CEREALS NETWORK

3.1. Cereals Network

Working Groups: *Avena,* Barley and Wheat.

The **Cereals Network Coordinating Group (NCG)** consisted of seven members: Helmut Knüpffer, Germany (Network Coordinator); Iva Faberová, Czech Republic; Christoph Germeier, Germany; Marja Jalli, Finland; Andreas Katsiotis, Greece; Gert Kleijer, Switzerland; and Marcin Zaczynski, Poland.

The Sixth Meeting of the Working Group on *Avena* was held in Bucharest, Romania, 21-22 October 2010, jointly with the final meeting of the GEN RES project AVEQ on "*Avena* Genetic Resources for Quality in Human Consumption".

The Group benefited from its involvement in the AVEQ project, which resulted in the evaluation of a working collection of about 600 accessions. Regeneration and multiplication protocols for wild *Avena* species were tested during the project. Protocols on regeneration of wild *Avena* to be agreed for the AEGIS Quality System (AQUAS) were planned to be drafted by a Group's Task Force. The ECPGR *Avena* Database is facing the challenge of integrating the *in situ* data produced by the AEGRO project ("An Integrated European In Situ Management Workplan: Implementing Genetic Reserves and On Farm Concepts") and the evaluation data generated by the AVEQ project. The advantages of the decentralized approach of a crop database were stressed, but this will require attracting new funds to make it sustainable, while the prevailing tendency of the European Information Landscape is moving towards centralized approaches (EURISCO and GENESYS, the gateway to genetic resources of the Global Information on Germplasm Accessions (GIGA) project).

The Group identified pre-breeding of *A. strigosa* and of other wild species as a topic of interest for future joint project proposals.

Survey missions to collect and monitor wild oat populations for *in situ* conservation were carried out in Sicily and Andalusia. Ideal conditions for *in situ* management would be the presence of several populations in protected ecosystems. In Sicily, pine trees have been planted at some *A. insularis* sites; this will result in loss of the *A. insularis* habitat. In Spain, none of the sites where *A. murphyi* is found are protected, but with proper management of the pasture land, *A. murphyi* can still thrive in the area: recommendations to farmers are needed in order to maintain satisfactory population levels. The local authorities were informed of the importance of existing populations. New samples were collected in Sicily and deposited in genebanks (see article in Newsletter for Europe, Issue No. 40, July 2010).

The **ECPGR project for urgent regeneration and safety-duplication activities**, funded by the Global Crop Diversity Trust, started its operation in 2009 and was concluded in 2010. In the case of cereals, six countries were involved in the regeneration of wheat or *Aegilops* (Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary and Israel), five countries in the regeneration of barley (Armenia, Belarus, Greece, Hungary and Israel), four countries in the regeneration of maize (Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia and Hungary) and three countries in the regeneration of sorghum (Azerbaijan, Bulgaria and Georgia). Out of the 3956 cereal accessions that were expected to be regenerated with the support of the project, 2675 (68%) were successfully regenerated. The project will continue on a no-cost extension basis in Armenia and Bulgaria in order to complete regeneration of accessions that was not successful in previous years. All the accessions are planned to be deposited during 2011 for safety-duplication at a CGIAR Centre and at Svalbard.

The Cereals Network submitted two **proposals for funding to the second call of the AEGIS Grant scheme**. These were prepared by partners from Ukraine (wheat) and Sweden (rye).

Outlook for 2011: the Network workplan for 2011 includes the Barley WG meeting, which is planned in Nicosia, Cyprus in May 2011. An ad hoc meeting of the *Avena* WG to discuss the selection of accessions for AEGIS and the Quality System is planned for autumn 2011.