembloux, will be project coordinator.

The **Working Group on *Prunus* is preparing for its seventh meeting** to be held in Larnaca, Cyprus, 1-3 December 2005. The Fruit EU project and the development of a European *Prunus* collection, within the framework of the AEGIS project, are the expected highlights of the agenda.

An *ad hoc* meeting on *Malus* and *Prunus* microsatellite markers genotyping and a meeting on synonymy in *Pyrus* cultivars are also being prepared by the Network, to be possibly held in 2005 or 2006.

### **3.4 Oil and Protein Crops Network**

The **Oil and Protein Crops Network Coordinating Group** was defined, consisting of four members: Mike Ambrose (Network Coordinator), Norwich, UK; Siyka Angelova, Sadovo, Bulgaria; Gérard Duc, Dijon, France; and Wojciech Świącicki, Poznan, Poland.

The Grain Legumes Working Group is considered a priority Group for Phase VII.

A new on-line entry page was prepared for the ECP/GR *Vicia* spp. database, which is managed by the Institute of Plant Genetics, Bari, Italy. The database is now downloadable from the Web.

The report of an *ad hoc* meeting on *Arachis* genetic resources in Europe, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, November 2002, was published by IPGRI.

**Plans for the Oil and Protein Crops Network activity in 2005** include the organization of an *ad hoc* meeting on regeneration methods for Grain Legume genetic resources in Valladolid, Spain, 22-23 September. The workshop aims at pinpointing the current problems in the management of grain legume germplasm, discussing appropriate management methodologies, proposing appropriate regeneration and management strategies for quality conservation and use of grain legume genetic resources, and identifying areas where further research is required. Further information is available from <http://www.ias.csic.es/>.

### **3.5 Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops Network**

The **Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops Network Coordinating Group** was defined, consisting of six members: Lothar Frese (Network coordinator), Braunschweig, Germany; Andrea Carboni, Bologna, Italy; Bruno Desprez, Cappelle-en-Pévèle, France; Roel Hoekstra, Wageningen, The Netherlands; Martin Pavelek, Šumperk, Czech Republic; and Loek van Soest, Wageningen, The Netherlands.

The NCG prioritized the *Beta* and the Fibre crops (flax and hemp) Working Groups for Phase VII. The Potato WG was assigned lower priority.

Thanks to the ECP/GR-funded project "Characterization of flax genetic resources in Europe and data transfer to the **International Flax Database (IFDB)**", passport and characterization data were received from the genebanks of Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Russian Federation and Ukraine, resulting in an increase in size (currently 8387 accessions are held) and quality of the

IFDB. The flax accessions were evaluated for 16 morphological characters and showed substantial differences predominantly in the quantitative traits such as plant height and height to first branch. The IFDB is downloadable, and it is planned to make it searchable on-line soon.

The **ECP/GR Hemp database**, which is managed by ISCI Bologna, is in the stage of hardware and software implementation. This database has also adopted the EURISCO Multicrop Passport Descriptor system and it was created starting with a download of hemp data from EURISCO. There are plans to develop the *Cannabis* Descriptors list in the near future. 1257 accessions from 37 countries are now held in the Hemp Database, which will be searchable on-line in the near future.

The report of the second joint meeting of the Working Group on *Beta* and World *Beta* Network, Bologna, Italy, October 2002, was published by IPGRI.

**Plans for the Network activity in 2005** include the organization of the **third joint meeting of the ECP/GR *Beta* Working Group and World *Beta* Network**. The meeting is planned in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, Spain, 16-19 October 2005. The agenda includes sessions on scientific, technical and financial aspects of *in situ* management, *in situ* management of wild *Beta* for breeding, review of the status of national collections and of the International Database for *Beta*, a critical assessment of the achievements of the Working Group and discussion of the next workplan. A visit will be made to the known *Beta* collection sites. Training will be given on threat assessment and population monitoring in the natural habitat.

A **technical meeting of the Network's Central Crop Database managers** is scheduled in Braunschweig, Germany, 28 July 2005 to discuss the data models for flax and hemp, the progress achieved and the steps needed to upgrade the databases. Recommendations would be formulated, to be implemented mainly for the Flax and Hemp Databases by a scientist to be hired by the Network.

A one-day **Potato WG *ad hoc* meeting** is planned (date to be determined) to discuss data documentation items, the composition of the variety core collection, sharing responsibilities, benefits from available molecular characterization projects, and relevant changes/developments at the institutions holding the germplasm.

