

Report of the Steering Committee

**Eighth Meeting, 14-17 October 2001, St. Petersburg,
Russian Federation**

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

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Report of the Eighth Steering Committee meeting

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Introduction

Introduction

The Eighth meeting of the Steering Committee of the European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks (ECP/GR) was held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, 14-17 October 2001. Prof. Viktor Dragavtsev, Director of the N.I. Vavilov Research Institute of Plant Industry (VIR), opened the meeting by welcoming participants and wishing them every success. Jozef Turok, Director of the Regional Office for Europe, welcomed everybody on behalf of IPGRI. Lorenzo Maggioni, ECP/GR Coordinator, announced that representatives from 28 member countries were attending the meeting, as well as observers from six non-member countries from the European region, ASSINSEL, EuroMAB, FAO, IPGRI, NGB and a representative from the Non Governmental Organizations.

Apologies for not being able to attend were sent by Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Iceland, Poland and Switzerland and by a representative of the European Commission.

The different sessions were chaired in rotation by Bert Visser, the Netherlands; Eliseu Bettencourt, Portugal; Eva Thörn, representing Denmark and NGB; Jens Weibull, Sweden and M. Smith, United Kingdom.

Mid-term financial and technical report

The technical (progress) and financial reports were approved with minor amendments. All amendments will be incorporated in the final Report of the meeting (Appendices I and II).

It was noted that a very large number of activities within the broad range of objectives of ECP/GR have been carried out since the last meeting. This includes contributions in kind, which have been made by various participating countries.

The representative of NGOs thanked the Secretariat for providing timely information and inclusion of NGOs in the activities of the Programme, especially the On-Farm Task Force. He suggested that raising public awareness would require more attention by ECP/GR.

The Steering Committee acknowledged the quality of the background documents provided, but requested that the Secretariat distribute these documents well in advance before meetings.

Regarding the financial situation, countries owing past contributions, namely Austria, Greece and Italy, informed the Committee about the possibility to settle their outstanding contributions in the near future. A communication received from the National Coordinator for Iceland also confirmed the intention of this country to continue their support for ECP/GR. The Committee therefore agreed that no revision of the total amount originally budgeted for Phase VI would be necessary, provided careful attention is paid to avoid significant deficit as a final result. The need for a strategy to set priorities was also mentioned.

Considering the imminent adoption of the Euro currency in several countries of the European Union, the Committee recommended that a change be made to Euro as the reference currency used by ECP/GR and asked the Secretariat to further explore the option of changing the currency denomination of countries' annual contributions, starting from the year 2002.

The Committee enquired whether the possibility to raise more funds from the private sector had sufficiently been explored. The Secretariat replied that the creation of a database of funding sources initiated by the Inter-Regional Network in this direction could be fruitful. The Committee felt that IPGRI should continue these efforts. Personal contacts with the vegetables seed breeding companies also gave positive signals. However, raising additional funds was said to be an activity in itself that should be appropriately budgeted within the ECP/GR workplan.

The ASSINSEL representative clarified that the plant breeders' association continues to be an open vehicle to transfer requests to the private sector. ECP/GR activities should, however, not expect to receive financial support from the breeding companies, but more likely inputs in kind (characterization, evaluation and regeneration work).

Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs)

The Committee discussed the opportunity to endorse the principles drafted in one or more of the Model MTAs prepared by the group of experts. Had these been endorsed, they could have been used as guidelines for the genebanks to adopt their own MTA during the transition phase that is expected between the (potential) approval of the International Undertaking (IU) and its coming into effect.

It was agreed that the ECP/GR expert group would reconvene its activity by email correspondence after the meetings of the CBD open-ended *ad hoc* Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing (Bonn, Germany 22-26 October 2001) and the FAO Conference (Rome, Italy 2-13 November 2001), at which the IU would be discussed, to take account of the outcomes of these meetings. A revised version of the draft MTAs would then be resubmitted to the attention of the Steering Committee. It was accepted that the consequence of this decision would be that the European genebanks would not receive any guidance for the time being from the Steering Committee, although it was noted that the MTA models had been distributed rather widely. It was also recorded that the Committee expressed some preference for model C, although there was no clear endorsement of any of the models.

Statement by the Steering Committee of ECP/GR on the negotiations to revise the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

The Steering Committee agreed to endorse the statement proposed by M. Smith on the IU negotiations and decided that this should be sent by the Secretariat to the FAO Director General, J. Diouf, the Chair of the CGRFA, Ambassador F. Gerbasi and the Secretary to the CGRFA, Josè Esquinas Alcazar (Appendix III). The following sentence, explaining the scope of ECP/GR, should be added as an introduction:

“The ECP/GR is a technical Coordinating Network of 43 national programmes across Europe¹ founded in 1980. ECP/GR is considered the European platform to facilitate the implementation of the Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Its principal purpose is to facilitate the long-term conservation, use and full and free exchange of crop genetic resources in Europe. ECP/GR is overseen by a Steering Committee composed of National Coordinators nominated by participating countries and a number of observers and relevant international bodies. The Steering Committee recently held its eighth meeting in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, hosted by the Vavilov Institute (VIR), which houses the largest collection of crop genetic resources in Europe².”

¹ ECP/GR incorporates 35 National Programmes with a further 8 national programmes in the process of achieving full membership(*) and 5 Observers: COUNTRIES: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan*, Austria, Belarus*, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia*, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia*, Lithuania, Macedonia FYR, Malta, Moldova*, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation*, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine*, United Kingdom, F.R. Yugoslavia. OBSERVER ORGANISATIONS: ASSINSEL, EURO Man and the Biosphere programme (EuroMAB), FAO, IPGRI, NGOs and Nordic Gene Bank. IPGRI provides the ECP/GR Secretariat.

² The N.I. Vavilov All-Russian Research Institute of Plant Industry maintains over 330,000 accessions of cultivated plants and their wild relatives. The main Vavilov herbarium collection of cultivated plants and their wild relatives has 250,000 sheets with over 100 families, about 500 genera and more than 4,600 species.

Sharing of responsibilities

The Committee considered the result of a questionnaire on sharing of responsibilities and the analysis carried out by the Secretariat as a useful starting basis to address this issue.

It was noted that a number of countries did not respond to the questionnaire and a further effort to obtain some more responses was recommended.

The representatives of ASSINSEL and of the NGOs informed the Committee that both private companies and seed savers associations would be interested in being involved in the sharing of responsibilities. In addition, they suggested that they could act as a vehicle and circulate the questionnaire to their associates and partners.

The Committee agreed that the Task Force should resume its activity, by email, looking at the results of the questionnaire in order to analyze in more detail which of the genebanks might favour each of the modules. This information should then be passed on to the Crop Working Groups to facilitate their involvement at the technical level and their effort to implement mechanisms for sharing responsibilities.

It was recommended that the Secretariat monitor the FAO and IPGRI campaign on the establishment of a Global Conservation Trust Fund and suggest to IPGRI the involvement of ECP/GR in elaborating this initiative at the European level.

The issue of quality standards of genebank operations was considered a very important element within the context of responsibility sharing.

National Programmes

Isaak Rashal presented the outcomes of the Workshop on Sustainable National Programmes in the Countries of the Former Soviet Union. The Workshop was held just before the Steering Committee meeting (11-12 October 2001, St. Petersburg). The Steering Committee members expressed their interest in the information presented. Several offers were made by members of the Steering Committee and FAO to support the next workshop in one of the former Soviet Union countries as well as training activities.

A proposal to organize a European Conference on National PGR Programmes – Design and Implementation, was presented jointly by Jens Weibull and Eliseu Bettencourt. The proposal was communicated to the Steering Committee for information. Several suggestions were made regarding the objectives, scope and participation in the Conference. It was noted that the opportunity might arise to link this Conference to the beginning of the work programme of a revised European Council Regulation 1467/94. Sweden offered to host the Conference, tentatively in autumn 2002, a significant year being 30 years since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm and 10 years since the adoption of the Convention on Biodiversity.

It was suggested that ECP/GR complementary modules could be used as a mechanism to raise some financial support for the Conference and that it might be held 'back-to-back' with an *ad hoc* ECP/GR Steering Committee meeting. However, some participants expressed their concern about holding Steering Committee meetings for three consecutive years (2001, 2002, 2003).

IPGRI, on behalf of the organizing committee of the Conference, will inform the ECP/GR Steering Committee about the progress made in the further development of this initiative.

Evaluation of Networks and Working Group activities

The Committee split into three groups to share the task of evaluating Network activities. The evaluation of the three groups was then presented in plenary session and the following recommendations were agreed by the Steering Committee:

CEREALS NETWORK

Recommendations:

Continue the work as planned;

- Hold the cereals full Network meeting, as previously planned, to discuss common problems;
- Consider the possibility to initiate activities jointly on *Secale* and *Triticale*, including inviting relevant crop experts to the full Network meeting.

INDUSTRIAL CROPS AND POTATO NETWORK

Recommendations:

- Hold the proposed meetings as planned (*Ad hoc* Flax – 2001; Potato WG – 2002; Beta WG - 2002; second Industrial Crops and Potato NCG meeting – 2002);
- Carry out flax germplasm characterization/evaluation activities, as planned;
- Encourage further strengthening of the collaboration with the ESCORENA Network, inviting sunflower experts to the next Network Coordinating Group meeting, with the purpose to facilitate the development of the sunflower database.

VEGETABLES NETWORK

Recommendations:

- Establish a Solanaceae Working Group. The ECP/GR budget will provide for the participation of attending members from non-EU countries to the EGGNET project meetings of 2002 and 2003. An ECP/GR day will be organized jointly with each of these meetings;
- Organize one *ad hoc* meeting on Cucurbits and one on leafy vegetables;
- Recommend that the Vegetables Network Coordinating Group prepare proposals for a Leafy Vegetables and a Cucurbits Working Group, to be considered by the Ninth Steering Committee meeting in 2003.

FRUIT NETWORK

Recommendations:

- To approve the establishment of a *Vitis* Working Group, considering the importance of the crop in Europe, and the organization of a first meeting in 2002 or 2003;
- Organize a *Malus/Pyrus* Working Group meeting in 2002;
- Organize a *Prunus* meeting in 2003.

