



# European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR)

2007 Progress Report

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## SUMMARY

As a result of the decisions of the Riga meeting in 2006 to reallocate approximately 150 000 euro to AEGIS, the Secretariat has dedicated significant time and energy to promote the further development and implementation of AEGIS. The publication of the Strategy Framework Discussion Paper and the preparation of a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the establishment and operation of AEGIS were the most noticeable outputs. Interactions with the Model Crop Groups and awareness creation on the AEGIS concept at several occasions (i.e. meetings and country visits) were also important activities to facilitate advancements of other components of AEGIS (i.e. selection criteria for Most Appropriate Accessions (MAAs), Quality Management System, etc.). The majority of the Networks and WGs have been exposed to the concept of AEGIS and several WGs are keen to proceed with its implementation.

Most of the Networks held large and important meetings during the year. The Documentation Network launched the EPGRIS3 initiative, based on the need to create a mode of operation whereby PGR documentation activities could be carried out collaboratively on a voluntary and self-funded basis and thus contribute in a coordinated manner to the achievement of common goals in the European Region. The *In situ* and On-farm Conservation Network held the Third Meeting of its On-farm Task Force, jointly with a Workshop on Home Gardens in Europe, which attracted the attention of several experts in Europe and the coverage of newspapers such as the New York Times. The richness of diversity remaining in European home gardens was shown to be probably more than expected, although these agro-ecosystems were also considered very fragile. Within the framework of the Inter-regional Cooperation Network, a meeting that gathered Network focal points from regions all over the world was convened at Bioversity and the critical role played by PGR regional Networks was re-affirmed. It was shown that a better coordination of Networks at the global level would be beneficial, although this role seems to remain without cover by any institution at the present time.

The Forages and Grain Legumes Working Groups held their regular meetings. The Forages WG is steadily progressing with the definition of MAAs in some model forage crops and they have been able to agree upon detailed regeneration guidelines for grasses and forage legumes, based on the results of the EC-funded project ICONFORS. The Grain Legumes WG is trying to make progress with its databases and to take advantage of planned regeneration activities in order to organize coordinated characterization of important traits as well as monitoring the presence of insect pests and pollinators on a regional level. The group is also establishing Pea and Faba bean genetic resources consortia at the global level.

The Vegetables Network held its second full-Network meeting. All the Working Groups are aligned with the intention to follow the example of the AEGIS model crops *Allium* and *Brassica* and they are planning their activities along the AEGIS concept. The MAP WG met and refined its strategies for a priority list of species. The Cereals Network organized a collecting mission of threatened wild *Avena* species in Spain.

Some of the EC-funded project (Reg. 870/04) were being very supportive of the ECPGR activities (*Allium*, *Avena*, Leafy Vegetables, *Vitis* and *In situ*).

The EURISCO Catalogue passed the threshold of one million accession data. A major effort was made for the development of a completely new Web site and search functionalities, although the effects of this work will only be visible in 2008.

Interactions with the Global Crop Diversity Trust were particularly important, since ECPGR was approached as the coordinating unit to identify important collections in urgent need of regeneration in Europe. A project jointly submitted to the Trust by the Cereals Network, the Oil and Protein Crops Network and the Potato WG was partially approved. The Secretariat and the relevant Networks will need to closely work with the Trust in the next three years to ensure a proper implementation of this activity.

Following the participation of ECPGR in the Planta Europa conference, it is expected that the PGR community contribution will be visible in the new European Plant Conservation Strategy.

Several electronic documents were made available on the Internet with the outcome of the various meetings and the ECPGR Web pages were continuously updated, including the preparation of new dedicated pages for AEGIS.

All the Networks were made aware of the guidelines agreed by the Steering Committee for budget allocation during Phase VII. Progress reports and planned projects will be prepared in 2008.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth progress report of Phase VII (2004-2008), covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2007, with information updated until March 2008. The aim of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of activities and progress of ECPGR, mainly for the benefit of the ECPGR Steering Committee and the implementing agencies of the ECPGR member countries. In the course of 2007, the Steering Committee received information and interacted for decision-making through the dedicated "steering committee listserver", which was kindly managed by NordGen (formerly the Nordic Gene Bank). In particular, through the listserver, the following actions have been completed:

- Agreement on the revised ECPGR Terms of Reference
- Nomination of Focal Points for National Inventories (*In situ*/On-farm)
- Circulation of job announcements and fellowship opportunities
- Announcement of Network budget reallocation and organization of extraordinary meetings
- Announcement of Bioversity publications
- Agreement on the Criteria for Network budget allocation (Phase VIII)
- Circulation for feedback of AEGIS documents (Strategic Framework and Memorandum of Understanding)
- Announcement of Global Crop Diversity Trust initiatives (support for evaluation and regeneration)
- Agreement of date and location of the 11th ECPGR Steering Committee Meeting
- Request for feedback on the revision process of the European Plant Conservation Strategy
- Information on the 7th Framework Programme calls for proposals.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE VII OF ECPGR

As of the end of March 2008, a total of 33 countries had formalized their membership to Phase VII of ECPGR. Six other countries had not signed the Letter of Agreement but had, nonetheless, started to pay annual contributions for Phase VII. The list of member countries is kept updated online at <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/AboutECPGR.htm/>.

Ukraine joined ECPGR in February 2008, while Bosnia and Herzegovina is expected to join in 2008, therefore becoming the 40th ECPGR member country.

Other relevant documents related to the implementation of Phase VII are available from the ECPGR Web pages. These are:

- ECPGR Terms of Reference (version 2 – February 2007)  
[http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/ToRs\\_PhaseVIIv2.pdf](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/ToRs_PhaseVIIv2.pdf)
- Networks' budgets  
<http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/Networks.htm> (*then select respective Network*)
- **Country quota for Phase VII (explanation)**  
[http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/Country\\_quota\\_PVII\\_New.pdf](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Introduction/Country_quota_PVII_New.pdf)
- ECPGR Annual reports  
<http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/SteeringCommittee/SC.htm>

### 3. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE NETWORKS

#### 3.1. Cereals Network

**Priority WGs:** *Avena* and Wheat

**Lower priority WG:** Barley

The **Cereals Network Coordinating Group (NCG)** consists of seven members: Helmut Knüpfper, Gatersleben, Germany (Network Coordinator); Iva Faberová, Prague, Czech Republic; Christoph Germeier, Quedlinburg, Germany; Marja Jalli, Jokioinen, Finland; Andreas Katsiotis, Athens, Greece; Gert Kleijer, Nyon, Switzerland; and Marcin Zaczynski, Radzików, Poland.

**Collecting missions:** a mission to collect samples from endangered *Avena murphyi* and *Avena prostrata* populations in the regions of Murcia and Andalusia (southern Spain) was organized with ECPGR funding support in June 2007 within the framework of a Letter of Agreement signed between Bioversity International and the Agricultural University of Athens, Greece. The Chair of the *Avena* Working Group, Andreas Katsiotis, in collaboration with Pedro Garcia, University of León, Spain, collected a total of 64 accessions of putative *A. prostrata* species, and 66 of *A. murphyi* samples. The collected material will be multiplied and stored for *ex situ* conservation in the Spanish genebank, as part of the Multilateral System of the FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The full report is available at:

[http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Workgroups/avena/Avena\\_CollTrip\\_Murcia\\_Andalusia\\_0607.pdf](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Workgroups/avena/Avena_CollTrip_Murcia_Andalusia_0607.pdf)

A collecting mission of wild *Avena* in Morocco was postponed, since agreements were not reached with the local authorities about the inclusion of the samples into the Multilateral System.

The **GENRES EU-funded project “*Avena* genetic resources for quality in human consumption”**, under the coordination of BAZ, Quedlinburg, Germany, organized its start-up meeting in Clermont-Ferrand, France, 18-22 September 2007. In order to strengthen the link between this project and ECPGR, the Cereals Network supported the participation of the Chair of the *Avena* Working Group, Andreas Katsiotis, Greece, and of Igor Loskutov, VIR, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, in this meeting. A satellite informal workshop was also organized on 18 September to discuss AEGIS matters, in particular the definition of Most Appropriate Accessions (MAAs) (see report at [http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Workgroups/avena/Adhoc\\_ClermontFerrand\\_Sept07.pdf](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Workgroups/avena/Adhoc_ClermontFerrand_Sept07.pdf)).

Between October and December 2007, the Network was mobilized in order to respond to the offer made by the Trust for support in the regeneration of germplasm collections. The Network Coordinator, Helmut Knüpfper, was primarily involved in the preparation of a document compiling the ECPGR Networks’ proposal for urgent regeneration. Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary and Israel submitted requests for the regeneration of cereals (see below, Chapter 6).

Preparation went on for the **Second Cereals Network Meeting**, including the members of all three Working Groups and the ad hoc activities on maize, rye and triticale, which is planned for 21-24 April 2008 in Foça, Turkey, with the support of the local hosts from the Aegean Agricultural Research Institute (AARI).

A few members of the Cereals NCG represented ECPGR (the European region) in the preparation of Crop Strategies of the Global Crop Diversity Trust for Wheat<sup>1</sup>, *Aegilops*, Rye and Triticale (I. Faberová), *Avena* (C. Germeier, coordinating the Strategy meeting in March 2007 in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation), and Barley (H. Knüpfper, meeting in September 2007 in Tunis, Tunisia).

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<sup>1</sup> The Wheat report was made available online in September 2007 from the Trust Web site (<http://www.croptrust.org/main/strategy.php>).

A new Database Manager for the **ECPGR Maize Database** was nominated in Serbia, Dr Violeta Andjelkovic, from the Maize Research Institute Zemun Polje, Belgrade.