### **3.6 Vegetables, Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Network**

The **Vegetables, Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Network Coordinating Group** was defined, consisting of eight members: Grégoire Thomas (Network Coordinator), Rennes, France; Dave Astley, Wellesbourne, United Kingdom; Dea Baričević, Ljubljana, Slovenia; Ietje Boukema, Wageningen, The Netherlands; Marie-Christine Daunay, Montfavet, France; Maria José Diez, Valencia, Spain; Joachim Keller, Gatersleben, Germany; and Aleš Lebeda, Olomouc, Czech Republic.

The NCG prioritized the Cucurbits, Leafy Vegetables, Medicinal and Aromatic Plants and Umbellifer crops Working Groups for Phase VII. The *Allium*, *Brassica* and Solanaceae WGs were assigned lower priority.

The second meeting of the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAP) Working Group was held in Strumica, Macedonia FYR, 16-18 December 2004. The meeting, organized jointly with the MAP Working Group of SEEDNet (South East Europe Development Network on Plant Genetic Resources), was attended by representatives from 24 countries (including observers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russian Federation and Ukraine).

The Group revised the list of ten priority species and made progress in the preparation of species-specific characterization descriptor lists, with responsibilities assigned to WG members for the final compilation of these lists. These descriptors are meant to characterize *in situ* populations and genebank accessions for their taxonomical and chemotaxonomical status, define morphological, chemical and genetic characteristics of genebank accessions for selection/breeding work and cultivar development, and find potential traits for food industry and trade. While the

SEEDNet group agreed to develop a central MAP documentation system with botanical, ecological, collecting, conservation and ethnobotanical data, the ECP/GR WG did not consider the establishment of any crop-specific central database to be a priority. On the other hand, the Group agreed that it was essential to submit a project proposal under Council Regulation 870/2004, since the topic of the Regulation relates to the WG objectives and strategy (long-term tasks). The project will be coordinated by Stephen Jury, University of Reading, UK (email: s.l.jury@reading.ac.uk).

For the first time all the Powerpoint presentations given at the meeting were compiled into a CD-ROM for free distribution. A copy can be requested from the ECP/GR Secretariat. The presentations include country surveys on priority species and scientific presentations on cultivation, characterization and evaluation of medicinal and aromatic plants. The draft report of the meeting is available on the WG Web site at [http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Workgroups/Med\\_aromatic/MAP2\\_draft\\_Jan2005.pdf](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Workgroups/Med_aromatic/MAP2_draft_Jan2005.pdf).

The **joint EGGNET final meeting and *ad hoc* Solanaceae Working Group meeting** took place at the Plant Genetics Institute in Bari, Italy, on 17-18 September 2004. The eggplant database, managed by the Botanical and Experimental Garden, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands, was shown to be the most advanced of the solanaceous databases, thanks to progress made during the EU-funded EGGNET project. It is searchable on-line and includes primary and secondary characterization data with pictures. Import modules allow data contributors to extract and edit their own data directly. The database was developed using Open source software (mSQL), so other central databases will be able to use and adapt it. Plans were made to transfer software and knowledge from Nijmegen and CGN Wageningen to the manager of the ECP/GR pepper database, hosted by AARI, Izmir, Turkey. This database is making progress (6300 accessions), but is not yet available on-line. The ECP/GR tomato database, hosted by the Vavilov Institute (VIR) in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, includes data received from 15 countries, but is not yet ready to be displayed on Internet. The two small *Physalis* and *Cyphomandra* passport databases, maintained by the University of Valencia, Spain made good progress and are already available on-line. The Solanaceae Working Group is focusing its efforts on raising the level of safety-duplication of the European Solanaceae crops. The definition of standard protocols for regeneration and seed storage of the various species was another objective of this meeting. Discussion started on a minimum list of about ten priority characterization descriptors. Agreed tables of descriptors and regeneration guidelines will be published in the final IPGRI report of this meeting. The ultimate objective of these common minimum characterization protocols is to allow the future addition of primary characterization data to the solanaceous Central Crop Databases.

The report of the first meeting of the Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Gozd Martuljek, Slovenia, September 2002, was published by IPGRI.

**Plans for the Vegetables, Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Network activity in 2005** include the **organization of the first meetings of two new Working Groups**, respectively the **Cucurbits WG** (Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 1-3 September) and the **Leafy Vegetables WG** (Olomouc, Czech Republic, 13-14 October). The agendas of these meetings will include surveys of the status of collections in Europe, plans to improve central documentation of the respective crops, including development of appropriate descriptors, preparation of collaborative project proposals, etc.