GRAIN LEGUMES NETWORK

Recommendations:

- Complement the work and let it proceed as planned;
- Encourage the NCG to submit a proposal for an *Arachis* genetic resources meeting in Bulgaria;
- Encourage submission of a proposal for a small technical meeting on the regeneration of allogamous grain legume species, in collaboration with the European Association for Grain Legumes Research (AEP).

MINOR CROPS NETWORK

Recommendations:

- Continue activities according to the original budget (hold the *ad hoc* meeting on Minor Crops);

- Establish a Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, considering recent developments and the increasing interest for these species, and hold a meeting in 2002.

FORAGES NETWORK

Recommendations:

- Allow for a flexible use of the budget allocated to the Network, in order to resolve the problem identified by the Working Group members (i.e. need for more frequent meetings);
- Organize one meeting of the Forages Working Group in 2003.

DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION NETWORK

Recommendations:

- Not to convene a full Network meeting, considering that the EPGRIS project is already offering ample opportunities to meet;
- Identify a coordinator for the Network;
- Use part of the available funds for the participation of non-EU national focal persons in the EPGRIS project;
- The Secretariat should approach the Network to request additional proposals, before 31/12/2001, to use non-allocated funds (US\$37,000). If not used, these funds can be allocated to other Networks' activities. In this context, the Documentation Network could take into consideration a proposal made by Helmut Knüpfner for a meeting of European flora experts on taxonomy standardization;
- Reconfirm the complementarity between the EPGRIS project objective (passport data) and the Central Crop Databases activities (collection and analysis of characterization/evaluation data).

INTER-REGIONAL COOPERATION

Recommendations:

- Rephrasing the objective formulated in the Mid-Term Network report as follows: "enhance collaboration between ECP/GR and other networks as well as between their members";
- Base priority for collaboration on geography/biology/policy and include Central Asia, West Africa and Near East networks among the partners;
- Collaboration should be subject to the non-exclusion of any member of ECP/GR;
- Maintain openness towards all regions;
- Start with the preparation phase of the three pre-proposals for inter-regional collaboration workshops and use allocated funds within Europe, preferably over the next six months and under the following additional conditions:

On-farm pre-proposal

1. Reformulate background sentences regarding the existing expertise in Europe and in developing countries;
2. Extend the participation to other ECP/GR members.

Policy pre-proposal

3. Involve the private sector, NGOs and experts in seed legislation in the preparation phase;
4. Take into account developments from the CBD open-ended *ad hoc* Working Group meeting in Bonn (November 2001), in order to avoid any overlaps;
5. Prioritize action toward European countries of the former Soviet Union.

- Contact the EIARD Infosystem to explore reciprocal role and avoid overlaps in collecting relevant information serving inter-regional collaboration;
- Allocate remaining funds to the Secretariat for support in the initiation of the pre-proposals.

IN SITU AND ON-FARM CONSERVATION NETWORK

Recommendations:

- Encourage the subgroup of the On-Farm Task Force to elaborate the project outlined at Isola Polvese (May 2000) for work at the interface between formal and informal sectors;
- Devote non-allocated funds to meetings of the Task Forces' subgroups (in particular within the On-Farm Task Force) and expand the participation of European countries of the former Soviet Union;
- Involve more participants in general;
- Endorse the project submitted by Romania for a survey of genetic diversity of Romanian traditional crop varieties and landraces conserved on-farm;
- Urge the National Coordinators to strengthen their links with organizations, farmers and gardeners who are conserving and developing PGRFA on-farm and in-garden.

Tables 1 and 2 (see pp12-13) outline the available funding, the original planned activities and the revised budget and list of activities resulting from the Eighth Steering Committee meeting proposals. Considering the large increase in the number of activities, the Committee agreed that those marked with # will be carefully followed up by the Secretariat from start to end. In all the other cases, the Secretariat will only provide limited support or hand over the available allocated funds to a partner institution hosting the meeting/carrying out the specific activity. Progress and outcomes of all activities will be reported by the Secretariat to the Steering Committee.

In order to further reinforce the Secretariat, it was agreed that remaining funds in budget lines for "Official travel", "Steering Committee meetings" and "European Information platform" (See Budget for Phase VI of ECP/GR - Report of the Seventh Steering Committee) could be re-allocated to "Network Coordination".

Considering that three new Working Groups (Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Solanaceae and *Vitis*) have been established, countries are invited to send the full contact details of their representatives for each of the three new Working Groups to the Secretariat. It was agreed that each country would select one of the three Working Groups as its priority and would designate an "attending" member to participate in any meeting(s) of this Group during Phase VI. Representatives in the two Working Groups that have not been considered priority for a given country would act as "corresponding" members. NGB will be subject to the traditional rule and will be invited to send two participants from the Nordic countries to every meeting.

Objectives and mode of operation of ECP/GR during Phase VI

The Steering Committee expressed its satisfaction with the progress made in fulfilling all ECP/GR objectives during the past three years. It was recommended that two of the objectives should be given increased attention during the remainder of the current Phase: "to facilitate the increased utilization of plant genetic resources in Europe"; and "to increase awareness, at all levels, of the importance of PGRFA activities including conservation and sustainable use".

On the latter, a proposal was made for a framework of activities for the final 2 years of Phase VI (see revised Appendix IV). The Steering Committee agreed that:

1. All Working Groups and Task Forces would be encouraged to include awareness raising activities in their work and report on these to the Steering Committee;
2. National Coordinators would seek to work actively with the informal sector civil society organizations and others to identify and develop awareness raising opportunities at local and national levels;
3. The ECP/GR secretariat would:
 - I. Facilitate communication about these activities between different ECP/GR interest groups, reporting on these at Regional level when appropriate;
 - II. Assist with translation of materials into appropriate languages to facilitate broad use within countries;
 - III. Liaise with Working Groups, Steering Committee members and Observers to identify opportunities for Region-wide awareness raising, resourcing these where necessary;
 - IV. Disseminate relevant electronic and printed information at Regional level.

It was noted that funding might be needed to fulfill points 3.II and 3.III above. It was agreed that such calls would be put to the Steering Committee for decision via a proposal by the Secretariat that would include an indication of savings elsewhere in the budget that could be used for this purpose.

The current mode of operation of the Programme was discussed. Clarifications were provided by the Secretariat on the objectives and the rationale behind the current mode in which the ECP/GR operates.

The need to improve overall communication and harmonization of efforts among the different Networks and Working Groups was emphasized. One of the options to facilitate interaction would be to maintain information about the activities of all the Networks and Working Groups available on the Internet/Intranet. The Secretariat reported that a comprehensive web page with this purpose has already been developed and that it is expected to be fully available by the end of the year 2001.

The Steering Committee requested that the Chairs of all the Networks prepare well structured very brief reports on the progress made, focusing on the specific objectives and the achievements that have been accomplished towards reaching those objectives. The reports from the Networks will be presented at the next Steering Committee meeting. The Secretariat will prepare the format of the reports and will facilitate the task.

The efficiency and effectiveness of “full” Network meetings (i.e. those consisting of more than one Working Group) was discussed at length. Considering the different views on this issue, the Steering Committee felt the need to be flexible in the future and listen to the Networks’ assessment of their needs. Therefore it was recommended that each Network carefully assess the potential benefits of full Network meetings against the high cost involved.

Proposal for a Sub-Group on the Strategy for Phase VII

The issue on establishing a Task Force on the strategy for Phase VII was presented by M. Smith. In connection with this, B. Visser gave the background for setting up a Task Force on the implementation of international agreements at the genebank level. The two proposed Task Forces were found to address complementary although different issues:

1. The impact of recent developments in relevant science and technology and international policy on plant genetic resources, ECP/GR policies and workplan;

2. The implementation of relevant international agreements by genebanks and how they will affect the work of genebanks and other collection holders.

An important issue of the Task Force working on the future ECP/GR Strategy includes priority setting.

It was decided that the two Task Forces would be chaired by M. Smith and B. Visser respectively. The issue of MTAs will be dealt with in the Implementation Task Force. The Steering Committee further recommended that the composition of the two Task Forces should have a balanced regional coverage. The Task Forces will operate through electronic communication.

Complementarity with the EU Programme

J. Turok provided information about the current review of the EC Regulation 1467/94. The representative of the EC responsible for this regulation was unable to attend the Steering Committee meeting, but he expressed interest in attending future meetings.

Monitoring of the Global Plan of Action (GPA)

Murti Anishetti of FAO expressed the intention of FAO to continue participating as an observer of ECP/GR, also during Phase VII. He then reviewed the process of monitoring of the GPA that has been in place since the Leipzig meeting in 1996. He informed that FAO plans to select a few countries in each region in order to evaluate and develop the reporting mechanism. The need for close coordination of international reporting was emphasized by several members of the Steering Committee. Furthermore, a better balance between monitoring and facilitating the implementation of the GPA was requested.

Future membership

The ECP/GR Coordinator reviewed the current situation with regard to ECP/GR membership and the potential for future expansion. The Steering Committee recommended that all countries of the European region be encouraged to join the Programme as soon as possible. It is envisaged, however, that future expansion of ECP/GR may call to find ways to facilitate communication during meetings. The desire expressed by several Working Groups to invite technical experts from outside the region was welcomed. Nevertheless it was agreed that priority should be given to European participation. From a funding point of view, such attendance will be considered as previously, i.e. on a case-by-case basis.

Mode of operation of the Steering Committee

To improve communication the use of both list servers, presently managed by the Nordic Gene Bank, was encouraged. The Steering Committee recommended that the ECP/GR Secretariat be more proactive in assuring that the Steering Committee members receive information, and that requested responses are returned accordingly. A suggestion was made that the objective should be to give one-month's notice for feedback. The Steering Committee further recommended maintaining its present structure, excluding the suggested participation of Network representatives.

Concluding remarks

An offer to host the next ECP/GR Steering Committee meeting in Izmir, Turkey, was made by Ertug Firat. The offer was warmly appreciated by the Steering Committee. However, the Committee confirmed that a prior offer had been made to host the Ninth meeting in Zichron Yaakov, near Haifa, Israel. It was agreed that the next meeting would therefore possibly be held in Israel, tentatively in October 2003.