The **ECPGR Triticale Database**, hosted by Agroscope Changins-Wädenswil Research Station (ACW), Nyon, Switzerland, was made available online in October 2007 (<http://www.bdn.ch/etdb>).

The **Report of a Triticale and Rye Ad hoc Meeting**, 27 September 2006, Nyon, Switzerland, was published as an electronic document (<http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Cereals/cereals.htm>).

## 3.2. Forages Network

### Priority WG: Forages

The **Forages Network Coordinating Group** consists of seven members: Merja Veteläinen, Finland (Network Coordinator); Beat Boller, Zürich, Switzerland; Lajos Horváth, Tápíószele, Hungary; Chris Kik, Wageningen, The Netherlands; Petter Marum, Ilse, Norway; Valeria Negri, Perugia, Italy; and Evelin Willner, Malchow/Poel, Germany.

**The Working Group on Forages held its Ninth Meeting** in Piešťany, Slovakia, on 23-25 October 2007, hosted by the Research Institute of Plant Production (RIPP) of the Slovak Agricultural Research Centre. The meeting, attended by 35 participants from 28 countries, put its main emphasis on the ongoing effort to create a European Forages Collection. This will be done by defining a number of Most Original Accessions, for which the holding institutions would take long-term responsibility for conservation, according to jointly agreed standards.

The analysis of the ECPGR *Poa* Database, by Database Manager Evelin Willner, Germany, identified 336 duplicate accessions (by variety name), while for 70% of all the accessions, she was able to suggest institutions that could become "Primary Holder". The respective curators' agreement to the related responsibility was obtained during the meeting for most of these accessions. Therefore, a first selection of about 3500 *Poa* accessions will be marked in the database as belonging to the European Forages Collection. A similar exercise was made by Petter Marum, Norway on the ECPGR *Phleum* database and "Primary Holder" institutions were suggested for about 5000 accessions. Agreements will be sought from *Poa* curators to take on the "Primary Holder" responsibility. According to the decisions of the WG, all the forage crop collections will go through this type of exercise in the near future.

Another highlight of the meeting was the discussion on the results of the EU-funded Fifth Framework project on "Improving germplasm conservation methods for perennial European forage species" (ICONFORS) and the influence that these findings should have on the regeneration guidelines agreed by the Group. The main conclusions from the experiments presented by Maurice Jones, UK, were that a Europe-wide plan for regeneration is not feasible since even populations grown in their country of origin were differentially sensitive to the environment; regeneration methods should be considered on a species-by-species basis; and it is more important to consider "how" a population is regenerated rather than "where" it is regenerated. P. Marum presented the ICONFORS experiment of genetic contamination by windborne pollen as an effect of isolation distance. The main conclusion was that isolation distances of at least 30 m are needed with a tall barrier crop to reduce the contamination level to below 1%. The Group agreed to revise the standards for regeneration procedures, namely a bulk harvest of 100 plants or more grown in isolated field plots was set as the preferred procedure for grasses. The preferred isolation distance was set at a minimum of 30 m with an efficient barrier crop, while for insect-pollinated crops, the preferred standard to be used remains isolation cabinets.

After five years Beat Boller, Switzerland, handed over the function of Chair of the WG to the newly elected Chair Merja Veteläinen, Finland. Evelin Willner remained to serve as Vice-Chair of the Group.

### 3.3. Fruit Network

**Priority WGs:** *Malus/Pyrus* and *Prunus*

**Lower priority WG:** *Vitis*

The **Fruit Network Coordinating Group** consists of six members: Daniela Benediková, Piešťany, Slovakia; Emilie Balsemin, Bordeaux, France; Stein Harald Hjeltnes, Leikanger, Norway; Marc Lateur, Gembloux, Belgium; Erika Maul, Siebeldingen, Germany; and Jesus Ortiz, Madrid, Spain. A replacement for Emma-Jane Allen, *Malus* Database Manager has been announced but not confirmed by the UK.

At the end of 2007, Ken Tobutt announced that his position was being declared redundant by East Malling Research (EMR) and he had to step down from his chairmanships of the ECPGR *Prunus* Working Group and the Fruit Network Coordinating Group. Daniela Benediková, Vice-Chair of the Group, took up the Interim Chairmanship of the *Prunus* WG. The Network Coordinating Group needs to nominate a Network Coordinator among its members, replacing the role previously maintained by K. Tobutt.

The Secretariat, on behalf of the Fruit Network, sent a letter to the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and EMR in February 2008, expressing concerns regarding the long-term conservation of the top fruit genetic resources collections in the UK and offered to mobilize the ECPGR Fruit Network and try to find institutions in Europe that could host important material on behalf of the UK, in case of need. A message from Colin Gutteridge, EMR, informed that necessary arrangements were made so that unique germplasm will be transferred to the National Collection in Brogdale.

The Secretariat was also informed that the maintenance and scientific curation of the UK National Fruit Collections, previously carried out by the Brogdale Horticultural Trust and the Imperial College, respectively, were transferred to the University of Reading. Consequently, Emma-Jane Allen transferred the ECPGR *Malus* Database to the new curatorial coordinator, Matthew Ordidge.

**Lower priority funds**, dedicated to the *Vitis* Working Group, were used with the establishment of an agreement between Bioversity and the Bundesanstalt für Züchtungsforschung an Kulturpflanzen (BAZ), Quedlinburg to undertake activities in relation to "Adaptation of the European *Vitis* database to the EURISCO format and development of an interactive modification system". The European *Vitis* Database has been reprogrammed with a new Web site and modules are being developed enabling partner specific modification of data records: addition, updating and deletion of single records. Uploading and downloading functions will be completed in 2008.

An informal meeting of the *Malus/Pyrus* Working Group was held at the occasion of the EUCARPIA Fruit Section Meeting in Zaragoza, Spain in September 2007. Members present in the meeting reviewed progress and discussed possible future actions. During the conference, a poster on the ECPGR *Malus/Pyrus* Working Group was presented

The *Malus/Pyrus* WG has been working on the preparation of a draft version of an updated ECPGR Apple descriptor list. A final draft was circulated to the entire group for comments in November 2007.

The revised draft of Part I of the Report of a Working Group on *Malus/Pyrus*, Third Meeting, 25-27 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia was made available on the Web at:  
[http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Workgroups/malus\\_pyrus/malus\\_pyrus.htm](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Workgroups/malus_pyrus/malus_pyrus.htm)

A meeting of the four Fruit Database Managers and of experts of fruit synonymy is planned in Gembloux, Belgium, 23-25 June 2008. Databases will be compared, exploring the opportunity for their technical harmonization. Moreover, a harmonized methodology will be discussed to solve the problem of a high number of existing cultivar synonyms.

### 3.4. Oil and Protein Crops Network

**Priority WG:** Grain Legumes

The **Oil and Protein Crops Network Coordinating Group** consists of four members: Mike Ambrose, Norwich, UK (Network Coordinator); Siyka Angelova, Sadovo, Bulgaria; Andrea Carboni, Bologna, Italy; and Gérard Duc, Dijon, France.

The Working Group on Grain Legumes was introduced during the training workshop for breeders (Paris April, 2007), organized as part of the **EU Grain Legumes Integrated Project (GLIP)**. The ECPGR WG coordinated a wide *Pisum* Germplasm Screening as part of EU GLIP programme. This consisted of high-throughput analyses of the genetic structure of pea germplasm collections in Europe (1500 samples from 8 European collections). Data were made available as of 10 November 2007.

The **Working Group on Grain Legumes** met for its **Fourth Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal**, on 16-17 November 2007, as a Satellite meeting to the 6th European Conference on Grain Legumes. The Conference discussed progress in legume knowledge, particularly the first outputs from the EU Grain Legumes Integrated Project (GLIP), ending in 2008, which lead the research on nitrogen-fixing plants. GLIP provided some support for the ECPGR Satellite meeting, including a budget for the registration fees of some participants, a meeting room and lunch on the first day.

The ECPGR Satellite meeting was attended by representatives from 17 member countries and several other observers from the Grain Legumes Conference.

Review of progress was made for various crops and their databases. The ECPGR *Phaseolus* Database (Austria) was shown to include limited characterization data for only 3% of the accessions. To overcome this limitation, an effort is being made to include pictures of the relevant accession traits. European Faba bean accessions were shown to represent 50% of the global collections. The ECPGR Faba bean Database (France) is closer to completion. Several accessions (17%) need urgent regeneration, a few orphan collections were identified and very limited safety-duplication could be recorded. Molecular characterization is in progress. The ECPGR *Cicer* Database (Portugal) needs to be updated. Safety-duplication of chickpea is not advanced and in some cases there is urgent need of regeneration (Albania, Bulgaria and Portugal). The ECPGR *Lens* Database (Turkey) includes data from eight countries, but has not progressed since 2001, due to lack of data sent by partner institutions. A call for better collaboration was made. The ECPGR *Pisum* database (United Kingdom) is currently being rebuilt from contributions representing 42 collections from 26 countries and should be placed online in the early summer of 2008.

The ECPGR Soybean Database (Russian Federation) was reported to contain 11 000 entries, mostly from VIR (> 6000). The DB has the potential to include larger international collections, such as from USDA (18 000) and China (12 000). However, it is to be verified whether the DB can be maintained in Russia, since difficulties to find necessary resources for its maintenance were reported.

A common issue was the lack of safety-duplication and the Group invited countries to offer suitable space. Portugal offered to host safety-duplicates in the genebank in Braga. Macedonia (FYR) mentioned its decision to safety-duplicate its collection at the Svalbard Seed Vault.