### **3.7 Documentation and Information Network**

The **Documentation and Information Network Coordinating Group** was defined, consisting of seven members: Frank Begemann (Network Coordinator), Bonn, Germany; Theo van Hintum, Wageningen, The Netherlands; Dražen Jelovać, Zemun Polje, Serbia and Montenegro (representing SEEDNet); Helmut Knüpffer, Gatersleben, Germany; Ahmet Semsettin Tan, Menemen, Turkey; Ian Thomas, Aberystwyth, United Kingdom; and Anne Zanetto, Montpellier, France.



The Network defined its structure, consisting of a Network Coordinating Group (NCG), with supervisory role, and two advisory bodies, with technical support functions, as follows: 1) EURISCO Advisory Group, with the function to monitor the progress of EURISCO and give advice on its further development; 2) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Advisory Group (ICT/AG) offering its services to help and give advice to database managers.

**A joint meeting of the EURISCO Advisory Group and the ECP/GR Documentation and Information Network Coordinating Group** was held in Wageningen, The Netherlands, on 5 March 2004. The objective was to set the scene for the preparation of a new project proposal to further develop EURISCO and the European PGR documentation system. The backbone of a project was laid out, including four elements: data standardization (revision of Multicrop and crop-specific descriptors); data schemas (using XML to increase the flexibility of data transfer); infrastructure upgrade (essentially the EURISCO infrastructure); capacity building (involving training at the country level). The Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER), Aberystwyth, United Kingdom, will take up the coordination of this project.

As of 2004, the ECP/GR budget includes a contribution for the maintenance and development of the EURISCO catalogue, through actions such as providing training for the National Inventory Focal Points and improving the uploading mechanism, and improving the Web interface and user-friendliness of the catalogue. During 2004, no focal point training occurred, but the helpdesk mechanism was used to help new users to correctly and effectively use the upload mechanism, to respond to information requests (various dataset compilations were edited and provided upon request), and to compile a list of features to be implemented in the near future.

EURISCO maintenance activities were the following:

- Ancillary data updates: ancillary data was synchronized throughout the year (the FAO institute code's table must be manually downloaded, cleaned and loaded into the system);
- A series of predefined views were developed to address specialized dataset download requests. This function has not yet been published in the catalogue because allowing anyone to download large datasets could slow the response (network traffic) and be expensive (data line consumption cost). This feature will however need to be implemented as soon as possible;
- The upload procedure was revised to make the process faster and more reliable. In particular, the process was changed from an 'on-line session' to a 'batch session', to allow interaction with the user to continue without being hindered by the import procedure;
- All batch procedures were converted to system scripts to allow transparent and background scheduling of activities to occur;
- Import checking procedures were revised to correct some errors, extract more information and allow more flexibility in providing data;
- A new backup mechanism was implemented to ensure that data could be restored in a short time if there was some system or hardware malfunction;
- Other routine testing and maintenance.

The main activities planned for the near future are:

- ***Improvement of the upload mechanism.*** The replication and publication strategy is under revision. The EURISCO uploading mechanism was developed to allow all members to participate in the process, meaning that it was necessary to adapt to the lowest common denominator. Today the situation is probably better, which may allow the development of a more decentralized system.
- ***Improving the Web interface and user-friendliness of the catalogue.*** Some cosmetic changes need to be made, especially in the area of scroll-down menus. Many requests were received for being able to download datasets and these will have to be addressed as soon as possible. Some more options for searching and viewing will be considered.

- **Providing training to National Inventory Focal Points.** This activity is related to the previous two: once the system evolves, sub-regional workshops or individual trainings will need to be organized.

After Brigitte Laliberté left her position in the Regional Office for Europe in early 2004, IPGRI decided to hire and fund new staff to support the maintenance and development of EURISCO. Consequently, as of December 2004, Sónia Dias is dedicating 50% of her time to EURISCO matters.

Currently, EURISCO provides access to passport information on over 900 000 plant genetic resources accessions maintained *ex situ* in 25 European countries.

A **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** regarding collaboration on the development of EURISCO, between IPGRI on behalf of the ECP/GR Secretariat and the National Focal Point (NFP) of the National Plant Genetic Resources Inventory, was signed by all the 41 countries participating in EURISCO, for the period 2004-2009. Of all the countries that could be expected to participate to the EURISCO initiative, only Belarus and Bosnia and Herzegovina have not yet identified a National Inventory Focal Point. The Secretariat will continue to make efforts to involve these missing countries, as appropriate.