Natalia Rybianets addressed the Committee with a statement regarding the collaboration between ECP/GR and EuroMAB. In particular, she reminded the group about the existence of approximately one hundred biosphere reserves in Europe and that their explicit task was to conserve and promote the sustainable use of genetic resources. She also proposed that ECP/GR take part in the next meeting of EuroMAB planned in Italy in 2002, and that EuroMAB remains an observer in the next ECP/GR Steering Committee meeting. She also proposed the strengthening of contacts between ECP/GR and MAB at the national level and the selection of a few biosphere reserves to conduct model projects on plant genetic resources.

Patrick Mulvany thanked ECP/GR for the continuing opportunity to participate in the Steering Committee meetings. He expressed concern, however, about insufficient action being taken to report on progress at National level, including involvement of informal sector organizations³.

Jozef Turok appreciated the prevailing spirit of ownership that is the driving force in the management of the Programme, which is mainly based on inputs-in-kind from the partners. He thanked the ECP/GR Secretariat and the N.I. Vavilov Institute and said he was looking forward to further developments.

The Steering Committee thanked the host institute for the huge effort made to ensure an effective meeting and the ECP/GR Secretariat for its continuing commitment in coordinating the ECP/GR Programme.

The present report and the financial tables 1 and 2 (pp. 12-13) were approved by the Steering Committee.

³ The full closing statement of NGO observer, Patrick Mulvany, is available at <http://www.ukabc.org/ecpgr/sc8ngo.pdf>

Table 1. Availability of funds for Network operations (US\$)

Source	Availability
Small technical meetings budget	72,302
Cereals full Network meeting	30,000
Vegetables full Network meeting	30,000
Fruit full Network meeting	30,000
Minor crops <i>ad hoc</i> meeting	30,000
Industrial Crops full Network meeting	30,000
Remaining Documentation	45,900
Remaining Cereals	6,147
Remaining Forages	6,262
Remaining Fruit	16,784
Remaining Grain Legumes	11,819
Remaining Industrial Crops	13,021
Remaining Minor Crops	8,829
Remaining Vegetables	7,909
Remaining <i>In situ</i> and On-farm	24,017
Remaining Inter-Regional Cooperation	30,228
	393,218

Table 2. Revised budget for Network operations (US\$)

	CEREALS NETWORK		
November 2001	1st Wheat WG meeting -1 (smt)	13,853	#
Year 2003	Cereals Network meeting	30,000	#
	FRUIT NETWORK		
May 2002	2nd Malus/Pyrus meeting	10,000	#
Year 2002 or 2003	1st <i>Vitis</i> meeting	15,000	#
Year 2003	7th <i>Prunus</i> meeting	15,000	
	Available for actions - Fruit	6,784	
	FORAGES NETWORK		
	8th Forages WG meeting	20,000	
	GRAIN LEGUMES NETWORK		
	Available for actions - grain legumes (<i>Arachis</i> meeting?)	6,000	
	Available for actions - meeting on regeneration of allogamous grain legume species ??	5,819	
	INDUSTRIAL CROPS NETWORK		
December 2001	<i>Ad hoc</i> flax meeting	5,330	#
July 2002	2nd Potato WG meeting	5,000	
Year 2002	Flax germplasm evaluation	19,691	#
Year 2002	2nd <i>Beta</i> WG meeting	10,000	
Year 2002	2nd NCG meeting (with sunflower)	3,000	
	MINOR CROPS NETWORK		
Year 2002	<i>Ad hoc</i> meeting	30,000	#
Year 2002	Medicinal and aromatic plants meeting (smt)	15,000	#
	VEGETABLES NETWORK		
November 2001	<i>Ad hoc</i> on Cucurbits	4,909	
February 2002	<i>Brassica</i> extra day	3,000	
Year 2003	Vegetables Network meeting	30,000	#
Year 2002 and 2003	Solanaceae WG meeting (jointly with EGGNET) (smt)	10,000	
November 2001	<i>Ad hoc</i> on Umbellifer crops (smt)	3,000	
Year 2002 or 2003	<i>Ad hoc</i> on Leafy vegetables (smt)	3,000	
	IN SITU AND ON-FARM NETWORK		
Year 2002	On-Farm Romania project	5,000	
Year 2002	NGO project?	5,000	
	Meetings of subgroups of the On-farm Task Force	14,017	
	INTER-REGIONAL COOPERATION NETWORK		
Year 2002	Policy project	5,000	#
Year 2002	Documentation project	10,000	#
Year 2002	<i>In situ</i> project	5,000	#
	Available for Secretariat	10,228	
	DOCUMENTATION NETWORK		
Summer 2002	EPGRIS meetings (non EU focal persons)	4,100	
Summer 2003	EPGRIS meetings (non EU focal persons)	4,100	
	Available for documentation actions (define by 31/12/01)		
	European Flora Network meeting (??)	37,700	
	EXTRA NETWORKS		
Year 2002 and 2003	Remaining from small technical meetings budget	28,687	
		393,218	

smt = all or in part from small technical meetings budget

= activities to be carefully followed up by the Secretariat from start to end

Appendix I. Mid-term technical (progress) report of Phase VI

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

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Mid-term progress report of Phase VI

(Background document for the Eighth ECP/GR Steering Committee meeting,
St Petersburg, Russian Federation, 14-17 October 2001 - Agenda Item 1)

1. Introduction

The Eighth meeting of the ECP/GR Steering Committee, previously due to be held in Israel in March 2001, was initially postponed for security reasons. It was eventually decided to organize the meeting in St Petersburg, Russian Federation and the dates were chosen not to conflict with meetings of the FAO Commission on PGRFA. National Coordinators from all member countries were invited to attend. A few coordinators asked to be accompanied by a technical assistant, attending on a self-funding basis. Focal persons from non-member countries of Europe were also invited to attend as observers, together with representatives of the Nordic Gene Bank and of the Non Governmental Organizations. Invitations were extended to self-funded observers from ASSINSEL, the European Commission, EuroMAB and FAO. A delegation of observers from IPGRI was also invited.

2. Implementation of Phase VI of ECP/GR

As of the end of September 2001, a total of 31 countries formalized their membership to Phase VI of ECP/GR. A further 2 countries have not signed the Letter of Agreement, but annual contributions were paid. Two more countries (Iceland and Italy) continued to be involved into Phase VI, although their formal membership to ECP/GR has not been secured. This brings the total number of participating countries to 35 to date. Armenia joined ECP/GR in the year 2000 for the first time, while Albania, after its participation in Phase IV in 1992 and 1993, again joined ECP/GR in February 2001. Focal persons from potential member countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Latvia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine) have been invited to attend the Mid-term Steering Committee meeting as observers.

2. The new Network Coordinating Groups

The main change in the mode of operation of the Networks, agreed by the Steering Committee during its Seventh meeting (Braunschweig, 1998), was the activation of Network Coordinating Groups to establish priorities for action for an extended range of crops to be covered by the Networks.

Coordinating Groups for the crop Networks were established and had their meetings during the first two years of Phase VI. The Network Coordinating Groups (NCGs) were composed of Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Database Managers in the case of the Cereals, Fruit,

Vegetables and Industrial Crops and Potato Network. The Forages and Grain legumes Networks identified a few Working Group members who accepted the role of promoting activities and coordinating the rest of the Group. The Minor Crops Coordinating Group was made up of ten members suggested by the National Coordinators.

The establishment of these new bodies and especially the organization of the respective meetings have been effective in the following:

- 1) Extending collaborative action to, and gathering preliminary information on, a wide range of crops new to ECP/GR. (Solanaceae, cucurbits and leafy vegetables, minor cereals, minor fruits, medicinal and aromatic plants, flax)
- 2) Strengthening coordination and exchange information between Working Groups as well as between Networks (Minor Crops Network members participated in the Vegetables and the Cereals Network meeting, as well as being involved in the Fruit Network's activities)
- 3) Proposing and organizing small technical meetings (on *Beta* core collections, flax, barley base-broadening, vegetatively propagated *Allium*, *Arachis*, etc.).

The coordinating function of these bodies after their respective meetings has been effective to various degrees; however, it has often been conditioned by the support of the ECP/GR Secretariat. Therefore, while the number of proposals and initiatives has certainly increased in many directions, the expected self-organizing nature of the Coordinating Groups has often been limited.

4. Summary of the Networks' activity

(For more information, see 1999 and 2000 ECP/GR progress reports and mid-term reports from the Network members (Agenda Item 4).

4.1 Cereals Network

Network Coordinating Group (NCG) - R. Ellis (United Kingdom); I. Faberová (Czech Republic); C. Germeier (Germany); D. Jelovac (F. R. Yugoslavia); G. Kleijer (Switzerland); H. Knüpffer (Germany); M. Leggett (United Kingdom); W. Podyma (Poland).

Working Group on Avena - Chair M. Leggett (United Kingdom)

Working Group on Barley - Chair: R. Ellis (United Kingdom); Vice-Chair: M. Veteläinen (Nordic Gene Bank)

Working Group on Wheat - Co-Chairs: A. Le Blanc (France) and I. Faberová (Czech Republic)

The NCG met in Radzików, Poland (July 2000). The development of the databases, the promotion of a system for responsibility sharing throughout the Cereals Network and the recommendation that genebanks adopt quality standards were the highlights of the meeting. The Group proposed a reallocation of available funds, which enabled the following actions: (1) Funding of complementary activity of six non-EU countries (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Poland, Russia and Slovakia) to the EU funded Gen Res project meeting on barley; (2) Organization of the sixth meeting of the Working Group on Barley (Italy, December 2000), jointly with the Gen Res project meeting and followed by a small technical meeting on barley base-broadening.

The Barley WG highlighted the progress of the European Barley database and of the Barley Core Collection. A mechanism for sharing responsibilities was recommended.

The WG on *Avena* did not meet during Phase VI, although some of the members are involved in a EU Gen Res project on *Avena*.

IPGRI publications:

- Report of the meeting of the Cereals Network Coordinating Group, Radzików, Poland, July 2000;

In preparation:

- Report of the sixth meeting of the Working Group on Barley, Salsomaggiore, Italy, December 2000.

