

Joint PGR Secure/ECPGR Workshop: Conservation strategies for European crop wild relative and landrace diversity

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Some of the 102 participants who came to the workshop from 38 countries.
Photo: P.Hauptvogel/CVRV, Slovakia

One of the goals of the EC-funded FP7 project, PGR Secure (www.pgrsecure.org) is to assist national PGR programmes to generate and implement conservation strategies for national crop wild relative (CWR) and landrace (LR) diversity. In joint collaboration with ECPGR, PGR Secure convened a workshop to discuss and agree a strategic approach to European and national CWR and LR conservation that will result in the systematic conservation of these important resources across Europe—the first time a systematic approach has been taken to CWR and LR conservation at a continental level.

The workshop, held on 7-9 September 2011 in Palanga, was organized by the University of Birmingham, University of Perugia, ECPGR and the Nature Research Centre (NRC), Lithuania and hosted by the NRC. It was attended by 102 participants from 38 European countries and the USA. National representatives were nominated by ECPGR National Coordinators—36 members of the Wild Species in Genetic Reserves Working Group and 32 members of the On-Farm Conservation Working Group of the ECPGR *In Situ* and On-Farm Conservation Network were nominated, along with 30 *In Situ* National Focal Points (NFPs) and 31 On-Farm NFPs¹ (associated with the ECPGR Documentation and Information Network).

The main topics discussed at the workshop were:

- How to create national CWR and LR inventories
- CWR and LR prioritization, diversity analysis and threat assessment
- Data collection, management and exchange
- Linking conservation to use

- Development and implementation of national CWR / LR conservation strategies by the ECPGR Network members.

The workshop consisted of a series of presentations on the current state of the art of CWR and LR conservation in Europe and available approaches and methods for CWR and LR conservation, illustrated with case studies and discussion sessions on the practical application of the approaches and methods, during which participants shared knowledge on current national activities and agreed on the way forward. The programme consisted of three plenary sessions and three parallel working group sessions—CWR conservation, LR conservation and

information management.

Participants agreed on the general approach to the development of national CWR and LR conservation strategies and the issue of funding the planning of the strategies was debated. PGR Secure, via the project's helpdesk, agreed to provide a list of policy drivers that will help persuade governments to provide the funds needed, along with guidance on identifying relevant national obligations and how to take them forward. The workshop facilitators emphasized the need to design national strategies to suit individual countries, adapting the models discussed in the workshop in a flexible way according to available resources.

For a full report of the workshop, visit www.pgrsecure.org/palanga_workshop.

Farewell to Jan Engels

This last newsletter also announces the retirement of one of Bioversity's longest serving and productive staff members, Jan Engels. Jan joined back in the early days of IBPGR (then based at FAO) and has fulfilled a number of important roles over the years, including Acting Regional Director, Europe (and NENA), as well as being Editor of this publication. Jan has also been AEGIS Coordinator and has supported Bioversity's work in this respect. He has been a strong believer and advocate in networks and networking, and has contributed significantly to strengthening Bioversity's relations and partnerships with various organizations in this regard. Jan has also been actively engaged in the Global Plan of Action and the Report on the State of the World in Plant Genetic Resources. His many publications are well documented, and he has been much sought after in various PGR processes and research initiatives, including on cacao. Whilst Jan is now officially retiring, his involvement with Bioversity doesn't end here as he has accepted to be an Honorary Research Fellow to the Organization and also continues to be the AEGIS Coordinator, working for ECPGR.

The members of the Europe office would like to extend their sincere thanks to Jan for his leadership and support over the last year and a half, and for his contributions and efforts as Editor of the Newsletter for Europe. We shall all miss his dedication, loyalty, dynamism and ready humour.

We know that you shan't have an idle retirement, Jan, but we wish you a well deserved and happy one !

Europe Group Colleagues

¹ Some participants are members of more than one Working Group