The **ECP/GR Web site** was revised and entirely updated in order to reflect the new organizational structure of ECP/GR (i.e. Networks and Working Groups). The process involved the production of both static (HTML code) and dynamic (ASP code) pages. New tools were developed for "Contacts" pages, where a link to the relevant member's institution has been added. An innovative system to display email addresses in order to reduce spamming has been applied to the entire Web site.

A completely new section was developed for the ECP/GR-funded project AEGIS (A European Genebank Integration System) at <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/AEGIS/AEGIS.htm>, where meeting reports, background documents and other reference information (i.e. contact lists) were published.

The **Web entry pages of the European Central Crop Databases (ECCDBs)** have been continuously updated. There are currently 60 ECCDBs managed by 50 database managers. Of these 60 ECCDBs, 57 have a Web entry page and 38 provide on-line access to the data, with an additional 7 that provide at least off-line download possibilities. Eight databases are making available also characterization data, beside passport data. Fifteen databases are under construction. Of the 57 Web entry pages, 34 are maintained by the ECP/GR Secretariat. Access to the ECCDBs is facilitated through a single entry point at <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Databases/Databases.htm>.

**Plans for the Network activity in 2005** include the organization of a **second joint meeting of the EURISCO Advisory Group and the Network Coordinating Group**. This meeting was held in Bonn on 11 April 2005.

One of the advisory bodies of the Network, i.e. the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Advisory Group (ICT/AG) (former Internet Advisory Group) was dissolved. The Documentation and Information Network will however continue to offer an advisory role upon request.

The role of the ECCDBs versus EURISCO was re-discussed. Several discrepancies between data available from EURISCO and from the central databases were noted and it was recommended to analyze the reasons for discrepancies and propose actions for improvement of data consistency. The role of ECCDBs, also including characterization and evaluation data, will be revisited in two years' time, at the EURISCO Advisory Group meeting which is planned for 2007 in Rome.

Further development of EURISCO was discussed, as a central node for establishing a coherent European Information System under the auspices of ECP/GR, whereby *ex situ* and *in situ* data might be gathered, deposited and displayed through the same type of organizational and technical infrastructure. The development of a project proposal (EPGRIS-2) under the coordination of IGER,

United Kingdom, will consider standardization issues (passport and characterization/evaluation data), XML schema and organization of data flow, GIS-visualization and taxonomy issues, the creation of pilot crop portals and linkages with all related documentation systems.

### **3.8 *In situ* and On-farm conservation Network**

The ***In situ* and On-farm conservation Network Coordinating Group** was defined, consisting of six members: Nigel Maxted (Network Coordinator), Birmingham, UK; Lothar Frese, Braunschweig, Germany; Paul Freudenthaler, Linz, Austria; José Iriondo, Madrid, Spain; Valeria Negri, Perugia, Italy; and Zdeněk Stehno, Prague, Czech Republic.

The Task Force for Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves continued to be involved in the EU-funded project on “European Crop Wild Relative Diversity Assessment and Conservation Forum – PGRForum”. PGRForum is composed of 23 national partners and 8 advisory board members and stakeholder representatives. The project is coordinated by Nigel Maxted and Shelagh Kell at the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. During 2004, the project held two workshops. The first one on **population management and monitoring methodologies** took place 21-25 April 2004 in Minorca, Spain. The second was held in the Azores islands, Portugal, 8-11 September 2004, focusing on **genetic erosion and pollution assessment methodologies for European Crop Wild Relatives**.

An offer from PGR Forum partners was made in early 2005 to hand over the documentation product of this project (i.e. the Crop Wild Relative Information System), to be maintained by IPGRI on behalf of ECP/GR. IPGRI accepted this task and is currently considering various options for linkage with EURISCO. For more information about PGRForum, including the Newsletter and workshop reports, visit [www.pgrforum.org](http://www.pgrforum.org).

Two project proposals are being prepared to be submitted to EC Regulation 870/2004. One is coordinated by Nigel Maxted, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom, focusing on the development of a European Genetic Resources *In situ* Information System (EGRISI). The second one (ONFARMSAFE), under the coordination of Valeria Negri, University of Perugia, Italy, is dedicated to describe on-farm conservation experiences in Europe, thereby facilitating information exchange on methods, techniques, utilization and marketing of products obtained from landraces.