OUTLOOK

The first meeting of the Working Group on Wheat is planned in Prague, Czech Republic, November 2001. A plenary Cereals Network meeting is scheduled for 2003, to review progress made and to plan for the future. It was proposed that the Network meeting be preceded by a small technical satellite meeting, where experts in biometrics and statistics could address problems related to the standardization of evaluation data. The development of a consolidated proposal on barley base-broadening will require further discussion within the Group. The Barley WG expressed interest in the preparation of a project proposal on the conservation of *in situ* wild relatives.

4.2 Forages Network

Network Coordinating Group (NCG) - H. Aynalem (Israel); L. Horváth (Hungary); M. Hulden (Nordic Gene Bank); P. Marum (Norway); V. Negri (Italy); N.R. Sackville Hamilton (United Kingdom); M. Sevcíková (Czech Republic); E. Willner (Germany)

Working Group on Forages - Chair: P. Marum (Norway); Vice-Chair: R. Sackville Hamilton (United Kingdom)

The Forages WG met in November 1999 in Portugal and decided to select a Network Coordinating Group among its members. Progress was made in the area of sharing responsibilities. A mechanism was agreed to provisionally identify Most Original Samples (MOS). Whenever the provisional MOS status is accepted, curators will also be asked to provisionally accept the accompanying responsibility for the maintenance of those accessions. Specific responsibilities for the MOS maintainer, the DB manager and the genebank hosting safety-duplicates were agreed. Genebanks were recommended to adopt the agreed regeneration standards, or otherwise to publish their own quality guidelines. A subgroup was defined to establish a procedure for redefining the *Lolium perenne* core collection and for defining a new *Medicago sativa* core collection. The development of the databases has been put on hold, due to the expectation that the European Plant Genetic Resources Information Infra-Structure (EPGRIS) project, once operational, will efficiently advance the collection of all the passport data.

The EU funded project ICONFORS, on “improving germplasm conservation methods for perennial European forages species” is a direct development of ECP/GR work and standards, and aims to definitively determine the optimum genetic and economic compromise between the quantity and quality of regeneration in the case of forages.

IPGRI publications:

- Report of the seventh meeting of the Working Group on Forages, Elvas, Portugal, November 1999.

Electronic documents:

- Report of the meeting of the provisional Forages Network Coordinating Group, Elvas, Portugal, November 1999:
<http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/publications/ForagesNCG1.htm>.

OUTLOOK

No further meetings are currently planned within the Forages Network, although a small technical meeting to advance core collection work may be proposed in the near future.

4.3 Vegetables Network

Network Coordinating Group (NCG) - G. Thomas - facilitator (France), D. Astley (United Kingdom), I. Boukema (the Netherlands), M.C. Daunay (France); J. Keller (Germany); T. Kotlinska (Poland); A. Lebeda (Czech Republic); F. Nuez (Spain); E. Rosa (Portugal)

Working Group on Allium - Chair: D. Astley (United Kingdom); Vice-Chair: J. Keller (Germany)

Working Group on Brassica - Chair G. Thomas (France) Vice Chair: E. Rosa (Portugal)

Working Group on Umbellifer crops - Chair: D. Astley (United Kingdom); Vice-Chair: T. Kotlinska (Poland)

Informal group on Solanaceae: focal person M.C. Daunay (France)

Ad hoc group on Cucurbits: focal person F. Nuez (Spain)

Ad hoc group on Leafy vegetables: focal person A. Lebeda (Czech Republic)

After a small preliminary meeting in Rome (May 1999), the NCG met in Vila Real, Portugal (May 2000). The Group emphasized the importance of extending activities to a wider range of crops, and focal persons were selected to promote new informal (*ad hoc*) groups on Solanaceae (tomato, pepper and eggplant), cucurbits and leafy vegetables (lettuce, spinach and chicory). The definition and implementation of a system for safety-duplication was suggested as a first item to be addressed at the Network level. Common elements requiring coordination and possible collaboration with other ECP/GR Networks (Minor Crops, Industrial Crops and Potato and Fruit Networks) were identified, such as problems related to the maintenance of vegetatively propagated crops. Available funds were allocated to the organization of meetings to be held back to back with the EU funded Gen Res project meetings on *Brassica*, Carrot, Eggplant and Melon. A Solanaceae *ad hoc* meeting was held in the Netherlands (September 2001), leading to the proposal to establish a new formal Working Group.

Working Groups on *Allium*, *Brassica* and Umbellifer crops did not meet during this Phase. However, they benefited from the activity of the EU Gen Res projects, even though a small number of Working Group members are involved in these. The *Allium* project ended in March 2000, while the *Brassica* and Carrot projects are ongoing.

The *Allium* WG focused on making the updated European *Allium* database available on the Internet. The database is being used to identify Most Original Samples of wild accessions. Field trials to identify duplicate accessions of onion and leek on morphological and agronomic characteristics were carried out. A few arrangements for safety-duplication between countries are in place, although not under formal agreements. Characterization work is slowly progressing. Collaboration for taxonomic identification is well established. A small technical meeting on vegetatively propagated *Allium* was held in Gatersleben (May 2001), where an integrated system for conservation was proposed, and phytosanitary standards and *in vitro* and cryopreservation methods were discussed. A project on the molecular characterization of all accessions in the European garlic and shallot collections was drafted, in order to identify duplicates and reduce the costs of conservation. However, no funding source was identified for this expensive project.

Ongoing activities of the *Brassica* WG are the definition of characterization descriptors for the European *Brassica* database; updating of the database and inclusion of evaluation data; and defining quality standards for regeneration procedures, improving safety duplication.

The Umbellifers Working Group has gathered information on the status of collections and the management and maintenance of collections. A European Umbellifer Database has been developed and is on-line searchable on the Internet. Minimum characterization descriptors have been developed for carrot. A successful collaboration for regeneration work has been carried out, with four national programmes (France, Italy, Poland and UK) contributing to regenerate endangered accessions of the *Daucus* collections of the Vavilov Institute (VIR), St Petersburg. Collaborative research and collecting activities were undertaken.

IPGRI publications:

- Report of the Vegetables Network Coordinating Group meeting, Vila Real, Portugal, May 2000;
- "Importance of Vegetables and their *ex situ* Conservation in Europe", a collection of tables and data compiled from FAO and IPGRI sources.

Electronic documents:

- Report of a preparatory meeting of the Vegetables Network Coordinating Group, Rome, Italy, May 1999:
<http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Publications/VegetablesNCG1.htm>.

In preparation:

- Report of an *ad hoc* meeting on vegetatively propagated *Allium*, Gatersleben, Germany, 21-22 May 2001;
- IPGRI descriptors for *Allium*.

OUTLOOK

Ad hoc meetings on Cucurbit, Umbellifer crops and *Brassica* genetic resources are respectively planned in Turkey (November 2001), United Kingdom (November 2001) and Portugal (February 2002), jointly with EU Gen Res meetings on Melon, Carrot and *Brassica*. A selected and limited number of experts from non-EU countries will be invited. An *ad hoc* meeting on leafy vegetables, possibly jointly with a Eucarpia meeting, is planned for 2003 in Wageningen (The Netherlands). A plenary Vegetables Network meeting is planned in 2003 to review progress made and to plan for the future. A proposal to establish a Working Group on Solanaceae is being presented to the attention of the Steering Committee by the coordinator of the EU funded Gen Res Eggplant project, Dr M.C. Daunay (Agenda Item 4).

4.4 Grain Legumes Network

Network Coordinating Group (NCG) - M. Ambrose (United Kingdom); G. Duc (France), R. Schachl (Austria), W. Swiecicki (Poland)

Working Group on Grain Legumes - Chair: M. Ambrose (United Kingdom); Vice-Chair: G. Duc (France)

The Grain Legumes WG met in Kraków, Poland, in July 2001, back to back with the meeting of the European Association for Grain Legume Research (AEP). The Network remains focused on bringing the entire Network Central Crop Databases to fruition with good passport and minimum characterization data. *Cicer*, *Glycine*, *Lupinus* and *Phaseolus* are already on-line, while *Lens*, *Pisum* and *Vicia faba* are due on-line by the end of 2001. Databases for *Arachis* and *Vigna* are under construction. The meeting identified the need to collate information on genebank quality standards and in particular on the regeneration practices for allogamous grain legume species. The Group decided to select a Network Coordinating Group among its members. The Network also maintained a

linkage with the EU-funded FAIR project PHASELIEU (Improvement of Sustainable *Phaseolus* Production in Europe for Human Consumption). Among the outputs of the "Phaselieu" Group, are a Handbook on Evaluation of *Phaseolus* Germplasm, a Handbook on Common Bean Related Laboratory Methods and a Catalogue of Bean Genetic Resources. The emergency regeneration of part of the Cambridge *Phaseolus* collection was carried out by Italian research institutes (partially with ECP/GR funds). A first priority list of 403 accessions (last regenerated in 1990) were planted during Summer 1998 and the regenerated seed was sent in 1999 to Wellesbourne, UK, with safety-duplicates sent to Linz, Austria.

In preparation:

- Report of the third meeting of the Working Group on Grain Legumes, Kraków, Poland, July 2001.

OUTLOOK

No further Working Group meetings are planned during Phase VI. Proposals for small technical meetings are currently being prepared on regeneration of allogamous grain legume species (jointly with the AEP) and on *Arachis* genetic resources.

4.5 Fruit Network

Network Coordinating Group (NCG) - I. Batlle (Spain); J. Blazek (Czech Republic); F. Dosba (France); M. Fischer (Germany); E. Giordani (Italy); E-J. Lamont (United Kingdom); M. Lateur (Belgium); R. Oger (Belgium); K. Tobutt (United Kingdom); A. Zanetto (France)

Working Group on Malus/Pyrus - Chair: M. Fischer (Germany); Vice-Chair: J. Blazek (Czech Republic)

Working Group on Prunus: - Chair: F. Dosba (France) Vice-Chair: K. Tobutt (United Kingdom)

The Fruit Network Coordinating Group met in Gembloux, Belgium, in November 1999. A draft agreement was approved for the establishment of a decentralized European *Prunus* collection. On this basis, curators would offer to maintain a number of European accessions for long-term conservation, to provide characterization data and to make the samples available in response to reasonable requests. Documentation and conservation activities remain priorities for the Network. Efforts are directed to further develop the European fruit databases. The European *Malus* and *Prunus* databases are already available on-line. Task forces were established with the purpose of defining accepted accession names and their synonyms. The Group also intends to promote agreements on uniform standards for optimal conservation of fruit germplasm. Links with fruit experts of the ECP/GR Minor Crops Network have been established.

