

NETWORK

3.7. Documentation and Information Network

The **Documentation and Information Network Coordinating Group** consisted of nine members: Theo van Hintum, The Netherlands (Network Coordinator); Frank Begemann, Germany; Iva Faberová, Czech Republic; Helmut Knüpffer, Germany; Jonas Nordling, Sweden (NordGen); Idin Fazlic, Bosnia and Herzegovina (SEEDNet); Ahmet Semsettin Tan, Turkey; and Ian Thomas, United Kingdom. Four additional *ex officio* representatives were Lorenzo Maggioni, ECPGR Secretariat; Sónia Dias (EURISCO Coordinator); Michael Mackay, Bioversity International, Rome; and José Iriondo, Spain (*In situ* and On-farm Conservation Network representative).

Following indications received from the ECPGR Steering Committee (Bratislava 2010), the Network Coordinator, Th. van Hintum, sought clarification from Bioversity on the progress made for the development of EURISCO with a letter to the Director General in February 2011. He received a reply in March 2011, reassuring him that a specific investment was made by Bioversity for a thorough revision of the EURISCO Web site and that it was the intention of Bioversity to take advantage of the development of GENESYS in order to apply the same functionalities to EURISCO, also indicating that the process of integration between EURISCO and GENESYS was planned. As a result of this integration, which would still permit EURISCO to retain its own identity, Bioversity would be prepared to cover operational costs and essential developmental costs also in the future as an in-kind contribution to ECPGR. The Network Coordinator was also invited for a meeting at Bioversity headquarters in Maccaresse (April 2011), where arrangements were made to speed up the development process for the various needs, such as standardization of taxonomy and inclusion of Characterization and Evaluation data. It was also made clear that ECPGR (through the Documentation and Information (D&I) Network Coordinating Group), will be invited to be fully represented in the steering group that should lead the future developments of GENESYS. As a follow up, two members of the D&I Network participated in the meeting at CIMMYT, Mexico, to define GENESYS in its second phase (see p.14).

A proposal from the D&I Network was accepted for funding under the **second call of the AEGIS Grant Scheme**. The proposal "PGR Duplicate Finder", a software package to assist in the identification of putative duplicates in germplasm databases" was submitted by the Centre for Genetic Resources (CGN), The Netherlands. This project, involving partners from IPK, Germany and JKI, Germany, will receive a grant of € 10 330. A number of crop collections have been identified to participate in a testing phase of the software package.

A joint PGR Secure/ECPGR Workshop on "Conservation strategies for European crop wild relative and landrace diversity" was held on 7-9 September 2011 in Palanga, Lithuania, hosted by the Nature Research Centre, Lithuania. This Workshop involved the **Working Groups of the ECPGR *In situ* and On-farm Network and National Inventory Focal Points**, as well as the project partners of the EC-funded project PGR Secure. Several new nominations of *In situ* and On-farm National Inventory Focal Points (NIFPs) were made by the National Coordinators in preparation for this meeting and eventually 30 *In Situ* and 31 On-Farm NIFPs participated in the meeting (with the two functions being represented in many cases by the same person per country). ECPGR funded the participation of 21 NIFPs. On-farm and *In situ* NIFPs were expected to offer their technical advice on the establishment of national inventories of crop wild relatives and landraces and on issues of data collection, management and exchange.

Points that emerged during the meeting were the following:

- The majority of countries have no plans to monitor landraces on-farm and there were several doubts expressed about the usefulness of such an activity, while a more keen interest was expressed for inventorying fruit trees at their *in situ* locations.
- Lack of funding at national level has hindered progress on establishing *in situ*/on-farm inventories.

- The approach preferred by a number of countries about on-farm and CWR data is that of providing to a regional information system only the collecting data that are associated with existing accessions stored *ex situ*, rather than providing data about living material in the field.
- Some countries have official lists of “Conservation Varieties”, but these may not meet the “landrace” definition as agreed by the PGR Secure project.
- A list of CWR descriptors for data exchange and an information system in which to store the data at regional level need to be established.
- The Focal Points offered, based on a collaborative effort between D&I Network and On-farm WG members, to review and revise the existing draft list of on-farm descriptors proposed by PGR Secure so that it will comply with documentation standards and could be formally agreed, jointly with the D&I Network.

The **Second Capacity Building Inter-regional Workshop** on International Treaty Implementation, organized by the Inter-regional Cooperation Network (see below, Section 3.9), was organized in Menemen, Turkey, on 28-29 September 2011, jointly with the Near East and North Africa (NENA) Plant Genetic Resources Network. A presentation by F. Begemann and Th. van Hintum on “Regional documentation and information of PGRFA in Europe” was made by F. Begemann and raised the interest of the audience towards the possibility of searching for funds for the development of a documentation system inspired by the EC proposal that funded EURISCO back in 1999. The NENA Network was provided with a copy of the original project proposal (EPGRIS) submitted to the EC for the establishment of EURISCO.

The D&I Network played a major role in the development of a new Bioversity coordinated proposal for the EU Seventh Framework Programme. The 10 Million Euro project called “**Plant Gene Access**” includes a major component aiming at improving the coverage, functionality and quality of EURISCO, as well as developing additional PGR documentation facilities. The proposal was submitted in November 2011.