**Plans for the Network activity in 2005** include the organization of the **final dissemination conference of the PGRForum project**, to be held in Agrigento, Italy, 14-17 September 2005. The ECP/GR Network will fund the participation of representatives of five PGR NGOs, two participants involved in protected area management activities, two botanic gardens and six genebanks.

### **3.9 Inter-regional Cooperation Network**

The **Inter-regional Cooperation Network Coordinating Group** was defined, consisting of five members: Eva Thörn (Network Coordinator), Alnarp, Sweden; Marcello Broglio, Florence, Italy; Ladislav Dotlačil, Prague, Czech Republic; Vladimir Meglič, Ljubljana, Slovenia; and Bert Visser, Wageningen, The Netherlands.

The NCG proposed to focus efforts in Phase VII on two areas of work, i.e. documentation and information systems, and policy implementation (directly related to task sharing and the establishment of the AEGIS project). On the other hand, it was decided to skip the area of on-farm/*in situ* management, which first needs to be developed within the European region. In addition to collaboration with the Sub-Saharan Africa networks, collaboration with the Central and West Asia and Northern Africa networks, including the Central Asian and Caucasus Network, seemed logical, given historical ties and ecological similarities (Mediterranean Basin).

A small **meeting of the Network Coordinating Group** planned for the first semester of 2005 was held to elaborate the agenda for the Network. This meeting took place on 5 April 2005 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. This was also attended by Raymond Vodouhe, coordinator of the West Africa PGR network GRENEWECA. He conveyed the message that the concept of sharing of responsibilities, as publicized by the ECP/GR circles, had taken root in that region, which is a gratifying result. The Network is anxious to continue collaboration with ECP/GR. In particular, training of trainers in various areas was requested. In order to facilitate the contacts and possible collaboration between regions, it was considered very important that the individual coordinators of the regional networks should be given the chance to meet and exchange information and ideas. Therefore a meeting between the African networks, CWANA and ECP/GR coordinators was proposed. It was proposed to use the small funds available to the Network to invite persons outside the ECP/GR region to relevant meetings.

As a follow-up to the joint ECP/GR–GRENEWECA workshop held in Cotonou, Benin, in 2003, it was proposed to raise funds for training initiatives related to the EURISCO-system (and other relevant documentation aspects) and to invite key persons from other regions to these training activities.

#### **4. Thematic cross-cutting issues**

This new budget line is dedicated to thematic actions of cross-cutting interest for several Networks, such as in the area of *in situ*/on-farm conservation and management and overall policies for *ex situ* conservation. Proposals for specific actions can be raised by the NCGs and submitted to the Steering Committee for approval.

During 2004, no specific actions were carried out, although plans were made for the use of these funds during Phase VII.

A proposal for the use of part of these funds was made by the *In situ* and on-farm conservation Network, to allow PGR genebank representatives to attend the Crop Wild Relative Conference in Agrigento in 2005 (see *In situ*/On-farm Conservation Network). The initiative has also been taken to hold an NGO and PGR networking meeting, although this still needs further planning.

Another proposal was put up for consideration, i.e. the organization of a meeting on genebanks and genomics (should genebanks dedicate their efforts to DNA collections or molecular testing?).

An initiative taken by the ECP/GR Secretariat to strengthen collaboration between genebanks and the private sector for the regeneration of endangered vegetable accessions was continued in 2004, following a proposal made during the ECP/GR Vegetables Network meeting in Skierniewice, Poland in May 2003. The proposal was welcomed by the Network and the ECP/GR Secretariat was given responsibility to collect requests for help from genebanks and offers to contribute to regeneration work by breeding companies. Several expressions of interest in this initiative were obtained from breeders from Italy, the Netherlands and Spain (a list is available from the Secretariat). However, there were no corresponding requests from genebanks to use the services of the breeders.

As positive results, a couple of bilateral and within-country initiatives were started following the ECP/GR proposal, but none of them required the coordination of the Secretariat or any legal or technical advice. In Germany, the genebank of IPK found private partners who were willing to help in the regeneration of wild *Allium* accessions. In Italy, the University of Catania signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a consortium of private breeders, establishing conditions for activities of mutual interest regarding regeneration, characterization and evaluation of vegetable species i.e. Brassicaceae, Solanaceae, Liliaceae and Umbelliferae.

## 5. Public awareness

The **ECP/GR Web site** was revised and entirely updated (see Documentation and Information Network).