No Working Group meetings have been held during Phase VI.

IPGRI publications:

- Report of an Extraordinary meeting of the *Prunus* Working Group and the Third Coordination meeting of the Project Gen Res 61, Rheinfelden, Switzerland, December 1998.

Electronic documents:

- Report of the meeting of the Fruit Network Coordinating Group, Gembloux, Belgium, October 1999: <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/publications/FruitNCG5.htm>.

OUTLOOK

A meeting of the *Malus/Pyrus* Working Group has been planned for May 2002 in Germany, at the occasion of the anniversary of the genebank in Dresden-Pillnitz.

A meeting of the full Network, involving the participation of the *Prunus* and *Malus/Pyrus* Working Group members, is planned for 2003, possibly in Hungary. The participation of a selected number of Network members in a meeting of the EUFORGEN Noble Hardwoods Network (United Kingdom, 2003) has been proposed, to take advantage of possible synergies.

A proposal to establish a Working Group on *Vitis* is being presented to the attention of the Steering Committee by the coordinator of the EU funded Gen Res *Vitis* project, Dr E. Dettweiler (Agenda Item 4).

4.6 Industrial Crops and Potato Network

Network Coordinating Group (NCG) - B. Desprez (France); L. Frese, Germany; L. van Soest (The Netherlands)

Working Group on Beta - Chair: L. Frese (Germany); Vice-Chair: B. Desprez (France)

Working Group on Potato - Chair: R. Hoekstra (The Netherlands); Vice-Chair: M. Vetelainen (Nordic Gene Bank)

The NCG met in Bury St Edmunds, United Kingdom, on 11 September 1999. A revised allocation of the Network funds was proposed, with a preference to hold separate meetings of the Working Groups. The first *Beta* and Potato meetings were held respectively in the United Kingdom (September 1999) and the Netherlands (March 2000). Both newly established *Beta* and Potato Working Groups made it possible to continue the collaboration started by the EU funded Gen Res projects and to extend it to non-EU countries. The *Beta* Working Group is considered an integral part of the World *Beta* Network.

The development of the databases has been at the centre of both Groups' activities. The *Beta* WG was the first Group to agree on mechanisms to share responsibilities, establishing a safety-duplication system and improving genebank quality standards. The Potato Working Group is also trying to define primary holders of potato varieties and to systematically implement safety-duplication. The NCG recommended increasing collaboration with the FAO/ESCORENA Networks on flax and fibre crops and on sunflower. A small meeting to discuss the development of an International *Beta* Core Collection was held in France (September 2000).

IPGRI publications:

- Report of the first meeting of the Working Group on *Beta*, Bury St Edmunds, United Kingdom, September 1999;
- Report of the first meeting of the Working Group on Potato, Wageningen, the Netherlands, March 2000.

Electronic documents:

- Report of the meeting of the Industrial Crops Network Coordinating Group, held in Bury St Edmunds, United Kingdom, September 1999:
<http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/publications/IndCrops0999.htm>;
- Report of an *ad hoc* meeting of a *Beta* core collection task force, held in Capelle-en-Pévèle, France, September 2000:
<http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Publications/IBCCRep.pdf>.

OUTLOOK

An *ad hoc* meeting on flax (Prague, Czech Republic, 7-8 December 2001) and the use of available funds for evaluation work was proposed to facilitate development of the International Flax database. The NCG proposed that both Beta and Potato groups hold a second meeting in 2002. The Potato meeting is planned in Hamburg, Germany, in July 2002, after the meeting of the European Association for Potato Research. The Beta meeting is planned for the end of 2002 (in Italy or Poland), jointly with the World Beta Network meeting and immediately followed by the NCG meeting.

4.7 Minor Crops Network

Network Coordinating Group (NCG) - A. Alanko (Finland); D. Baričevič (Slovenia); I. Batlle (Spain); A. Della (Cyprus); F. Grassi (Italy); K. Hammer (Germany); M. Hulden (Nordic Gene Bank); A. Michalová (Czech Republic); M. Mitteau (France); A. Rosati (Italy)

The meeting of the Minor Crops Network Coordinating Group was held in June 1999 in Turku, Finland. At the meeting, it was agreed that the range of crops eligible for the scope of the Network will be characterized by limited production and consumption levels and those usually restricted to specific areas where both ecological and market niches exist. It was suggested that the Network should maintain links with all the other crop Networks and therefore it should be represented as horizontal in the diagram of the operational structure of ECP/GR. Consensus emerged on the need to establish a Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants. Focal persons have been identified, in consultation with National Coordinators, for Minor Cereals (A. Michalová, Czech Republic), for Minor Fruits (Ignacio Batlle, Spain) and for Minor Vegetables (A. Rosati, Italy). They have the task of identifying a list of crops that should become the focus of the Network's activity and of starting collation of information related to the conservation and use of their genetic resources. A. Michalová and A. Rosati were invited to attend the NCG meetings of the Cereals and Vegetables Networks respectively, in order to strengthen inter-Network cooperation. I. Batlle was invited to be a member of the Fruit Network Coordinating Group. A strategy for minor cereals was proposed by the Minor Cereals focal person, who identified millets and buckwheat as the crops for priority action, on the basis of the criteria set out in Turku (1999). Similarly, the Minor Fruit focal person suggested quince, loquat and azarole for priority action.

IPGRI publications:

- Report of the Minor Crops Network Coordinating Group meeting, Turku, Finland, June 1999.

OUTLOOK

A proposal for the establishment of a Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic plants is being presented to the Steering Committee by Prof K. Hammer and Dr D Baričevič.

A Minor Crops Network meeting is planned for the year 2002 or 2003, to review progress made by the focal persons.

4.8 Documentation and Information Network

A meeting to prepare a project proposal for the "Establishment of an European Plant Genetic Resources Information Infra-Structure" (EPGRIS) was held at IPGRI in Rome on 29-30 August 1999. The proposal was successfully submitted to the EC for funding through the Fifth Framework Programme for Research and Technology. CGN, The Netherlands (coordinator), IPGRI, NGB, BRG, France, RICP, Czech Republic, INIA, Portugal and ZADI, Germany are partners in this project. Acting as sub-regional coordinators, they offer technical support and coordinate the creation of national PGR

inventories by organizing regional meetings with the responsible documentation persons from each European country. The European Internet Search Catalogue (EURISCO), based at IPGRI in Rome, will include passport information of plant genetic resources maintained *ex situ* in Europe, to be frequently updated and publicly accessible via the Internet. The first coordination meeting of the project partners was held at IPGRI in Rome, Italy in December 2000. The ECP/GR Secretariat received nominations of country focal persons for EPGRIS representing 40 European countries. These documentation experts supported by the EU or by IPGRI are fully involved in the project, participating in three annual sub-regional meetings. The first round of meetings was held at RICP, Czech Republic, BRG, France, NGB, Sweden and INIA, Portugal in the Summer of 2001.

A revision of the IPGRI/FAO Multicrop passport descriptors is part of the exercise to define which descriptors will be used by EURISCO. This revision, coordinated by IPGRI in close consultation with the EPGRIS project, is expected to be concluded by December 2001. To address the concern expressed by some European Central Crop Database (ECCDB) managers that EPGRIS might take over their role, the project has produced a draft document clarifying the objectives of EPGRIS and its complementarity with the ECCDBs. The database managers will also be encouraged to concentrate their efforts on characterization and evaluation data. The project website, developed by the ECP/GR Secretariat, includes a list of national inventories and focal points, as well as further information on EPGRIS (<http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/epgris/index.htm>).

A **new ECP/GR website** was released in December 2000 with a new address (<http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org>) and a new design (new logo), to be used for all ECP/GR products. The objective of the new site is to provide easier access to ECP/GR information, to raise the profile of ECP/GR and inform the public of the Programme's objectives, activities and outputs. Most of the information on the site is provided dynamically through databases to facilitate the management, updating and access to ECP/GR information. An increasing amount of documents is being made available in PDF format: these include the reports of the meetings of the Network Coordinating Groups and the most recent ECP/GR publications.

It should be noted that IPGRI has given new emphasis to providing on-line services. Therefore, most of the functions previously covered by the "European Information Platform" are now offered by the new site of the IPGRI Regional Office for Europe (<http://www.ipgri.cgiar.org/regions/europe/home.htm>). An entry page to access all the available on-line germplasm databases is now searchable at: <http://www.ipgri.cgiar.org/regions/europe/databases/eurdb.asp>.

The **ECP/GR Steering Committee listserver** (ecpgr_steering@ngb.se) was constantly used to good effect by most of the National Coordinators during Phase VI.

The **ECP/GR public listserver** (ecpgr_list@ngb.se) was used only occasionally by its subscribers. It is suggested to still maintain both listservers functional, since they both offer a useful instrument of communication. The Nordic Gene Bank is thanked for their effort in maintaining the listservers operational throughout Phase VI.

Electronic documents:

- Internet Advisory Group meeting, Rome, Italy, August 1999:
<http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Publications/IAG0899.htm>;
- ECP/GR Home Page: <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org>;
- EPGRIS Home Page: <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/epgris/index.htm>;
- IPGRI Regional Office for Europe Home Page:
<http://www.ipgri.cgiar.org/regions/europe/home.htm>.

OUTLOOK

A Documentation Network meeting was planned for the second part of Phase VI. However, the EPGRIS project is funded to hold a final meeting in 2003, involving all the partners and national focal persons. Therefore it seems more appropriate to use available ECP/GR funds to ensure the participation of non-EU funded countries in the various EPGRIS meetings, as well as to support different initiatives, rather than to use the funds to hold the planned Documentation Network meeting.

Prototype ECP/GR web pages offering information on specific Networks' activities, as well as the availability of related products, have been prepared and will be made public before the end of the year 2001.