The Network had been mobilized to respond to the offer made by the Trust for support in the regeneration of germplasm collections. Urgent needs for regeneration were expressed by Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary and Portugal. The need to regenerate and maintain collections of homozygous lines containing well identified genes, as well as collections of local European landrace populations was identified. Support expected from the Trust should be complemented by additional offers of facilities for regeneration. This initiative will need to be planned as a European action, complementary to ICARDA's activities. Upcoming regeneration activities were also considered ideal to score at least the most essential characterization data. Flowering time, a relevant trait for adaptation to climate change, will be scored under the coordination of Portugal. Portugal also offered to coordinate an initiative to monitor presence/absence of relevant grain legume insect pests in Europe. Additionally, A. Carboni, Italy offered to coordinate the search for a new determinate habitus for common bean. Regeneration of *Vicia faba* was considered an occasion to monitor pollinators and flower morphology. M. José Suso, Spain offered to provide contact with experts in this area. Finally, M. Ambrose, UK together with S. Angelova, Bulgaria, offered to coordinate scoring of the "lodging"

in pea which is still a high priority trait for breeders. Considering the importance of comparing the results of different methods of regeneration, M. José Suso will provide a flow chart on how to approach this research area. Mike Ambrose was reconfirmed as Chair of the Group and Gérard Duc as Vice-Chair.

Considering that Pea is not a mandate crop for the CGIAR and in the absence of a global focal point, it was decided to form a *Pisum* Genetic Resources Consortium (**PeaGRIC**), with the aim of creating a single portal for the *Pisum* research community, to develop an international reference collection of *Pisum* and to facilitate agronomic and molecular characterization of the reference collection. The consortium is open to registrations and members of the WG were invited to join (reference M. Ambrose).

A similar proposal was under development for a Faba bean Genetic Resources International Consortium (**FababeanGRIC**) (reference Gérard Duc).

**Collaboration of the Network with the Global Crop Diversity Trust** also took the form of participation of three members in the Global Conservation Strategy Meeting for chickpea, lentil, grasspea and faba bean, held 19-22 February 2007 in Aleppo, Syria. The outcome of this action took the form of Global Strategies and specific actions to target problems of regeneration/safety-duplication or knowledge gaps. Following a specific invitation, a request for the regeneration of grain legumes was submitted to the Trust in December 2007 (see below, Chapter 6).

The Network Coordinator, M. Ambrose attended, in November 2007, the start-up and training workshop of the GENRES EU-funded project on “An Integrated European *In situ* Management Work Plan: Implementing Genetic Reserves and On-Farm Concepts” (**AEGRO**). Although grain legumes were not included in the project, lessons can be learned from this exercise and the Network intends to maintain a close relationship with AEGRO (see below, Chapter 3.8).

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

**Priority WGs:** *Beta* and Fibre Crops (Flax and Hemp); Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

**Lower priority WG:** Potato

The **Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops Network Coordinating Group** consists of four members: Lothar Frese, Quedlinburg, Germany (Network Coordinator); Dea Baričević, Ljubljana, Slovenia; Roel Hoekstra, Wageningen, The Netherlands; and Martin Pavelek, Šumperk, Czech Republic.

The **Third Meeting of the Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs)** took place on 26-28 June 2007, hosted by the local Department of Vegetables and Special Crops of the Crop Research Institute, Prague-Ruzyne in Olomouc, Czech Republic. It was attended by representatives from 23 countries. New responsibilities for the compilation of species-specific descriptor lists were reassigned for *Artemisia absinthium*, *Melissa officinalis*, *Origanum* spp. and *Salvia officinalis*. Zlatko Šatović (Croatia) agreed to compile protocol(s) on the most appropriate molecular tools to assess the genetic variability among populations of the target species. The development of European MAP conservation strategies for a priority list of species (*Achillea millefolium* agg., *Artemisia absinthium*, *Carum carvi*, *Gentiana lutea*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Melissa officinalis*, *Mentha* spp., *Origanum vulgare*, *Salvia officinalis* and *Thymus* spp.) remains the main goal of the WG. Missing knowledge on the distribution and genetic diversity of wild populations and the high level of threats to their survival were deemed limiting factors in ensuring long-term conservation. It was recognized that inventories or surveys on MAP distribution and abundance have not been documented at European level, mainly due to the lack of appropriate descriptors and of financial support, both at national and international levels.



The updated version of the “Proposal for a MAP descriptor list” was presented by the WG Chair and unanimously considered finalized by the members. A proposal was made to implement the AEGIS concept for *Origanum*. The first step would be to define criteria for the Most Appropriate Accessions to be included in a European collection. Technical guidelines for conservation should then be agreed by the MAP WG. A collaborative project proposal on: “Characterization of *Origanum* spp. populations in member countries” has been planned for submission to the Steering Committee as part of the workplan for the next Phase of ECPGR.

As a result of the 5th Planta Europa Conference held in Cluj Napoca, Romania, September 2007, a new draft **European Strategy for Plant Conservation (2008-2014)** was developed. One of the targets is “No species of wild flora endangered by international trade” and it is foreseen that “Action plans be implemented and methodologies disseminated to ensure that 15 priority wild medicinal and aromatic plant species traded within Europe are not endangered by trade”. The ECPGR MAP WG was alerted by the Secretariat about this opportunity to channel its efforts towards this joint target, in collaboration with other partners of the Planta Europa Network.

The Network Coordinator, Lothar Frese, participated in the On-farm Conservation Task Force Meeting and Home Gardens Workshop in Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2-5 October 2007. He provided a case study related to “On-farm management of fodder beets in Germany”.

Plans made by the ECPGR Working Group on *Beta* for the last part of Phase VII can partly be implemented by workpackage 6 (case study on *Beta*) of the EU-funded **AEGRO project** (see below, Chapter 3.8). ECPGR funded the participation of Dea Baričević, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and Arnaldo Santos Guerra from the Instituto Canario de Investigaciones Agrarias, Tenerife, Spain in the AEGRO start-up meeting in Evershot, United Kingdom, November 2007. During the meeting A. Santos Guerra agreed to sample populations of selected *Beta* species on the Canary Islands on an input-in-kind basis to enable the determination of the within- and between- population variability.

In the same way, *Beta* populations on Madeira will be sampled by the University of Madeira. Only very limited information on the distribution of *B. patula* existed as the last *Beta* collecting mission on Madeira took place in the 1960s. Within the first six months of AEGRO Miguel Pinheiro de Carvalho, University of Madeira, provided new distribution data on *Beta* species. The data are required to identify potential sites for *B. patula* genetic reserves. Local experts from both Portugal and Spain will sample populations and send the probes for marker analysis to the Julius Kühn-Institute at Quedlinburg, Germany. This small project on top of AEGRO can be considered a test case for European collaboration in the field of genetic reserve management through the ECPGR Working Groups.

The Chair of the Potato WG, Roel Hoekstra, contributed to collect from the members any proposal for urgent regeneration of potato collections. A request from Belarus, aiming to increase material from the collection of the National Academy of Sciences, to enable distribution of the germplasm to users, was included in the project document submitted to the Trust (see below, Chapter 6).

The following reports were made available on the Web  
([http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Indus\\_crops/indus\\_crops.htm](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Indus_crops/indus_crops.htm)):

- Part I of the Report of a Working Group on *Beta* and the World *Beta* Network. Third Joint Meeting, 8-11 March 2006, Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife, Spain (revised draft).
- Part I of the Report of a Working Group on Fibre Crops (Flax and Hemp). First Meeting, 14-16 June 2006, Wageningen, The Netherlands (revised draft).
- Part I of the Report of a Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants. Third Meeting, 26-28 June 2007, Olomouc, Czech Republic (revised draft).

### 3.6. Vegetables Network

**Priority WGs:** Cucurbits, Leafy Vegetables and Umbellifer Crops

**Lower priority WGs:** *Allium*, *Brassica* and Solanaceae

The **Vegetables Network Coordinating Group** consists of seven members: Dave Astley, Warwick, United Kingdom (Network Coordinator); Ferdinando Branca, Catania, Italy; Marie-Christine Daunay, Montfavet, France; Maria José Díez, Valencia, Spain; Willem van Dooijeweert, Wageningen, The Netherlands; Joachim Keller, Gatersleben, Germany; and Rob van Treuren Wageningen, The Netherlands.

With involvement of the **Allium Working Group** a project proposal called “Vegetative *Allium*, Europe's Core Collection, safe and sound” (EURALLIVEG) was developed under the coordination of IPK, Gatersleben, Germany. This was successfully submitted to the second call of the EC Programme AGRIGENRES and the First Project Coordination Meeting was held at IPK, Gatersleben, 12-13 April 2007. Vegetables Network funds were used to support the attendance of Dave Astley, not a partner in the project, but Chair of the *Allium* WG, in the EURALLIVEG start-up meeting. The AEGIS coordinator, Jan Engels, also attended the meeting. Concrete steps or approaches were suggested on how the project would be able to better contribute to the objectives of AEGIS and *vice versa*. In particular, the project will carry out molecular screening on all the garlic and shallot accessions that are being maintained by the partners (Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, NordGen and Poland), predominantly with the idea of identifying duplicate accessions of both crops among and within the collections. Additionally, the project is intending to establish a tripartite agreement among the three cryopreservation genebanks in Czech Republic, Germany and Poland. Such an agreement will likely coincide with the AEGIS long-term conservation strategy of cryopreservation of selected accessions, combined with virus elimination and safety-duplication.

The **Vegetables Network** met on 26-28 June 2007 in Olomouc, Czech Republic, holding its second meeting with participation of about 50 people from 26 countries. The meeting was hosted by the local Department of Vegetables and Special Crops of the Crop Research Institute, Prague-Ruzyne. The six WGs gathered at this meeting to review their progress and make plans for the future.