Further public awareness activities involved the **production of ECP/GR pens and a leaflet** detailing the priorities and objectives of the Programme during Phase VII. The leaflet includes two inserts, one listing the member countries and the European Central Crop Databases and the other presenting the AEGIS project. This material is being distributed during meetings and related events.

Other public awareness initiatives proposed for action are listed below. Comments from the Steering Committee on the opportunity for the Secretariat to undertake, promote or coordinate these actions would be very welcome.

- Consultancy to gather information on the use of genebank material: what is the level of exchange of seed samples from European genebanks? What is the destination of the seed samples? What use is made of them?
- Development of a package of seeds of traditional varieties to be grown for display and multiplied by genebanks for distribution to the general public. Development of a common strategy to promote this type of initiative as a Europe-wide public awareness effort (five people for a 1-day meeting).
- ECP/GR brochure for the wider public (in paper form and as an electronic template), to be prepared in collaboration with NGOs. This initiative is under discussion with Pro Specie Rara. The objective would be to enhance PGR visibility, encourage the public to request increased availability of PGR, and inform the public about the threats of genetic erosion).

## 6. AEGIS project

During its ninth Steering Committee meeting in October 2003 in Izmir, Turkey, the ECP/GR Steering Committee (SC) approved funding of a feasibility study project on sharing of responsibilities as a possible model for A European Genebank Integration System (AEGIS). The ECP/GR Secretariat formulated a draft proposal which was circulated to the ECP/GR SC in December 2003 for selection of an **AEGIS Steering Committee, terms of reference of project manager, project partners, and model crops**. The commented proposal was finalized in January 2004 by the ECP/GR Secretariat and it has been approved by the ECP/GR SC.

A **Web Site on the AEGIS project** was launched in May 2004 containing all information, relevant documents, meeting reports and updates on activities. An AEGIS logo has been designed and published. The AEGIS Web site is available on line at <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/AEGIS/AEGIS.htm/>.

The **first meeting of the AEGIS Steering Committee** was held at IPGRI in Rome on 1 March 2004. Eva Thörn was elected Chair of the SC. The AEGIS Project Document "Sharing of long-term conservation responsibilities as a possible model for 'A European Genebank Integration System' AEGIS" was finalized. The Project Document together with the report from the meeting can be found on the AEGIS homepage.

Birgitte Lund was appointed as **Project Manager** for development of a European Genebank Integration System and started working at IPGRI Headquarters in Rome on 17 August 2004.

During September 2004 eleven countries via their respective National Coordinators, the Nordic countries via the director of the Nordic Gene Bank, and the South East Europe Development Network on Plant Genetic Resources (SEEDNet) via the SEEDNet coordinator have been invited and confirmed their participation in the AEGIS project. Information about the crop(s) and institutions for which each project partner is responsible is published on the AEGIS home page.

An informal sub-group of the AEGIS SC met in Rome in November 2004 to discuss progress of the project and prepare the **start-up AEGIS meeting for the project partners**, which was held on 26-27 November 2004 at the Nordic Gene Bank in Alnarp, Sweden. The aim of the meeting was to inform and update the project partners and for the project partners to prepare a workplan for the next two years based upon presentations and the AEGIS Project Document. The report of the AEGIS start-up meeting, including the workplans of the *Allium*, *Avena*, *Brassica* and *Prunus* sub-groups, is available from the AEGIS Web site.

Germany and the Netherlands have independently made **additional voluntary contributions** to the AEGIS project of 5000 euro each. Similar contributions from other ECP/GR countries could be an option, to obtain missing funds for the budget of the second year of the project.

A **meeting of the AEGIS Steering Committee** is planned to take place in June 2005 in Rome, followed by a meeting of the AEGIS SC with representatives of the Global Crop Diversity Trust and by the Mid-term Project Partners meeting. These meetings are expected to bring the project forward, with the possible endorsement of a vision paper for A European Genebank Integration System. This paper would set out what the ideal scenario the AEGIS Steering Committee hopes to achieve through the AEGIS project. The objective is to share this vision widely with the ECP/GR technical partners and eventually with policy-makers in Europe.

## **7. ECP/GR and the EU Programme on genetic resources for agriculture**

**Complementary Programme Module funds** from Phase VI were used to allow a Russian delegate to attend a meeting (Alnarp, Sweden, 28 November 2004) for the preparation of a project on *Avena*, to be submitted for funding under Regulation 870/2004.