4.9 Inter-regional Cooperation Network

Task Force on Inter-Regional Cooperation - M. Broggio (Italy); C. De la Cuadra (Spain); L. Dotlacil (Czech Republic); F. Grassi (Italy); V. Meglič (Slovenia); N. Stavropoulos (Greece); E. Thörn (Nordic Gene Bank); L. Visser (The Netherlands); B. Weiskopf (Germany)

The **Inter-Regional Cooperation Task Force** held two meetings during Phase VI, the first in Florence, Italy, in October 1999 and the second in Prague, Czech Republic, in May 2001. The Task Force suggested changing the name of this Network to "Inter-Regional Cooperation Network" and agreed that the main objective of the Network should be to enhance collaboration between European partners involved in PGRFA development cooperation and developing countries. A collection and processing of relevant information was undertaken, in order to obtain a better overview of existing activities:

1. Inventory of scientific and technical cooperation in PGRFA in Europe (some information obtained, but still very incomplete);
2. Assessment of needs and priorities of other Networks (basic insights were obtained);
3. Database of European funding opportunities for activities/projects in other regions (information obtained on funding conditions of more than 100 organizations);
4. Directory of European and national NGOs active in technical cooperation (scarce information obtained);
5. Directory of specialists on PGRFA in Europe (scarce information obtained).

The Task Force decided to set its priorities in consultation with a selected number of regional Networks: WANANET (West Asia/North Africa), SPGRC (Southern Africa), REMERFI (Central America), CAN-PGR (Central Asia). Contacts were also made with EAPGREN (Eastern Africa) and GRENEWECA (West and Central Africa).

Project proposals to use available funds were prepared on three topics: *In situ* and on-farm conservation and management; Documentation and information system development; Policy issues.

Electronic documents

- Report of the second meeting of the Inter-regional Cooperation Task Force, 11-12 May 2001, Prague, Czech Republic
http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Publications/IRC_report2.doc

OUTLOOK

Three project proposals for the use of available funds have been presented to the Steering Committee. Task force members would be involved in the implementation and follow up of these projects, provided the Committee's approval.

4.10 *In situ* and On-farm Conservation Network

Task Force on On-farm Conservation and Management - V. Negri - Chair (Italy); M. Angelini (Italy); H. Becker (Germany); M. Bossard (Switzerland); P. Freudenthaler (Austria); B. Horneburg (Germany); G. Kleijer (Switzerland); M. Mitteau (France); W. Podyma (Poland); J. Rode (Slovenia); J.J. Ruiz Martínéz (Spain); N. Maxted (United Kingdom); A. Sartori (Italy); N. Stavropoulos (Greece); Z. Stehno (Czech Republic); S. Strajeru (Romania); M. Veteläinen (Nordic gene Bank); L. Visser (The Netherlands)

Task Force on Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves - N. Maxted - Chair (United Kingdom); Y. Anikster (Israel); M. Gustafsson (Sweden); I. Hjalmarsson (Nordic Gene Bank); J. Iriondo (Spain); V. Meglič (Slovenia); M. Mitteau (France); V. Negri (Italy); N. Rybianski - observer (EuroMAB); S. Samaras (Greece); Z. Stehno (Czech Republic); R. Wingender (Germany)

A joint meeting of the Task Forces for “Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves” and for “On-farm Conservation and Management” was held in Italy, in May 2000. The main objectives of the Task Forces are to bring together and enhance collaboration between the different European partners involved; identify priorities; and enhance joint fund raising efforts for *in situ* and on-farm conservation in Europe.

The workplan agreed by the Task Force on “**Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves**” includes the preparation of: (1) a preliminary inventory of existing examples of *in situ* conservation projects in Europe; (2) a consolidated list of guidelines and methodologies for the practical implementation of *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives; (3) a list of research papers related to the genetic reserve conservation of crop wild relatives and to mathematical modeling systems for predicting changes as a result of management interventions. Additionally, the preparation of project proposals for *in situ* conservation of wild cereals and wild brassicas were prioritized. A research project to locate, catalogue and assist in the genetic reserve conservation of PGRFA species of Europe was developed by the Task Force and submitted for funding to the EU in February 2001 (the project coordinator is Nigel Maxted of Birmingham University, UK). A preparatory meeting took place at IPGRI in Rome in December 2000. The project was unsuccessful after its first submission, however a second project application will be submitted at the next call (see outlook below).

The workplan agreed by the Task Force on “**On-farm Conservation and Management**” includes the preparation of an inventory of experiences in Europe, as a basis to identify gaps and opportunities for collaborative work for the conservation of landraces and old varieties. A subgroup has been formed to investigate possible solutions for improved legislation for the free exchange and use of non-registered seeds in relation to the reception of Directive 98/95/CE. A subgroup will also be looking at the documentation needs and appropriate descriptors for the inclusion of data derived from farmers' knowledge and on-farm management into crop databases. Several mechanisms for improving relations between institutions from the formal and informal sectors have been identified, including greater representation and participation of NGOs in ECP/GR activities. A proposal was made for a pilot study looking at the genetic diversity of landraces conserved in the Carpathian areas of Romania and studying the process including socio-economic reasons for conservation and management.

IPGRI publications

- Report of the joint meeting of a Task Force on Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves and a Task Force on On-farm Conservation and Management, Isola Polvese, Italy, May 2000.

OUTLOOK

The Task Force on wild species is preparing a second project application for a thematic network on “European wild plant diversity assessment and conservation”, to be submitted to the EU by 15 October 2001.

A project proposal for the use of available funds to survey genetic diversity of Romanian traditional crop varieties and landraces conserved on-farm is being submitted to the Steering Committee for approval.

A concept note to propose the use of available funds for an information gathering exercise is expected to be presented to the attention of the Steering Committee by the Task Force. Information to be gathered would include a catalogue of possible joint formal/informal initiatives; a concept paper on methodologies for the conservation of traditional varieties; and an inventory of existing informal databases and relevant bibliographies.

No further meetings of the Task Forces are planned during Phase VI.

5. Complementary Programme Modules and collaboration with EU programme EC 1467/94

In its Seventh meeting (Braunschweig, 1998) the Steering Committee recommended that the Secretariat request voluntary contributions for the funding of complementary modules, in order to undertake activities related to the implementation of GPA priorities. At the start of Phase VI, the Secretariat requested all the member countries to offer contributions for emergency actions, for cooperation with EU-funded projects and for training activities. A second request was sent later, specifically targeted to collaboration with project Gen Res 104 on Barley. Overall, a limited but appreciated response came from a few countries and a total of US\$ 28,246 was raised, all specifically targeted to collaboration with EU projects. As mentioned in previous progress reports (see also Mid-term Financial Report), these funds enabled considerable cooperation with EU projects on *Avena*, Barley, Carrot and *Vitis*. Collaboration with the EU *Brassica*, Eggplant and Melon projects is also ongoing, thanks to core budget funds.

In June 2000, the ECP/GR Coordinator attended the meeting convened by the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium, to discuss the future of the EU Programme EC 1467/94, following the evaluation made by a group of experts. The invitation was reiterated for the EC to become a member of the Steering Committee of ECP/GR. According to the meeting and to our further contacts with the Commission, a continuation of the EC programme is expected, with emphasis given to *in situ* and on-farm conservation.

The eligibility for non-EU countries to participate in the new EC Programme would be very welcome and would reduce the need for ECP/GR to intervene with complementary action.

The attempt to raise voluntary funds for other activities can be continued in the future. The inventory of funding sources, recently developed by the Secretariat, within the framework of the Inter-regional Cooperation Network, can offer useful insights on the existence of appropriate donors. It would, however, be necessary for *ad hoc* groups within ECP/GR to further develop the concepts of complementary modules before proposals can be submitted to possible donors.

6. ECP/GR and the Braunschweig recommendations

While the operative basis for and the governance of the implementation of the Global Plan of Action (GPA) clearly lie with the national programmes, a number of priority activities of this Global Plan gain in effectiveness if they are facilitated by a regional hub. ECP/GR

lacks the core resources to be pro-active in all relevant activities. However, some of the activities carried out within the Networks during Phase VI have gone in the direction recommended by the Braunschweig Symposium on the implementation of Priority Activities (PA) of the GPA in Europe (Germany, 1988):

Wild relatives of cultivated crops (PA 4)

The Task Force on “Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves” has been established, jointly with a Task Force on “On-farm Conservation and Management”. It has included in its workplan the preparation of an inventory of genetic reserve conservation projects and an inventory of existing guidelines for the establishment and management of genetic reserves. The joint Task Force established links with EuroMAB and is developing project proposals to assess the genetic diversity of European wild crop relatives and to develop appropriate methodologies for conservation.

On-farm management (PA 2)

A Task Force on “On-farm Conservation and Management” was established, including NGO representatives among its members. The Task Force carried out an inventory of on-farm management experiences in Europe, discussed the problems of definition of “on-farm conservation and management” and offered a forum to improve communication and information exchange between the formal and informal sectors.

Sustaining *ex situ* collections. The rationalization of regenerating methods (PA 5 and PA 6)

The Forages Working Group has developed and agreed on regeneration guidelines for the main perennial forage grasses and legumes of temperate grasslands (Sixth meeting) and has discussed experiences with the adoption of minimum standards (Seventh meeting). The *Brassica* WG is rationalizing regeneration procedures and identifying an official common regeneration procedure. The Grain Legumes WG is organizing a workshop to discuss the genetic problems of regeneration of allogamous grain species. Emergency regeneration has been carried out by Network partners for *Phaseolus* accessions of the Cambridge collection and for carrots from the Vavilov Institute.

Utilization of plant genetic resources (PA 9 and PA 10)

Several Working Groups have collaborated on the development of core collections (*Avena*, *Brassica*, *Beta*, Barley, *Lolium*, Garlic, etc.). Discussion for the preparation of a base-broadening project is ongoing in the Barley WG.

Seed production and distribution (PA 13)

The “On-farm Conservation and Management Task Force” has included in its workplan the objective to collect information regarding seed legislation, with special attention to variety registration fees and the state of laws permitting the use and trade of landraces in Europe.

Underutilized crops (PA 12)

The Network Coordinating Group on Minor Crops has gathered information on existing platforms and expertise dealing with the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources of underutilized crops. It has started to define priority crops for action in Europe.