- The **Allium WG** took stock of the approval of the EU-funded EURALLIVEG project, in which garlic collections will be molecularly characterized, freed from virus infections and the unique material will be cryopreserved. A garlic image database is being developed on the IPK Web site ([pgrc-35.ipk-gatersleben.de/gcc/](http://pgrc-35.ipk-gatersleben.de/gcc/)) and a shallot image database is under development. Special attention will be dedicated in the near future to the value of wild relatives of onion, leek and garlic for pre-breeding.
- The **Brassica WG** reported recent updates of the ECPGR *Brassica* database, including nearly 20 000 accession data. Being a model crop for AEGIS, the WG refined their criteria to identify Most Appropriate Accessions (MAAs) and resolved to start the identification of MAAs within the *Brassica rapa* collections. Among the priorities for future action, the WG identified the need to better characterize and evaluate the collections for traits of common interest and to make the data publicly available. Collecting of wild *B. rapa* accessions was recommended, considering their poor/minor representation in genebanks and the threat posed by climate change to the survival of several sites. Strategies for *in situ* and on-farm conservation of *Brassica* species will be developed by the EU-funded project AEGRO.
- The **Cucurbits WG** reported on the establishment of the European Central Cucurbits Database, with a structure comprising minimum characterization data and links to information to determine taxonomic nomenclature and to methods for regeneration of *Cucurbita* species. Plans for the future foresee the improvement of data quality of the database, including characterization and evaluation data, definition of quality standards for conservation, definition of minimum descriptors for *Lagenaria* and *Momordica* and compilation of information about on-farm conservation of cucurbit crops.
- The **Leafy Vegetables WG** will benefit from the EU-funded project on “Leafy vegetables germplasm, stimulating use” which started in 2007. This project will result in the updating of

the lettuce database and development of spinach, chicory and minor leafy vegetables databases. Accessions will be regenerated, characterized and evaluated for pests, disease and utilization aspects. Inventory of regeneration protocols, status of safety-duplication, regeneration and characterization will need to be carried out among the members in view of harmonizing methodologies and ensuring good management of the collections. Attention to other leafy vegetables such as *Rheum*, *Asparagus* and artichoke will also be increased in the future.

- The **Solanaceae WG** reviewed the progress of its databases on Eggplant, Pepper, Tomato, *Physalis* and *Cyphomandra*. All of them are accruing data and plans were made to improve their functionality and nomenclature systems.
- The Pepper Database was installed in Turkey using the Eggplant database software, with the help of the Dutch Database Managers and it was subsequently made available online by AARI ([http://www.etae.gov.tr/capsicum/browse\\_capsicum\\_db.php](http://www.etae.gov.tr/capsicum/browse_capsicum_db.php)).
- Due to insufficient staff time resources at VIR, Russian Federation, it was jointly agreed to transfer the Tomato Database to CGN, the Netherlands. The WG thanked VIR for their contribution in establishing the database since 2001. The Tomato Database was made available online (<http://documents.plant.wur.nl/cgn/pgr/tomato/>).
- A new ECPGR database on Pepino will be developed in Spain. Plans are underway to map the genetic diversity of the European *Capsicum* collections with molecular markers, with the help of a consortium of breeding companies. Increased characterization and evaluation of the collections, based on agreed minimum descriptors, is envisaged, as well as inventories of the Solanaceae genetic resources existing on farm in the European countries.
- The **Umbellifers WG** had the opportunity to analyze the results of a questionnaire giving an overview of the status of conservation facilities, different distribution practices and level of safety-duplication in European collections. A significant level of characterization has been achieved with work on carrot, celery, dill, fennel and parsley. There was agreement to focus more in the near future on characterization and evaluation of minor Umbellifer crops, with focus on disease resistance, quality traits (flavour, pigments, essential oils) and abiotic stress.

Safety-duplication of collections was considered an ongoing priority by all the WGs. They also confirmed their support for the AEGIS concept and all are prepared to actively contribute to this collaborative programme. The *Brassica* WG will be the model group for the outbreeding seed-propagated taxa in AEGIS.

The Network membership agreed unanimously that the Network Coordinating Committee should send a formal letter to the Steering Committee requesting that the Networks' WGs will not be prioritized in Phase VIII of ECPGR. All WGs felt that competition for funds, in the present circumstances, would divide the WGs, thereby threatening the unanimity and the positive collaborative relationships that currently prevail within the Network.

Following the decision at the meeting in Olomouc to use savings of the Network for speeding up the compilation and editing of Networks' reports, Elinor Lipman, ECPGR Secretariat, started working at 75% time (from 50%) as at November 2007 and until end of December 2008, dedicating her additional time exclusively to the Vegetables Network's reports.

During 2007 and the early part of 2008, the following changes were made in the chairmanship of the WGs: after a period as interim Chairs, Rob van Treuren, The Netherlands, and Ferdinando Branca, Italy, were confirmed during the Vegetables Network meeting as Chairs of the Leafy Vegetables and *Brassica* WGs, respectively. Due to several reasons, mainly their time availability, Marie-Christine Daunay, Chair of the Solanaceae WG, and Willem van Dooijeweert, Vice-Chair, proposed to the Vegetables meeting to switch roles. In January 2008, Dave Astley, United Kingdom, due to his retirement, resigned as the Chair of the Umbellifer Crops WG and a process to find an interim Chair was started by the Secretariat via email.

The Cucurbits WG is planning to hold a small ad hoc meeting in Poland, in October 2008. Their revision of Minimum descriptor lists for *Cucurbita*, cucumber, melon and watermelon has continued in collaboration with Bioversity and the agreed version is expected to be online in 2008. The Group is also planning to use remaining funds to facilitate the implementation of black boxes for the cucurbits' collections of Bulgaria and Israel.

A review of the Cucurbits WG was published in Acta Horticulturae (see below, Chapter 7).

### 3.7. Documentation and Information Network

The composition of the **Documentation and Information Network Coordinating Group** was revised during a meeting of the EURISCO Advisory Group (EAG) in March 2008. A proposal to reduce duplication of coordinating bodies was made, with a suggestion to incorporate all the tasks in the NCG, including the advisory role to EURISCO. The composition of the NCG was proposed to be enlarged, maintaining a balanced number of Central Crop Database Managers and National Focal Points, including NordGen and SEEDNet representatives, as well as four ex officio standing guests (*In situ* and On-farm Network Coordinator, EURISCO Coordinator, ECPGR Coordinator, and the IT representative of the institute hosting EURISCO).

NCG members are the following: Frank Begemann, Bonn, Germany (Network Coordinator); Iva Faberová, Prague, Czech Republic; Theo van Hintum, Wageningen, The Netherlands; Helmut Knüpffer, Gatersleben, Germany; Jonas Nordling, Alnarp, NordGen; Sonia Dias and Lorenzo Maggioni, Rome, ECPGR Secretariat; Idin Fazlic, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (SEEDNet); Ahmet Semsettin Tan, Menemen, Turkey; Ian Thomas, Aberystwyth, United Kingdom; Nigel Maxted, Birmingham, United Kingdom (*In situ* and On-farm Network Coordinator); and a representative from France (to be confirmed).

Requests for nominations of **Focal Point(s) for the *In situ* and On-farm Plant Genetic Resources National Inventory** were sent by the Secretariat to the National Coordinators in January 2007. The list of nominated Focal Points is available at:

[http://www.bioversityinternational.org/networks/ecpgr/Contacts/ecpgr\\_PGR\\_NI\\_insonfarm\\_FP.asp](http://www.bioversityinternational.org/networks/ecpgr/Contacts/ecpgr_PGR_NI_insonfarm_FP.asp)

The National Inventory "*In situ*/On-farm" Focal Points will be the unique link between EURISCO and the different national documentation systems. Within their country, these new Focal Points will be expected to hold responsibility for the creation and/or the development and/or the coordination at national level of *in situ*/on-farm PGR inventories. They will be expected to ensure the appropriate flow of data to the European Catalogue, EURISCO. Their role will be eminently technical, but they are also expected to give clearance for the online publication of country passport data.

The **Crop Wild Relative descriptor list** that was developed within the UNEP-GEF Crop Wild Relatives project was circulated in July 2007 by Bioversity to the relevant ECPGR Thematic and Crop Networks. Feedback was received by some partners and comments are being analyzed by Bioversity.

A joint meeting of the **Documentation and Information Network Coordinating Group and the EURISCO Advisory Group** was held on 2-3 April 2007 in Maccarese, Rome, hosted by Bioversity International. This meeting was organized upon consideration that a recent EU proposal for a European PGR Information Infrastructure (EPGRIS2), as well as other proposals for projects contributing to an improved documentation infrastructure (AEGIS and EGRISI), were regrettably not approved for funding. It seemed therefore necessary to take stock of ongoing initiatives and explore alternative ways to better collaborate in the field of PGR documentation in Europe. The existing framework of the ECPGR Documentation and Information (D&I) Network was considered the most suitable to organize a planning meeting. The meeting agreed on the need to create a mode of operation whereby PGR documentation activities could be carried out in collaboration on a voluntary and self-funded basis and thus contribute in a coordinated manner to the achievement of common goals in the European Region. Collaboration should result in adding value to the sum of individual activities. It was considered desirable to create a system that would not be elitist, but rather constituting a driving force and that would be able to be inclusive rather than excluding the less

developed countries from the initiative. The system would have the ability to collect contributions from several partners, either in the form of technological improvement, or with discussion and ideas. Transparency of operation was considered paramount.