Council Regulation (EC) No 870/2004 was published in the Official Journal of 24 April 2004, establishing a Community programme on the conservation, characterisation, collection and utilisation of genetic resources in agriculture and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1467/94. The text of the Regulation is directly accessible from the ECP/GR home page at <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/>.

Several ECP/GR Working Groups are preparing project proposals for submission to the first call. Indeed, the text of the Regulation makes specific reference to the need to take into account programmes implemented under international frameworks, such as, *inter alia*, ECP/GR. There is therefore a high expectation from the groups to be able to implement part of their workplans with funding from the EC, as it was the case with the previous Regulation GenRes 1467/94. The first call for proposals was expected to be launched in 2004, but it was eventually postponed and is now expected any time in 2005.

## 8. Link with other Networks and initiatives

The following interactions between ECP/GR and other Networks and initiatives took place during 2004:

- **SEEDNet.** A member of the ECP/GR Secretariat was welcomed as permanent observer in the Regional Steering Committee meetings of the Sida-funded South East Europe Development Network on Plant Genetic Resources. The ECP/GR Coordinator attended the first two meetings in Skopje, Macedonia FYR (April 2004) and in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina (September 2004). The close linkage established with ECP/GR can be exemplified by the agreement that SEEDNet representatives should be invited to participate in ECP/GR bodies and initiatives (Documentation and Information NCG, AEGIS project) and by the joint organization of WG meetings (see MAP meeting held in Strumica, Macedonia, FYR).
- **Global Crop Diversity Trust.** A close interaction with the Trust initiative and staff is maintained and developed, especially in the context of the AEGIS project.
- **European Commission.** The Secretariat is involved in facilitating the preparation of several project proposals to be submitted under Regulation 870/2004.
- **EUCARPIA.** During the 17th general Congress held on 8-11 September in Tulln, Austria, arrangements were made to invite EUCARPIA to join the Steering Committee of ECP/GR as observer. The new president of EUCARPIA, Jaime Prohens, subsequently joined the Steering Committee listserver and will be invited to the next Steering Committee meeting.
- **EUFORGEN.** A dialogue between the Noble Hardwood Network of EUFORGEN and the Fruit Network of ECP/GR was initiated with the aim to prepare a joint project proposal on the sustainable management of European fruit and forest tree biodiversity.

## 9. Publications

The following **ECP/GR publications were produced in 2004** and can be obtained free of charge from the Secretariat. These publications are also available in electronic format through the ECP/GR Web site ([www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Publications/Publications.htm](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Publications/Publications.htm)).

- Report of the second meeting of the Working Group on *Malus/Pyrus*, Dresden Pillnitz, Germany, May 2002;
- Report of the first meeting of the Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Gozd Martuljek, Slovenia, September 2002;
- Report of the second meeting of the Working Group on *Beta*, held jointly with the World *Beta* Network meeting, Bologna, Italy, October 2002;
- Report of an ad hoc meeting on *Arachis* genetic resources, Bulgaria, November 2002;
- Report of the eighth meeting of the Working Group on Forages, Linz, Austria, March 2003 (produced in 2005).

### Electronic documents:

- Part I of the report of a Vegetables Network and *ad hoc* Leafy Vegetables meeting, Skierniewice, Poland, May 2003;
- Part I and Book of abstracts of the Sixth meeting of a Working Group on *Prunus*, Budapest, Hungary, June 2003;
- Part I of the report of a Cereals Network, Yerevan, Armenia, July 2003;
- Minutes of a Working Group on Barley. *Ad hoc* meeting, Brno, Czech Republic, June 2004;
- Minutes of a Working Group on *Avena*. *Ad hoc* meeting, Helsinki, Finland, July 2004;
- Part I of the report of a Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants. Second Meeting, Strumica, Macedonia FYR, December 2004;
- Minutes of a Working Group on *Avena*. *Ad hoc* meeting, Helsinki, Finland, July 2004.

Issues 28 and 29 of the IPGRI Newsletter for Europe were also published in 2004 with partial support from the ECP/GR budget.

The following poster was presented at the first Solanaceae genome workshop, held in Wageningen, the Netherlands, 19-21 September 2004: Solanaceae genetic resources in Europe. The ECP/GR Working Group (by M.C. Daunay, W. von Dooijeweert and L. Maggioni).