On 5-9 December 2011 the CGIAR Genebank Managers convened a **meeting at CIMMYT in Mexico to discuss the future of GENESYS**. GENESYS is the internationally funded global portal to information about PGR, which has been developed over the last few years at Bioversity International. Two representatives from ECPGR were invited. In consultation with the ExCo and the D&I Network Coordinator, the Secretariat confirmed the participation of Th. Van Hintum, The Netherlands and Iva Faberová, Czech Republic at the meeting in Mexico. The meeting resulted in a clear vision of the future of GENESYS, regarding governance, operation and functionality, and a strategy to implement this vision. As such it created the basis for the development of a proposal for the second phase of GENESYS. It became clear that the early development of EURISCO can be used as a model for the further development of GENESYS, as it will have to become based on the communities that own and supply the data. Like EURISCO, GENESYS will only be as good as the data it provides, and this data quality is in the hands of the communities managing the data sources. EURISCO will continue to be a major data-donor to GENESYS, and the ECPGR D&I Network will increasingly be involved in the governance of GENESYS.

EURISCO in 2011

With the Republic of Moldova joining EURISCO as a newcomer in 2011, the Catalogue now represents 42 National Inventories and 318 collection holdings. The total number of accessions, as of 31 December 2011, was 1 096 182. These accessions were listed as wild/weedy species (9%), landraces (25%), advanced cultivars (19%), breeding/research material (15%), others (1%). The status of the remaining 31% is unknown. The registration of Multilateral System accessions in 2011 was 22.5% of the total in EURISCO reported accessions. This year, the German Inventory was the first to assign accessions to AEGIS (61 garlic accessions) and to flag them accordingly in EURISCO.

The EURISCO Web site has been entirely revised and transferred into the Typo3 environment and the new site was launched on 17 November 2011. The revision included upgrading of the functionalities and search capacity, providing users with more accurate results of the taxonomy searches and ensuring that synonyms are also captured in the search. This was based on a review of

the taxonomic nomenclature of EURISCO¹, and is achieved through the implementation of a static middle layer on the search, matching the existing genus and species in the database against the accepted genus and species in the GRIN-Taxonomy. This process will allow for the search and display of corrected taxonomy (without misspellings) and synonyms that are found within the GRIN-Taxonomy Catalogue. Consequently, users will have the possibility to search not only by scientific names but also use and/or see the synonyms. Besides upgrading the search functionalities, some light “cosmetic” changes were made to the Web site: results displayed in selected views, from the dropdown menu; possibility to create a custom report; improved Passport view page with Google maps for the accession (where latitude/longitude have been provided), making it more attractive and user-friendly.

Data quality was analysed, and the results published². To further increase data quality and completeness in the EURISCO, real time taxonomy and geo-referencing reports are available on countries’ upload pages. The taxonomy reports highlight taxonomic imprecision such as spelling mistakes, indicating which scientific names are fully matching, partially matching or not matching the GRIN-Taxonomy, while the geo-referencing reports cross-check that the coordinates given for the collecting site actually fall within the borders of the assigned “country of origin”; they can be downloaded in both Excel and for Google Earth viewing and the data are available by institute.

Three e-bulletins (September, November and December) were prepared and published on the EURISCO Web site (http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/releases/e_bulletin.html), as well as disseminated via e-mail to more than 200 individuals.

Some facts and numbers regarding changes and improvements in EURISCO during 2011 are summarized below:

- The total number of accessions has increased by 12 735, reaching a total of 1 096 182 accessions in December 2011;
- One new National Inventory joined (Republic of Moldova), raising the number of participating countries to 42;
- The number of data providers increased, now reaching 318 institutes conserving PGR in Europe;
- Accessions flagged in EURISCO as part of the Multilateral System have reached the number of 246 216 from 17 countries, representing around 22.5% of the total number of accessions recorded in EURISCO;
- During 2011 the EURISCO portal received 6737 visits of which 4023 were unique visitors.

Outlook for 2012

Coordination of EURISCO, maintenance and development. Upgrading and re-designing of the EURISCO intranet (staging area), which is responsible for receiving, processing and publishing the data on the EURISCO public site. Improvements and new expected functionalities are the following:

1. A Web site providing all the functionality (upload, validation, data quality reports and publishing) of the current EURISCO intranet.
2. A new data structure that can accommodate C&E data. A framework will be ready to be tested by selected EURISCO partners.
3. A new credentials system in which National Focal Points may delegate the uploading directly to the data providers and collect from the EURISCO staging area the national inventory data.
4. A series of published Web-services that can be used to search and refer to specific germplasm.
5. An access to germplasm information via Google Maps, regardless of the amount of coordinates data.

¹ van Hintum TJJ, Knüpffer H. 2010. Current taxonomic composition of European genebank material documented in EURISCO. *Plant Genetic Resources: Characterisation and Utilisation* 8:182-188.

² van Hintum TJJ, Menting F, van Strien E. 2011. Quality indicators for passport data in *ex situ* genebanks. *Plant Genetic Resources: Characterisation and Utilisation* 9:478-485.

6. A new database structure that is more flexible and that can handle much greater amounts of data.