The meeting concluded that a new initiative should be launched by the ECPGR D&I Network, consisting of a self-funded project called **EPGRIS3**. The objective of this initiative, coordinated by Theo van Hintum, CGN, The Netherlands, is to coordinate ongoing, self-funded voluntary actions proposed by European partners for the improvement of a European Plant Genetic Resources Information Infrastructure. EPGRIS3 specifically aims to achieve a list of workplan elements, related to: Discussion on vision and scope of EURISCO; Data quality and quantity in EURISCO; Uploading mechanism; User interfaces; and Networking of National Focal Points.

The meeting also concluded that EURISCO will need to develop as the entry point for access to all information on European PGR at the accession level.

The minutes of the meeting were made available online at the project's Web site at <http://www.epgris3.eu/>.

Following the meeting, the ECPGR Secretariat sent a letter (July 2007) to National Coordinators, National Inventory Focal Points and European Central Crop Database Managers, inviting for participation in the project and seeking for inputs in kind, such as technological inputs, training, staff time, etc.

Activity leaders and current workplans can be found online at the EPGRIS3 Web site (<http://www.epgris3.eu/>).

The number of accession-related **data stored in EURISCO** has passed the threshold of one million in 2007, having reached almost 1.1 million accessions by December 2007, with an increase of the number of National Inventories, representing 35 of the European countries.

During 2007, **EURISCO** activities focused on improving data quality and quantity, namely taxonomy and GIS data; translation of two fact sheets into nine languages; EURISCO database technology updating; Web site redesign and updating; and monitoring visitors/users. To enhance the data quality and quantity in the EURISCO Catalogue, at the National Inventory (NI) and individual institutions level, two types of analysis reports were made, i.e. on taxonomy and on GIS. As a result of this exercise, taxonomy reports on 31 NI were generated, representing a total of 220 institutions. Latitudes and longitudes available in the Catalogue were mapped (using Google Earth) and the results were checked against the declared country of origin. Discrepancies were revealed and GIS reports related to 16 NIs were produced. The reports were sent to the National Focal Points (NFPs) for data verification/correction and update of the NIs and subsequent uploading of revised data to EURISCO. This will ensure the improvement of data quality in the system and at the data providers' level.

The English version of the EURISCO fact sheets were updated as at September 2007 and simultaneously translated into nine other languages. Translations were offered as an input in kind by the NFPs, while Bioversity provided layout and printing. The updated EURISCO fact sheets are now translated into the following languages: Azerbaijani, Croatian, Czech, Danish, German, Norwegian, Romanian, Slovak and Turkish, and will be available on the EURISCO Web site. Printed copies were distributed in scientific and technical meetings in Europe. The EURISCO poster was also updated and disseminated for further use. One EURISCO e-bulletin was produced and circulated in December 2007. Two dissemination articles were published in the Newsletter for Europe and four presentations were made in scientific meetings.

The Web site re-design and the database technology updating made considerable progress. The estimated date of release of the new Web site and product was planned for the end of 2007, but needed to be rescheduled for 2008.

Monitoring of the visitors' log to the EURISCO Web site showed a marked increase in the number of visitors to the Catalogue. There has been an increase in the number of repeated users and general interest in the Catalogue is also expanding geographically, since the Catalogue was visited from 125 countries, compared to 68 countries in 2006.

Routine maintenance and updating was carried out for indexing EURISCO to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) as a data provider. EURISCO was tested as a concept to be used for the global system "Accession Level Information System (ALIS) on Plant Genetic Resources".

A EURISCO external assessment: "Needs and recommendations for setting a roadmap" was initiated in December 2007 with the support of Bioversity. Iva Faberová, member of the EURISCO Advisory Group, was selected as external evaluator.

**A EURISCO Advisory Group meeting was held** at the Central Office of the Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food (BLE) in Bonn, Germany **on 12 March 2008**. The overview of the achievements was discussed, and the new Web site was presented. Preliminary results of the external assessment of EURISCO were summarized. It was agreed that the new Web site and the Memorandum of Understanding between Bioversity and the partner countries, which has to be renewed after its expiration at the end of 2009, will explain all the categories of plant genetic resources that are expected to be in EURISCO; a statement of the objectives will also be included, indicating which users EURISCO aims to serve. It was agreed that the EURISCO Team should propose a number of indicators of quality and of success for EURISCO and submit this list for comments to the EURISCO Advisory Group. The EAG asked the EURISCO Coordinator to prepare a workplan, with specific activities and expected outputs for 2008, on the basis of an agreed list of important actions, including as the highest priority the further improvement of the Web site and of the search components. A plan with concrete actions for 2009-2011 was also requested, for inclusion in the workplan of Phase VIII.

Following the initiative to adopt an enlarged Doc & Info NCG, operating also as EAG, new Terms of Reference will be drafted, also including the governance of EURISCO. These documents will eventually be included among the background documents for the next ECPGR Steering Committee meeting.

Minutes of the meeting are available at:  
[http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Info\\_doc/bonn\\_minutes\\_final.pdf](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Info_doc/bonn_minutes_final.pdf)

As part of the **EPGRIS3 project, a meeting was held in Bonn, Germany on 13-14 March 2008**, back-to-back with the EAG meeting. Three project activities were on the agenda, specifically to discuss opportunities arising from the existing plant genetic resources information infrastructures in Europe for: 1) the Registration procedure for European material under the Multilateral System (MLS) of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA); 2) The reporting procedure under the Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA) of the MLS of the ITPGRFA for European providers; and 3) the relationship between EURISCO and the European Central Crop Databases (ECCDBs). The EURISCO Advisory Group and other EPGRIS3 activity partners participated in the meeting. A proposal was made to adopt new descriptors in EURISCO that would enable the registration (through the European National Inventories) of accessions that are part of the MLS and of those that are part of AEGIS. The EURISCO Catalogue would then serve as a regional interface for Europe to report on material included in the MLS to the Treaty Secretariat.

Discussions also focused on suitable additional descriptors that would enable EURISCO to serve as a regional infrastructure to record germplasm transactions taking place in Europe and therefore to serve as a reporting mechanism on concluded SMTAs to the Treaty Secretariat.

Technical issues were thoroughly discussed and suitable solutions proposed. The possible implementation of these mechanisms will be tabled for discussion at the ECPGR Steering Committee meeting in September 2008. If agreed, this ECPGR initiative could be reported to the Governing Body of the International Treaty as an example that could be suggested for use also by other regions.

The issue of the relationship between EURISCO and the ECCDBs was introduced by a presentation illustrating the discrepancies among these two documentation systems. The status of development of the 60 existing ECPGR databases was also reported, showing that ECCDBs contain data for nearly 750 000 accessions, but only 12 databases (20%) contain partial sets of characterization data. It was noted that ECCDBs have different roles from EURISCO and obtain data from different sources. This would explain some of the data discrepancies (i.e. historical data are sometimes included in ECCDBs; the national data included in EURISCO is at the discretion of the individual countries). It was agreed that a better definition of the objectives of the ECCDBs will need to be agreed in order to better serve the needs of the ECPGR Working Groups. It could also be useful to define ECPGR quality criteria for

ECCDBs, as well as to envisage formal agreements between ECPGR and the European institutions hosting the databases, ensuring an appropriate maintenance and update. As a workplan for this activity, it was agreed to draft a “Vision paper for a European PGR information and documentation landscape”. This document could serve as a foundation to create a consensus within the ECPGR Networks in order to move in a common direction for the establishment of a more efficient PGR documentation and information environment in Europe. A session of the next ECPGR Steering Committee Meeting will be dedicated to discussing documentation issues along these lines.

### **3.8. *In situ* and On-farm Conservation Network**

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

The **Third Meeting of the Task Force (TF) on On-farm Conservation and Management** was hosted in Ljubljana, 2-3 October 2007, by the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia, in collaboration with the Slovenian Institute of Hop Research. The meeting was attended by 21 country representatives, a larger group than ever before, testifying an increased interest for on-farm activities. The group took note of the newly established dedicated Web site where contacts, activities, bibliographies and related documents provided by the TF members were being uploaded at:  
[www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Insitu\\_onfarm/OnfarmTF\\_intro.htm](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Insitu_onfarm/OnfarmTF_intro.htm)

A new version of minimum descriptors for the documentation of on-farm conservation and management activities was jointly proposed by the Suceava genebank, Romania and the Applied Biology Department, Perugia University, Italy, and then circulated to the On-farm Task Force for further comment and approval. These were being tested in ongoing missions carried out in the Apuseni mountains, Romania and will be open for further refinement and suggestions by the TF. A draft version is available online at:  
[http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Insitu\\_onfarm/Docs/OnfarmDescr\\_DRAFT271107.pdf](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Insitu_onfarm/Docs/OnfarmDescr_DRAFT271107.pdf)

The importance of unconventional information (grey literature) and guidelines to find these sources were described by Z. Stehno (Czech Republic) and B. Schierscher-Viret (Switzerland), who also presented the Swiss database for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, which is rich of historical and bibliographic information on Swiss traditional crops and varieties (<http://www.bdn.ch>).

A case study on “On-farm management of fodder beets in Germany” was presented by L. Frese (Germany) and a study on “Common bean landraces in Italy” was circulated by V. Negri, to serve as possible models for the preparation of similar studies in other countries.

Following the meeting, other case studies were made available from the Web site (on cowpea and beans in Italy, timothy in the Nordic countries and tomato in Spain).

The status of progress of the approval of the EU Directive on “Conservation varieties” was outlined by P. Freudenthaler, Austria. This Directive is expected to provide derogations for marketing of seed of landraces and varieties threatened by genetic erosion. Controversial points remain the geographical and quantitative restrictions for the marketing of seeds. The TF resolved to establish a sub-group with the task to prepare a consensus position on this Directive, expressing the point of view from the perspective of the genetic conservation of landraces diversity.