The following ECP/GR-related paper was published and is also electronically available at [http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/Proceedings\\_ArticleLM.pdf](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/Proceedings_ArticleLM.pdf):

Maggioni, L. 2004. The ECP/GR, an example of cooperation for crop genetic resources in Europe. Pp. 58-67 in Strengthening policy and institutional frameworks for conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources – National programmes and networks as strategic tools. 1-10 October 2002, Zschortau, Germany (J.M.M Engels, D. Kiambi, J. Watts and I. Zougrana, editors). International Plant Genetic Resources Institute.

#### **Publications in preparation:**

- Report of a Vegetables Network and *ad hoc* Leafy Vegetables meeting, Skierniewice, Poland, May 2003;
- Report of a Cereals Network meeting, Yerevan, Armenia, July 2003;
- Report of the sixth meeting of the Working Group on *Prunus*, Budapest, Hungary, June 2003;
- Report of the first meeting of the Working Group on *Vitis*, Palič, Serbia and Montenegro, June 2003;
- Report of the second meeting of the Working Group on Potato, Hamburg, Germany, July 2002;
- Report of the ad hoc meeting of the Solanaceae Working Group, Bari, Italy, September 2004;
- Report of the second meeting of the Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Strumica, Macedonia FYR, December 2004;
- Report of a joint meeting of the Network Coordinating Group on Forages and Forage Database managers, Lindau, Switzerland, April 2005 (electronic version only).

## **10. Forthcoming ECP/GR meetings**

#### **Meetings held in early 2005**

- Preparatory meeting for EU project proposal on wild fruit conservation, Gembloux, Belgium, 18 February 2005;
- Inter-regional Network Coordinating Group, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 5 April 2005;
- Documentation and Information Network Coordinating Group and EURISCO Advisory Group, Bonn, Germany, 11 April 2005;
- Forages Network Coordinating Group meeting, jointly with forage database managers, Lindau, Switzerland, 21-22 April 2005.

#### **Other meetings planned for 2005**

- Technical meeting of the Starch and Fibre crops database managers to discuss the data models for flax and hemp, Braunschweig, Germany, 28 July 2005;
- First meeting of the Working Group on Cucurbits, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 1-3 September 2005;
- *In situ* and On-farm Network: Crop Wild Relative Conference (final dissemination conference for PGR Forum, open to non-PGR Forum members), Agrigento, Italy, 14-17 September 2005;
- *Ad hoc* meeting on regeneration methods for Grain Legume genetic resources, Valladolid, Spain, 22-23 September 2005;
- Second meeting of the Working Group on Wheat, La Rochelle, France, 22-24 September 2005;
- First meeting of the Working Group on Leafy vegetables, Olomouc, Czech Republic, 13-14 October 2005;



- Third meeting of the Working Group on *Beta*, including *Beta in situ* assessment day, Las Palmas, Spain, 16-19 November 2005;
- Seventh meeting of the *Prunus* Working Group, Larnaca, Cyprus, 1-3 December 2005;
- *Ad hoc* meeting on synonymy in *Pyrus* cultivars, Gembloux, Belgium, date to be confirmed;
- Fruit Network: *Ad hoc* meeting on microsatellite markers and genotyping, East Malling, United Kingdom, date to be confirmed;
- Barley *ad hoc* meeting to link European Barley DB (IPK) and Barley Genetic Stocks DB (NGB) with SINGER (IPGRI) and Global Inventory of Barley Genetic Resources (ICARDA) (EBDB and BGS DB managers), date and location to be confirmed.

## 11. Coordinating Secretariat and IPGRI

The following staff members have worked as part of the ECP/GR Secretariat at IPGRI (ECP/GR personnel budget): Olga Spellman as half-time ECP/GR Programme Assistant (until 31 March 2004), Lidwina Koop (as half-time ECP/GR Programme Assistant); Elinor Lipman (as half-time Scientific Assistant, based in Montpellier, France, involved in the production (compilation and layout) of ECP/GR publications; and Aixa Del Greco (as Scientific Assistant to the ECP/GR Secretariat involved in the support to the Crop Networks, Web development and public awareness). Birgitte Lund was appointed in August 2004 as Project manager for AEGIS. Sónia Dias, Programme Specialist, is dedicating 50% of her time to EURISCO and documentation-related activities as of December 2004. Milko Skofic has dedicated two months of his time to the maintenance of EURISCO. The contributions made to the work of ECP/GR by these and many other IPGRI colleagues during the year 2004 are gratefully acknowledged.

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Rome, 30 April 2005

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