Collaboration with other regions (PA 16)

A Task Force on Inter-Regional Cooperation has been established. It has started to increase the level of information exchange.

Information systems (PA 17)

ECP/GR has offered the most appropriate framework for the preparation and development of the EPGRIS project, which is going to facilitate the development of information systems and of a regional information hub, as well as it offers training schemes. At the same time ECP/GR, through its CCDBs, facilitates the development of databases focusing on characterization and evaluation data, linked to agreed standards.

7. Sharing of responsibilities

A document prepared towards the definition and implementation of a European *Prunus* collection was finalized by the Fruit Network. Database managers of the *Beta* and Forages Groups have started to identify the Most Original Samples (MOS), in order to propose that their curators accept responsibility for conservation. The Cereals Network Coordinating Group has also agreed that the three Working Groups (*Avena*, Barley and Wheat) start applying a mechanism to identify MOS. It is proposed in this case that curators offer to take responsibility for maintenance and distribution to *bona fide* users of a list of accessions (suggested criteria: material of local origin, unique material) and inform the DB manager of their offer. DB managers would combine the lists received from curators and identify gaps in the responsibility net. The Working Group on Barley subsequently adopted this proposal during its meeting in December 2000. An *ad hoc* group on vegetatively propagated *Allium* has proposed to establish an inter-institute network of vegetative *Allium* collections (See background document for Agenda Item 2-B: A collection of mechanisms proposed by the different Working Groups to share responsibilities for conservation).

In parallel with the efforts of the Working Groups to implement systems for responsibility sharing, a questionnaire was prepared by the Secretariat, in consultation with a small Task Force of experts, to be sent to the institutes through the National Coordinators. The results of over 190 replies received have been analyzed by the Secretariat and an outline prepared, in consultation with the task force, for the Steering Committee. Support for the concept of responsibility sharing is shown to be very high among the respondents.

8. Material Transfer Agreements

The process of consultation to define a model for Material Transfer Agreement (MTA), which could be generally adopted by genebanks in Europe, was concluded by the Task Force coordinated by L. Visser, CGN The Netherlands. The results of a questionnaire, as well as a draft model text were distributed to all the National Coordinators. This text is tabled as a background document for discussion during the Eighth Steering Committee meeting (Agenda Item 2-A). The objective is that the Committee endorses final text(s) for use by genebanks throughout Europe.

9. Link with other Networks and initiatives

During Phase VI, links were established between ECP/GR and the following initiatives:

- **AEP (European Association for Grain Legume Research).** A joint meeting of the Grain Legumes Network and the AEP was organized in Kraków, Poland, in July 2001 (see above, chapter 4.4) The ECP/GR Coordinator presented the ECP/GR grain legumes activity during the AEP symposium.
- **Council of Europe.** The Secretariat was an observer in the meeting of the Group of Plant Experts of the Council of Europe, in the framework of the Bern Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats (Strasbourg, France, March 1999).

- **EUCARPIA.** The Secretariat attended the Leafy vegetables '99 meeting, Olomouc, Czech Republic, June 1999 and the XVI Genetic Resources Section Symposium in Radzikow, Poland, May 2001, where a general presentation on ECP/GR was given.
- **EuroMAB Conference.** The participation of N. Maxted (University of Birmingham, UK) on behalf of ECP/GR in the EuroMAB Conference, Cambridge, UK, 10-14 April 2000, was supported by ECP/GR. N. Maxted gave a presentation about ECP/GR and its activities within the *In situ* and On-farm Conservation Network.
- **European Commission.** Meeting convened by the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium, to discuss the future of the EU Programme EC 1467/94 (see above, chapter 5).
- **FAO/SCORENA Networks.** Links have been established within the framework of the Industrial Crops and Potato Network (see above, chapter 4.6).
- **Global IPGRI *in situ* initiative.** The ECP/GR Coordinator, as a team member of the IPGRI *in situ* project, participated in a on-farm workshop in Hungary, thereby facilitating the establishment of a Hungarian component of the project on "Strengthening the scientific basis of *in situ* conservation of agricultural biodiversity".
- **NGO/GO linkages.** The Secretariat attended a conference jointly organized in June 1999 at Ryton Gardens, UK, by the UK Plant Genetic resources Group and the Henry Doubleday Research Association, to enable better communication between Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations.
- **NGO SAVE.** The ECP/GR Coordinator participated in the meeting on "Rare breeds and plant varieties in the Carpathian mountains", organized by the Swiss NGO Monitoring Institute (affiliated to the NGO SAVE) in Suceava, Romania, May 1999. He subsequently became a member of the SAVE Project Commission.
- **PHASELIEU.** An EU funded FAIR project on improvement of sustainable *Phaseolus* production in Europe. The link with the Grain Legumes Network was maintained. The ECP/GR Coordinator participated in a Phaselieu meeting in Viterbo, Italy (June 1999), explaining the operation of ECP/GR. He also provided a preface to the Phaselieu Catalogue of Bean Genetic Resources.
- **Planta Europa.** The Secretariat participated in the meeting for the development of a European Plant Conservation Strategy (Prague, April 2001).
- **WBN (World Beta Network).** The Working Group on *Beta* is an integral part of the WBN and the meetings are jointly organized (see above, chapter 4.6).

10. Forthcoming ECP/GR meetings

Meetings planned for the remaining part of 2001

- First meeting of the Wheat Working Group, Prague, Czech Republic, 8-10 November 2001;
- *Ad hoc* meeting on Carrot Genetic Resources, jointly with Gen Res project 105, Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 22-23 November 2001;
- *Ad hoc* meeting on Cucurbit Genetic Resources jointly with Gen Res project 108, Adana, Turkey, end of November 2001;
- *Ad hoc* meeting on Flax Genetic Resources, Prague, Czech Republic, 7-8 December 2001.

Meetings planned for 2002 and 2003

- *Ad hoc* meeting on *Brassica* Genetic Resources, jointly with Gen Res project 109-112, Vila Real, Portugal, 7-8 February 2002;
- Second meeting of a *Malus/Pyrus* Working Group, Dresden-Pillnitz, Germany, 2-5 May 2002;
- Second meeting of the Potato Working Group, Hamburg, Germany, July 2002;

- Second meeting of the *Beta* Working Group, jointly held with the World *Beta* Network meeting and the second meeting of the Network Coordinating Group, Italy or Poland, end of 2002;
- Meeting of the Minor Crops Network (2002, to be confirmed);
- *Ad hoc* meeting on leafy vegetables (2002 or 2003, to be confirmed);
- Meeting of the Cereals Network (2003, to be confirmed);
- Meeting of the Fruit Network (Hungary 2003, to be confirmed);
- Meeting of the Vegetables Network (2003, to be confirmed);
- Ninth meeting of the Steering Committee (Israel, 2003, to be confirmed).

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The contribution made to the work of ECP/GR by several IPGRI colleagues during the first part of Phase VI is gratefully acknowledged. In particular, Lidwina Koop, Brigitte Laliberté, Elinor Lipman, Marisa Sartore and Olga Spellman.

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Rome, 11 October 2001

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Appendix II. Mid-term financial report of Phase VI

European Cooperative Programme for
Crop Genetic Resources Networks (ECP/GR) - Phase VI

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**(October 2001) - Mid-term Financial Report****Contents:**

Table 1.	ECP/GR contributions received for 1999, 2000 and 2001
Table 2.	ECP/GR Phase VI - 1999, 2000 and 2001 (estimate) expenses
Table 3.	Complementary modules - 1999, 2000 and 2001 contributions and expenses
Table 4.	Financial status of ECP/GR - end of Phase VI
Table 5.	Small technical meetings

Table 1. ECP/GR Annual contributions received for 1999, 2000 and 2001 (US\$)

Participating country	Contributions for 1999	Contributions for 2000	Contributions for 2001	Outstanding
(Phase VI)				
Albania				2,000
Armenia				4,000
Austria	12,500			25,000 *
Belgium	12,500	12,500	12,500	
Bulgaria	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Croatia	5,000	5,000	5,000	
Cyprus	5,000	5,000		5,000
Czech Republic	7,500	7,500	5,000	2,500
Denmark	12,500	12,500	12,500	
Estonia	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Finland	7,500	7,500		7,500 *
France	35,000	35,000	35,000	
Germany	35,000	35,000	35,000	
Greece				22,500
Hungary	7,500	7,500	7,500	
Iceland				15,000
Ireland	7,500	7,500		7,500
Israel	7,500	7,500		7,500
Italy				105,000
Lithuania	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Macedonia FYR	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Malta	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Netherlands	12,500	12,500	12,500	
Norway	12,500	12,500	12,500	
Poland	7,500	7,500	7,500	
Portugal	7,500	7,500	7,500	
Romania	5,000	5,000		5,000 *
Slovakia	5,000	5,000		5,000 *
Slovenia	5,000	5,000	5,000	
Spain	12,500	12,500	12,500	
Sweden	12,500	12,500	12,500	
Switzerland	12,500	12,500		12,500 *
Turkey	7,500	7,500	7,500	
UK	35,000	35,000	35,000	
Yugoslavia F.R.	5,000	5,000	5,000	
Total	305,000	292,500	240,000	226,000

Receipts Phase VI received by 9 October 2001 837,500

Total outstanding receipts Phase VI 226,000

*At date of printing (12 December 2001) the following contributions had also been received: Austria for 2000 and 2001 US\$25,000; Finland for 2001 US\$7,500; Romania for 2001 US\$5,000; Slovak Republic for 2001 US\$5,000; and Switzerland for 2001 US\$12,500

Revised total outstanding receipts Phase VI 171,000

Table 2. ECP/GR Phase VI - 1999, 2000 and 2001 (estimates) Expenses (US\$)