Among the plans made by the TF for future activities, Valeria Negri, Italy, reconfirmed as Chair of the TF, agreed to take on the role of developing landraces data structures for the creation of European inventories. The TF also agreed to undertake the preparation of a book describing, with a European perspective, some methodological approaches to conserve landraces on farm, as well as methodologies to establish on-farm national inventories. It was considered important that the TF receive in the future the inputs of plant breeders, farmer organizations, organic agriculture movements and NGO movements, and representatives of these categories will be invited to be associate members of the TF.

National experiences on on-farm conservation were described in 20 posters. Abstracts of their content will be included in the report of the meeting, which will be published by the ECPGR Secretariat in electronic form.

The On-farm TF meeting was followed by a **Workshop on Home Gardens in Europe on 3-4 October 2007**. Around 50 experts from 23 countries gathered to discuss and exchange information about the state of knowledge and research in the field of European home gardens, especially focusing on the genetic diversity of crops conserved, and on the significant gaps in knowledge that would need to be filled by further collaborative research. An introduction summarizing the state of the art of home gardens research in Europe was made by Gea Galluzzi. Information presented in the meeting showed home gardens as probably being the most outstanding agro-ecosystems in Europe where high levels of agricultural diversity are still maintained. It was agreed that knowledge of the value and existence of home gardens in Europe is not sufficiently widespread among the scientists and there was the need for a systematic survey. This should comprehend descriptive studies of home gardens' potential, as well as threats to survival in different geographic and climatic areas of Europe, in order to know what exists, who maintains it and the level of genetic diversity involved. Home gardens management practices, their sustainability and the linkage to other production and seed systems should also be investigated. Participants resolved to develop a European-wide research agenda to be implemented over the next five years. As a result of the meeting, a concept note was sent to the European Commission, proposing to establish a research "budget line" in the framework of the EU Framework Programme.

The proceedings will be published by Bioversity International.

Media coverage of the event reached international newspapers, with features in the International Herald Tribune (<http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/11/05/europe/seed.php>) and in the New York Times.

The meetings in Ljubljana were attended by several "Diverseeds" project partners and the first European workshop of the project was organized during the subsequent day.

An invitation from Bioversity was sent to the Network asking for inputs and comments regarding the **descriptors for Crop Wild Relatives**. These were developed collaboratively by the EC-funded project PGR Forum, international organizations and country partners in the UNEP/GEF project "*In situ* conservation of crop wild relatives through enhanced information management and field application". A set of comments was sent on 26 November 2007 by N. Maxted to Bioversity.

Nominations of **Focal Point(s) for the *In situ* and On-farm Plant Genetic Resources National Inventory** were organized by the ECPGR Secretariat (see above, Chapter 3.7).

L. Frese, Julius Kühn Institute, Quedlinburg, Germany, is coordinating the EU project "An Integrated European *In Situ* Management Workplan: Implementing Genetic Reserve and On-Farm Concepts (AEGRO)" (AGRI GENRES 057). The project held its start-up meeting in Evershot, UK, on 1-4 November 2007. The project deals with the identification of target species and populations for *in situ* (both genetic reserve and on-farm) conservation of key crop groups (*Avena*, *Beta*, *Brassica* and *Prunus*), the development of a data model for *in situ* management data including a software application suited to record geo-referenced data in the natural habitat, and the development of a workflow (methodology for sampling, analysis and documentation), required to determine a demographic and genetic baseline of populations.

Preferentially, genetic reserves will be nominated both within protected areas and outside in traditional farming systems. The selection and management of sites, and of populations within sites, will always be based on the complementary knowledge available within a multidisciplinary and decentralized European team of crop experts. Hence, cooperation between experts working in different sectors and European countries will often be necessary. The ECPGR Networks are most suited to assist the organization of such teams and the decision-making process that finally leads to the establishment of genetic reserves.



In November 2007, Bioversity concluded that it was not a priority to be involved in hosting, maintaining and developing the **Crop Wild Relative Information System (CWRIS)** and the ECPGR Secretariat suggested that other partners should take it over. The Secretariat noted that CWRIS will be developed further in the context of the AEGRO project.

In representation of ECPGR and specifically the *In situ* and On-farm Conservation Network, N. Maxted and L. Maggioni attended the 5th Planta Europa Conference, hosted 5-9 September in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The meeting had the objective to launch a new **European Plant Conservation Strategy (EPCS)**, more aligned with the Global Plant Conservation Strategy, and including feasible targets and suitable leaders for specific actions. Presentations made by ECPGR representatives raised interest and awareness of the need to start a closer dialogue and further integrate conservation efforts between the wild plant/ecosystem and PGRFA communities. The intention was for raising the profile of crop wild relatives (CWR) and landraces in the frame of the EPCS. A number of points in this direction were actually picked up by the Conference. In particular, some actions planned by the ECPGR *In situ* and On-farm Conservation Network were included in the EPCS and this Network was indicated as the potential leader (definition of a list of priority CWR in Europe; inventory of CWR hotspots of species and genetic diversity; establishment of 25 European crop wild relative genetic reserves covering the major hotspots of species and genetic diversity; *ex situ* conservation of CWR as a specific priority; inventory of traditional, local crop landrace varieties).

**The Report of an On-farm Conservation and Management Task Force**, Second Meeting, 19-20 June 2006, Stegelitz, Germany, was published as an electronic document and is available at: [http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Insitu\\_onfarm/OnfarmTF\\_intro.htm](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Insitu_onfarm/OnfarmTF_intro.htm)

**The agreed protocols of PGR Forum Workshop 4**, Genetic Reserve Management Guidelines, held in Menorca, Spain, on 21-24 April 2004 and the proceedings of the project's final Workshop and International Conference on Crop Wild Relative Conservation and Use held in Agrigento, Sicily, Italy in September 2005, were published by CAB International, as follows:

- Iriondo JM, Maxted N, Dulloo ME, editors. 2008. Conserving Plant Genetic Diversity in Protected Areas: Population Management of Crop Wild Relatives. CAB International.
- Maxted N, Ford-Lloyd BV, Kell SP, Iriondo JM, Dulloo ME, Turok J, editors. 2008. Crop Wild Relatives Conservation and Use. CAB International.

An article on "**ECPGR and Planta Europa: an opportunity for synergies**" was prepared by L. Maggioni, N. Maxted and J. Engels for the Proceedings CD of the Planta Europa Conference. An abstract of the same article was published in the e-newsletter Planta Europa News.

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

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

A **Workshop on Crop Genetic Resources Networks** was organized at Bioversity in Maccarese, Rome, from 3-5 December 2007, in close collaboration with the EC-funded project Diverseeds (Networking on conservation and use of plant genetic resources in Europe and Asia) and Bioversity International, with the intention of assessing the changes in the environment (FAO International Treaty, Global Crop Diversity Trust, etc.) in which the networks operate, revisiting existing network concepts and strategies, elaborating suggestions for new or improved modes of operation of regional genetic resources networks, and identifying formal channels of communication and cooperation among regional networks.

The meeting recognized the added values and benefits to partners related to conservation and use of PGR that are being provided by regional networks. These include capacity development, developing common regional information systems, providing a discussion forum for access and

benefit sharing arrangements/agreements, providing an environment for formal and informal cooperation and ensuring that the weakest partners in a given region are or will become actively involved in the global system.

The alignment of the regional networks' objectives towards a contribution to the creation of the global system is seen as an important step in best positioning the networks to be visible in the global arena and to receive support from international agencies and instruments. Coordination of the networks' activities at the global level would help the networks to focus on global system objectives; to take advantage of successful ideas, tools and mechanisms developed by individual networks; to identify common interests and create synergies by collaborating across the borders; and to facilitate the Treaty ratification process in countries through the sharing of knowledge and experience from countries that already ratified the Treaty.

It was recommended that an appropriate forum be established to facilitate coordination among the networks as part of the global system. With the aim of ensuring effective and sustainable regional networks and to increase their visibility and recognition in the regional and global context, it was recommended that the regional networks: participate in and report progress to the FAO Commission and the Governing Body meetings; sharpen strategies towards breeding and development (linking conservation and use and research); link up with Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), the GPA development process and the environment and nature conservation programmes.

The **Inter-regional Cooperation Network Coordinating Group** met for the second time on 6 December 2007 in Maccaresse, Italy, at Bioversity International headquarters, to review the outcome of the Workshop on Crop Genetic Resources Networks (see above) and its impact on the ECPGR Inter-regional Cooperation Network, and to make plans for Phase VIII of ECPGR.

The Workshop on Crop Genetic Resources Networks held on 3-5 December identified a possible new role for the ECPGR Inter-regional Cooperation Network in the near future. In particular, it seemed that "sharing of responsibilities" should receive the highest priority. It would be a natural role for the ECPGR Network to transfer to other regions the same view that is prevailing in Europe with regard to the sharing of tasks, material and information. Facilitating and promoting the ratification and implementation of the Treaty could therefore be an area of relevance, also considering that when a larger number of countries implement the Treaty, this will also have an impact on the European region. Along these lines, a contribution of 10 000 euro, recently offered by Germany, will be used to organize an Inter-regional Cooperation Network meeting to bring together experts from Europe and other regions, to exchange experiences as to how to make germplasm available to the Multilateral System, and to facilitate the use of the SMTA within a country.

Exchange of information across the Networks, with special reference to ongoing projects and activities, was highlighted as a constant need. A role was identified for ECPGR in establishing a Web portal that could offer information on ongoing activities within the Networks and therefore constitute a platform for finding partners for cooperation. It was agreed to explore which European institution could provide such a Web portal. At the same time, the ECPGR Secretariat will compile, with the help of the Bioversity Regional Offices, a list of contacts of the PGR Regional Networks Coordinators and will maintain this list on the ECPGR Web site.

Another useful area for cooperation, highlighted in the preceding workshop, was "*in situ* and on-farm conservation and management", which is an area where Europe may benefit from the experience of other regions. It was noted that "on-farm conservation" in many cases would correspond to "participatory plant breeding" in developing countries. It could therefore be a strategic area to attract donors that would be interested in linking conservation and development through use. It was agreed that this item should be highlighted for further consideration, especially in collaboration with the ECPGR *In situ* and On-farm Conservation Network.

A full report of this meeting is available at:  
[www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Inter\\_reg\\_coop/inter\\_reg\\_coop.htm](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Inter_reg_coop/inter_reg_coop.htm)

#### 4. PUBLIC AWARENESS

The ECPGR Web site was continuously amended in order to provide updated information on future events, meeting reports, workplans and other relevant news.

Various Web pages were developed and implemented within the ECPGR Web site. Special emphasis was given to the AEGIS Web section, including newly published documents and contact "asp" pages of the AEGIS bodies, the Documentation and Information Network, the *In situ* and On-farm Conservation Network, the On-farm Task Force activities, and the Inter-regional Cooperation Network. The European Central Crop Databases entry pages and the Collaborating Organizations list were amended as appropriate.

The ECPGR brochure on collaboration with NGOs for the wider public did not make progress in 2007, since it was not possible to receive adequate feedback from the Swiss NGO on the revised text required by the Steering Committee. However, an agreement was reached in early 2008 and the brochure is planned to be finalized before the Steering Committee Meeting, as a template to be made available to the National Programmes for their use.

#### 5. AEGIS INITIATIVE FOR "A EUROPEAN GENE BANK INTEGRATED SYSTEM"

With the decisions made by the ECPGR Steering Committee during its Tenth Meeting in Riga in 2006 and the part-time appointment of the AEGIS Coordinator in December 2006 it was foreseen that AEGIS would be able to start being implemented. Many of the achievements are the result of joint activities with AEGIS partners and stakeholders, in particular the ECPGR Steering Committee, the AEGIS Advisory Committee and the Local AEGIS Task Force at Bioversity International. Progress made during 2007 can be summarized as follows:

- The ECPGR Steering Committee endorsed the revised Terms of Reference of the newly formed AEGIS Advisory Committee and appointed the following persons as members: Sergey Alexanian (VIR, Russian Federation), Béla Bartha (Pro Specie Rara, Switzerland), Frank Begemann (IBV/BLE, Germany), Eliseu Bettencourt (EAN/INIAP, Portugal), Walter de Backer (EC, Brussels), Erling Fimland, later replaced by Jessica Kathle (NordGen, Sweden), Gert Kleijer (ACW, Switzerland), Andrée Sontot (BRG, France), Silvia Strajeru (Suceava Gene Bank, Romania), Ayfer Tan (AARI, Turkey), Eva Thörn (SEEDNet, Sweden – she was elected as Chair), Garlich von Essen (ESA, Belgium), Jan Engels and Lorenzo Maggioni (ECPGR Secretariat). Additionally, an FAO representative has been invited, but this designation remained pending.
- Through an intensive correspondence process the Steering Committee members agreed on all the key elements of the AEGIS approach, whereas some issues were identified for requiring further discussion. The results are reflected in the final version of the Strategic Framework Discussion Paper ([http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/AEGIS/Docs/AEGIS\\_DiscussionPaper.pdf](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/AEGIS/Docs/AEGIS_DiscussionPaper.pdf)).
- Participation in a number of meetings (Oats Global Conservation Strategy meeting at VIR in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation; EURALLIVEG Project Initiation meeting at IPK in Gatersleben, Germany; EUCARPIA Genetic Resources Section Meeting in Piešťany, Slovakia); Planta Europa Conference in Cluj Napoca, Romania; SEEDNet Policy Workshop in Banjaluka, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Second Meeting of the ECPGR Vegetables Network in Olomouc, Czech Republic; Ninth Meeting of the Forages Working Group in Piešťany, Slovakia) provided opportunities to create more awareness about AEGIS and to obtain feedback on the planned activities. In addition, a seminar about AEGIS was given to Bioversity staff.
- Participation in ECPGR-related meetings allowed discussion on the next steps of the AEGIS implementation process, in particular with the participating members of the two above-mentioned AEGIS Model Crop Groups. Special attention was paid to the development of the selection criteria to identify the Most Appropriate Accessions (i.e. the European Accessions) for each of the gene pools and to the role of the Crop Working Groups in this identification process.
- As part of the long-term conservation strategy of the European Accessions, a safety-duplication strategy was developed and shared with partners for comments. Discussions were also

initiated with colleagues from the Global Crop Diversity Trust and NordGen regarding the use of the Svalbard Seed Vault for safety-duplication of European Accessions.

- The Secretariat has been working on the revision and updating of the AEGIS Web pages ([www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/AEGIS/AEGIS\\_home.htm](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/AEGIS/AEGIS_home.htm)).
- The Local AEGIS Task Force prepared a first draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that is intended to provide the formal basis for agreements between governments of the European countries and AEGIS on the establishment and operation of the latter. The first part of the MoU is an agreement between the governments and AEGIS; the second part is an Annex consisting of the joint agreement and undertaking between the ECPGR National Coordinators and eligible institutions in the countries to become Associate Members of AEGIS.

In July 2008, a meeting of the model crop curators will be organized in Radzików, Poland, to advance the definition of criteria to select MAAs, the procedures to establish the list of MAAs and to discuss a Quality Management System. An economic study is also being carried out in collaboration with IFPRI, with the aim to develop an appropriate preliminary methodological framework and a tool to gather data with which to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of collection management in AEGIS. Endorsement of the MoU by the Steering Committee is expected to be the key decision to enable AEGIS to be formally established.

## 6. LINK WITH OTHER NETWORKS AND INITIATIVES

The following interactions between ECPGR and other Networks and initiatives took place during 2007:

### ➤ Global Crop Diversity Trust

In September 2007, the Trust initiated a competitive grants scheme to support the evaluation of genetic resources. The Trust will provide approximately 20-25 grants annually, to enable breeders and others to screen germplasm collections for important characteristics and to make the information generated publicly available. The ECPGR Secretariat distributed this information to all National Coordinators, as an encouragement to apply for the Trust's grants.

In October 2007, the Trust approached the ECPGR Secretariat, informing them that they would like to assist its region in the regeneration and safety-duplication of priority collections over the next 3 years. The objective was to ensure the long-term safety and accessibility of these globally important materials, in line with the provisions of the International Treaty, as a first, vitally important step in building a rational global system for the effective and efficient conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA). The Trust had already identified, as part of relevant crop strategies, a collection of wheat in Albania and collections of wheat, chickpea and lentil in Ukraine as being of global significance and deserving support. In addition, the Trust invited the Secretariat to initiate a process within ECPGR to identify other collections, or portions of collections, that were priorities for regeneration and safety-duplication over the next 3 years. Eligibility for funding was restricted to the following Annex I crops: barley, bean, breadfruit, cassava, chickpea, cowpea (*Vigna* spp.), faba bean, finger millet, grass pea (*Lathyrus* spp.), maize, major aroids (e.g. taro, cocoyam), lentil, pearl millet, pigeon pea, potato, rice, sorghum, sweet potato, wheat and yam.

Consequently, the Secretariat mobilized the Cereals and Oil and Protein Crops Networks and the Potato Working Group in order to prepare an ECPGR proposal for urgent regeneration. The proposal, jointly prepared by M. Ambrose, R. Hoekstra, H. Knüpfper and L. Maggioni, was submitted to the Trust on 30 November 2007, including an application for about US\$ 200 000 to be spent for regeneration of eligible accessions from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary, Israel, Portugal. An additional application from Albania was also forwarded to the Trust in February 2008. A response from the Trust was received 18 April 2008, informing that the decision had been made to allocate US\$ 92 000 to the ECPGR Networks regeneration project and requested ECPGR to decide which collections, crops and countries to focus on, keeping in mind that the effort should focus on local, unique and threatened material. Contracts with the selected institutions will have to be signed as soon as possible.

➤ **SEEDNet**

The ECPGR Coordinator attended the sixth meeting of the Sida-funded South East Europe Development Network on Plant Genetic Resources (SEEDNet) Regional Steering Committee (RSC), in representation of the ECPGR Secretariat, which is ex officio member of the RSC. The meeting was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, 19-21 March 2007. ECPGR developments, specifically regarding AEGIS and EPGRIS3, were communicated to SEEDNet, in view of the possibility to strengthen collaboration on these topics. SEEDNet decided to set up a sub-regional task force (Silvia Strajeru, Eva Thörn and Lidija Tomic), with the task to follow the progress of the AEGIS concept and to facilitate the implementation of, for instance, quality standards and quality assurance of genebank operations. The AEGIS Coordinator and a Bioversity policy specialist attended a SEEDNet Policy Workshop in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, October 2007. Close collaboration with SEEDNet was instrumental, among other things, to promote the membership of Bosnia and Herzegovina to ECPGR, as well as to promote the use and update of EURISCO by the member countries. An ongoing joint effort of the SEEDNet and ECPGR Coordinators is the attempt to involve Moldova in PGR international collaboration.

➤ **Council Regulation (EC) No 870/2004 (AGRI GEN RES)**

The ECPGR Networks are fully involved in the development of a few ongoing projects: AEGRO (*In Situ* Management), AVEQ (*Avena* for quality in human consumption), EURALLIVEG (vegetative *Allium* core collection), LEAFY VEG (use of leafy vegetables germplasm) and GrapeGen06 (management of *Vitis* genetic resources). The project coordinator of CYNARES (genetic resources of artichoke) approached the ECPGR Secretariat to exchange information, particularly on the ECPGR documentation standards and the principles of AEGIS, in view of a possible application to artichoke collections in Europe.

➤ **EC Sixth Framework Programme**

Collaboration with the project **Diverseeds** for “Networking on conservation and use of plant genetic resources in Europe and Asia” continued in 2007. The project organized its first European and international meetings back-to-back with ECPGR, respectively at the occasion of the Home Gardens Workshop in Slovenia (October 2007) and the Inter-regional Cooperation Network meeting in Italy (December 2007). On both occasions, Diverseeds participants enriched the meetings with the Asian perspective. Future collaborative activities between Asia and Europe are being developed as projects’ outputs in the area of documentation of Crop Wild Relatives and of research and use of Neglected and Underutilized Species.

➤ **Planta Europa**

Participation of ECPGR representatives in the 5th Planta Europa conference made it possible to bring the PGR community perspective to the drawing board for the preparation of the new European Plant Conservation Strategy (see above, Chapter 3.8).

➤ **Botanic Gardens Conservation International**

The European Botanic Gardens Consortium invited the ECPGR Coordinator to make a presentation about the activities of ECPGR at their meeting in December 2007. They expressed interest in hearing about the plant conservation activities of ECPGR and exploring potential areas of collaboration, specifically regarding the link between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation. It was not possible to attend this meeting, due to clashing commitments, and the collaboration will need to be explored on future occasions.

## 7. PUBLICATIONS

### Publications produced in 2007

The following **ECPGR publications** were produced in 2007 and can be obtained free of charge from the Secretariat. These publications are also available in electronic format through the ECPGR Web site ([www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Publications/Publications.htm](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Publications/Publications.htm)).

- Electronic documents
  - Report of the ECPGR Network Coordinating Groups. First Meeting, 29-31 March 2006, Bonn, Germany. (Final update);
  - Minutes of a Joint Meeting of the Documentation and Information Network Coordinating Group and the EURISCO Advisory Group. Planning for the continuation of EPGRIS, 2-3 April 2007, Rome, Italy;
  - Genetic resources in the northern parts of Europe: current status and the future in relation to major environmental changes. Report of a Workshop, 18-19 September 2006, Rovaniemi, Finland;
  - Report of an On-farm Conservation and Management Task Force. Second Meeting, 19-20 June 2006, Stegelitz, Germany;
  - Report of a Rye and Triticale Ad hoc Meeting, 27 September 2006, Nyon, Switzerland;
  - Report of a Working Group on *Malus/Pyrus*. Third Meeting, 25-27 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia. (Part I). (Revised draft).
  - Report of a Working Group on Fibre Crops (Flax and Hemp). First Meeting, 14-16 June 2006, Wageningen, The Netherlands. (Part I). (Revised draft).
  - Report of a Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants. Third Meeting, 26-28 June 2007, Olomouc, Czech Republic. (Part I). (Revised draft).
  - Report of a Vegetables Network. Second Meeting, 26-28 June 2007, Olomouc, Czech Republic. (Part I). (Revised draft).
  - Executive summary of the Joint ECPGR-Diverseeds-Biodiversity Inter-regional Workshop on Crop Genetic Resources Networks, 3-5 December 2007, Maccarese, Italy;
  - Terms of Reference for the operational bodies of the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR). (Working Document version 2 – February 2007);
  - ECPGR Annual report 2006;
- Issues 34 and 35 of Biodiversity's Regional **Newsletter for Europe** were also published in 2007 with contributions and partial financial support from ECPGR.
- Other publications
  - Díez MJ, Nuez F, Maggioni L, van Dooijeweert W. 2007. The ECP/GR Cucurbits Working Group. In: McConchie R, Rogers G, editors: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Cucurbits. *Acta Horticulturae* 731:25-30.
  - Maggioni L, Maxted N, Engels J. 2008. ECPGR and Planta Europa: an opportunity for synergies". Proceedings CD of the Fifth Planta Europa Conference, 5-9 September 2007, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
  - Engels JMM, Maggioni L, Maxted N and Dulloo ME. 2008. Complementing *in situ* conservation with *ex situ* measures. In: Iriondo JM, Maxted N, Dulloo ME, editors. Conserving Plant Genetic Diversity in Protected Areas: Population Management of Crop Wild Relatives. CAB International. pp. 169-181.
  - Iriondo JM, Dulloo ME, Maxted N, Laguna E, Engels JMM, Maggioni L. 2008. Final considerations for the *in situ* conservation of plant genetic diversity. In: Iriondo JM, Maxted N, Dulloo ME, editors. Conserving Plant Genetic Diversity in Protected Areas: Population Management of Crop Wild relatives. CAB International. pp. 182-202.

## Publications in preparation in 2008

- Printed publications
  - A Strategic Framework for the Implementation of a European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS). Discussion Paper (published March 2008);
  - Report of a Working Group on *Vitis*. First Meeting, 12-14 June 2003, Palić, Serbia and Montenegro;
  - Report of a Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants. Second Meeting, 16-18 December 2004, Strumica, Macedonia FYR/Third Meeting, 26-28 June 2007, Olomouc, Czech Republic;
  - Report of a Workshop on Home Gardens in Europe, 4-5 October 2007, Ljubljana, Slovenia;
  - Report of a Working Group on *Beta* and World *Beta* Network. Third Joint Meeting, 8-11 March 2006, Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife, Spain.
- Electronic documents (Web publishing)
  - Minutes of the Inter-regional Cooperation Network Coordinating Group, 6 December 2007, Maccarese, Italy (published January 2008);
  - Report of a Working Group on Cucurbits. First Meeting, 1-2 September 2005, Plovdiv, Bulgaria;
  - Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the EURISCO Advisory Group, 12 March 2008, Bonn;
  - Report of a Working Group on Leafy Vegetables. First Meeting, 13-14 October 2005, Olomouc, Czech Republic;
  - Report of a Vegetables Network. Second Meeting. 26-28 June 2007, Olomouc, Czech Republic;
  - Report of the Eleventh Steering Committee Meeting, 2-5 September 2008, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
  - ECPGR Annual report 2007;
  - Public awareness brochure.

## 8. ECPGR MEETINGS

### Meetings held in 2007

- ECPGR Documentation and Information Network - Ad hoc planning meeting for the continuation of the coordinated activities on the European PGR Information Infrastructure (EPGRIS), 2-3 April 2007, Maccarese, Rome, Italy.
- Third meeting of the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Working Group, 26-28 June 2007, Olomouc, Czech Republic.
- Second Meeting of the Vegetables Network. 26-28 June 2007, Olomouc, Czech Republic.
- Third meeting of the On-farm Conservation and Management Task Force and Home gardens Workshop, 2-5 October 2007, Ljubljana, Slovenia.
- Ninth Meeting of the Forages Working Group, 23-25 October 2007, Piešťany, Slovakia.
- Fourth Meeting of the Grain Legumes Working Group, 9-10 November 2007, Lisbon, Portugal.
- Joint ECPGR-Diverseeds-Bioversity Inter-regional Workshop on Crop Genetic Resources Networks, 3-5 December 2007, Maccarese, Italy.
- Second Meeting of the Inter-regional Cooperation Network Coordinating Group, 6 December 2007, Maccarese, Italy.

## Meetings planned for 2008

- Fourth Meeting of the EURISCO Advisory Group, 12 March 2008, Bonn, Germany.
- Second Meeting of the Cereals Network, 21-24 April 2008, Foça, Izmir, Turkey.
- Ad hoc brainstorming session on ECPGR Phase VIII (budget and expected achievements)
- Ad hoc meetings of the four Fruit Database Managers (*Malus*, *Prunus*, *Pyrus* and *Vitis*) and on fruit synonymy, 23-25 June 2008, Gembloux, Belgium.
- Meeting of the AEGIS model crops curators and Database Managers, 1-3 July 2008 in Radzików, Poland.
- Eleventh Meeting of the Steering Committee, 2-5 September 2008, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Inter-regional Cooperation Policy and Information meeting with another regional Network (to be confirmed).

## 9. COORDINATING SECRETARIAT AND BIOVERSITY INTERNATIONAL

The following staff members have worked as part of the ECPGR Secretariat at Bioversity (ECPGR personnel budget): Aixa Del Greco (as half-time Scientific Assistant involved (*inter alia*) in support to the Networks, revision of descriptors, Web development/implementation, public awareness); Jan Engels (as half-time AEGIS Coordinator); Lidwina Koop (as half-time ECPGR Programme Assistant); Elinor Lipman (as half-time Scientific Assistant, based in Montpellier, France, involved in the compilation and layout of ECPGR publications and general support to the Secretariat activities); and Gea Galluzzi (as temporary intern between February and May 2007, to help in the preparation of the Home Gardens Workshop with a survey on home gardens status of knowledge and research needs in Europe).

The scientific and technical contributions, as well as management and administrative support provided by Bioversity International and its staff to the work of ECPGR, is also acknowledged. In particular, Bioversity provided funding for the half-time EURISCO Coordinator and documentation-related activities in Europe, as well as technical inputs to the maintenance and development of EURISCO. Continuous support and advice were provided for the development of (ECPGR and Bioversity) descriptors. Several colleagues participated and actively contributed as members of the Local AEGIS Task Force. The ECPGR Secretariat staff collaborated closely with Bioversity's Diversity for Livelihoods Programme in ensuring the success of the Home Gardens Workshop. Substantial inputs in kind were also provided in the public awareness and public relations area, including linkages with the press and production of the Regional Newsletter.

★★★

Lorenzo Maggioni  
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Rome, 23 May 2008

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