	Budget 1999, 2000 and 2001	EXPENDITURE				BALANCE
		1999	2000	2001 (estimate)	TOTAL	
Full-time ECP/GR Network Coordinator	246,000	77,862	76,341	77,000	231,203	14,797
Secretarial support	131,400	35,600	32,659	51,000	119,259	12,141
Official travel	36,000	10,523	4,839	12,000	27,362	8,638
Network operations	300,000	63,094	44,421	84,250	191,765	108,235
Steering Committee mtgs.	45,000	0	0	40,000	40,000	5,000
Publications	40,000	0	13,460	16,000	29,460	10,540
European Internet Platform	18,000	0	2,418	3,000	5,418	12,582
Newsletter	9,000	3,341	3,044	3,000	9,385	-385
Communication and office consumables	30,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000	0
Overhead (indirect support) 13% (1)	111,202	29,280	26,670	38,513	94,463	16,739
TOTAL	966,602	229,701	213,852	334,763	778,315	188,287

Total contributions received (as of 9 October 2001)	837,000
Total expenditures (estimate end of 2001)	778,315
Balance of Phase VI	58,685

Total Budget Phase VI	1,739,974
Estimated total income for Phase VI (based on 1999 income)	1,525,000
Difference	214,974

Table 3. Complementary Modules - 1999, 2000 and 2001 Contributions and Expenses (US \$)

CONTRIBUTIONS	
Germany 1999	5,000
Slovenia 1999	500
Germany 2000	5,000
United Kingdom 2000	5,921
Finland 2000	4,325
Spain 2000	2,500
Germany 2001	5,000
Total	28,246

EXPENDITURES	
Cooperation with EU funded projects 1999	6,452
Cooperation with EU funded projects 2000	15,972
Cooperation with EU funded projects 2001 (estimate)	4,054
	26,478

Note:

These funds were used to support the participation of Cyprus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Israel, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Russian Federation in the first and second meeting of the EU-funded project on Barley, and for non EU complementary activities of Czech Republic, Romania, Russian Federation, Poland and Slovakia in the EU funded Gen Res Barley project. They were also used to support the participation of Poland in two meetings of the EU funded carrot project; of Poland and Russian Federation in one meeting of the EU funded Avena project; of Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and Yugoslavia F.R. in one EU funded Vitis project meeting.

Total contributions received	5,921
Total expenditures	0
Balance of Module	5,921

Table 4. Financial Status of ECP/GR - END of Phase V

ECP/GR Phase V fund balance 31.12.00	-33,262
Outstanding contributions received:	
Italy 1996	27,842
Contributions still outstanding :	
Greece 98	5,000
Italy 96	1,966
To be transferred to Phase VI	-1,546
Final balance	0

Table 5. Small technical meetings (Mid-term financial report - October 2001)- US\$

Date	Meeting	Expenses/budget
May 1999	Vegetables pre-NCG meeting	1,304
August 1999	Preparatory meeting for EPGRIS	4,380
September 1999	First <i>Beta</i> WG meeting	8,890
September 2000	<i>Beta</i> Core collection	3,211
December 2000	6th Barley WG meeting	4,264
December 2000	pre-breeding in barley	1,897
December 2000	EU <i>in situ</i> project preparation	5,837
May 2001	Vegetatively propagated <i>Allium</i>	8,715
	Total spent	38,498
Planned meetings:		
November 2001	<i>Ad hoc</i> on Umbellifer crops	3,000
November 2001	First Wheat WG meeting -2	7,706
Year 2002	<i>Ad hoc</i> on Leafy vegetables	3,000
	Total allocated	13,706
	Total spent + allocated	52,204
	Available	58,596
	Budget Phase VI	110,800

Appendix III. Statement by the Steering Committee of the European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks (ECP/GR) on the Negotiations to Revise the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture⁴

The ECP/GR is a technical Coordinating Network of 43 national programmes across Europe⁵ founded in 1980. ECP/GR is considered the European platform to facilitate the implementation of the Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Its principal purpose is to facilitate the long-term conservation, use and full and free exchange of crop genetic resources in Europe. ECP/GR is overseen by a Steering Committee composed of National Coordinators nominated by participating countries and a number of observers and relevant international bodies. The Steering Committee recently held its eighth meeting in St Petersburg, Russian Federation, hosted by the Vavilov Institute (VIR), which houses the largest collection of crop genetic resources in Europe⁶.

The Steering Committee of ECP/GR has closely been following the negotiations to revise the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IU/PGRFA) to bring it into harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The special features of plant breeding for food and agriculture make the bilateral approach of the CBD a real barrier to the exchange of PGRFA, which has potentially very serious consequences for World Food Security. This has been exemplified by the large drop in the exchange of PGRFA since the entry into force of the CBD. It is for this reason that we fully support the proposals to introduce a Multilateral System of Access and Benefit Sharing.

For countries to make available their genetic resources under the Multilateral System, it is absolutely necessary that the arrangements for benefit sharing meet the terms of the CBD such that they are and are seen to be fair and equitable. The Steering Committee of the ECP/GR notes the substantial package of benefit sharing identified in the current draft of the IU, including exchange of information, access to and transfer of technology, capacity building, and the sharing of monetary and other benefits of commercialisation. This is complemented by financial arrangements designed to ensure that adequate resources are made available to finance the activities of the IU, including the funding of agreed plans and programmes. In addition, the arrangements for facilitated access to PGRFA are, in themselves, a major and extremely important benefit, which should contribute significantly to World Food Security.

⁴ The statement was sent to the attention of the FAO Director General, J. Diouf, the Chair of the CGRFA, Ambassador F. Gerbasì and the Secretary to the CGRFA, José Esquinas Alcazar on 24 October 2001.

⁵ ECP/GR incorporates 35 National Programmes with a further 8 national programmes in the process of achieving full membership(*) and 5 Observers: COUNTRIES: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan*, Austria, Belarus*, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia*, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia*, Lithuania, Macedonia FYR, Malta, Moldova*, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation*, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine*, United Kingdom, F.R. Yugoslavia. OBSERVER ORGANISATIONS: ASSINSEL, EURO Man And Biosphere programme (EuroMab), FAO, IPGRI, NGOs and Nordic Gene Bank. IPGRI provides the ECP/GR Secretariat.

⁶ The N.I. Vavilov All-Russian Research Institute of Plant Industry maintains over 330,000 accessions of cultivated plants and their wild relatives. The main Vavilov herbarium collection of cultivated plants and their wild relatives has 250,000 sheets with over 100 families, about 500 genera and more than 4,600 species.

This said, the Steering Committee of the ECP/GR is most concerned with the current list of crops to which the Multilateral System will apply. The extent to which the IU can contribute to World Food Security depends entirely on the crops included in the list.

The work of ECP/GR is, by its very nature, restricted largely to temperate crops. However, the ECP/GR is also the major platform, within Europe, for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action (GPA) for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA. In this context, we are concerned that the goals of the GPA be achieved worldwide, particularly in developing countries where food security is lacking for many millions of people. For this reason we are concerned to see the extent to which the list of crops is deficient in crops of worldwide significance, particularly those for tropical and sub-tropical regions.

The discussions that are due to take place later this month within the FAO Council and Conference may be a last chance to adopt an IU that meets the needs of all countries of the world. Therefore, the Steering Committee of the ECP/GR would urge the Parties to the negotiations to reconsider their positions on the list and seek to extend it so that the IU, and specifically the Multilateral System, may have the maximum effect on World Food Security.

St. Petersburg, 17 October 2001

Appendix IV. Awareness Raising Recommendation

Phase VI of the ECP/GR Programme has, as one of its 8 objectives:

"To increase awareness, at all levels, of the importance of PGRFA activities including conservation and sustainable use".

This objective contributes directly to the Global Plan of Action (GPA) Priority Activity 20, that has its objective "To integrate fully public awareness into all local, national, **regional** and international programme activities" (emphasis added). The GPA also notes that "strong linkages between international organisations and national programmes and organisations can increase effectiveness and reduce costs."

ECP/GR is considered the platform to facilitate the GPA implementation for the European Region and yet, in the past three years, almost no awareness raising outputs have been noted by National Coordinators or Working Groups/Task Forces and there have been no activities at Regional level to raise awareness.

The reasons for lack of outputs contributing to this objective may include lack of reporting, reduced priority, perception of limited opportunities, lack of capacity, limited translation of materials, limited resources or a combination of these.

Building on the outcome of the Braunschweig Symposium, the Steering Committee reaffirms that:

1. awareness raising is an important route to achieving continued support for its activities and for promoting policy change;
2. there is need for clarity in communication, in order to increase awareness of the importance of crop genetic resource conservation and utilisation to long-term global food security, local food production options and maintenance of diversity;
3. there is a significant but relatively small constituency, which includes farmers, gardeners and consumers and their informal sector organisations, that has some awareness of the importance of these issues but that this needs widening in order to influence decision making.

A proposal was made for a framework of activities for the final 2 years of Phase VI of the Programme. The Steering Committee agreed that:

4. All Working Groups and Task Forces would be encouraged to include awareness raising activities in their work and report on these to the Steering Committee;
5. National Coordinators would seek to work actively with the informal sector civil society organizations and others to identify and develop awareness raising opportunities at local and national levels;
6. The ECP/GR secretariat would:
 - I. Facilitate communication about these activities between different ECP/GR interest groups, reporting on these at Regional level when appropriate;
 - II. Assist with translation of materials into appropriate languages to facilitate broad use within countries;
 - III. Liaise with Working Groups, Steering Committee members and Observers to identify opportunities for Region-wide awareness raising, resourcing these where necessary;
 - IV. Disseminate relevant electronic and printed information at Regional level.

Appendix V. Programme

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

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Programme

(St Petersburg, Russian Federation, 14-17 October 2001)

14 October 8:30 - 9:30	Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening statements by representatives of the host country and IPGRI • Election of the Chair • Adoption of the Agenda
9:30 - 10:30	Item 1 Report on Phase VI progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-term Technical and Financial Report of Phase VI (<i>ECP/GR Coordinator</i>) • The ECP/GR modules as additional sources of funds (<i>ECP/GR Coordinator</i>) <p><i>Discussion and adoption of the report</i></p>
Coffee break		
11:00-12:30	Item 2 Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latest international PGR policy developments (<i>C. Fowler</i>) <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
Lunch		
14:00-15:30	Item 2-A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material Transfer Agreements (<i>introduced by B. Visser</i>) <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
Coffee break		
16:00-18:00	Item 2-B Item 2-C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of conservation responsibilities for PGRFA in Europe (<i>B. Laliberté and L. Maggioni</i>) • Implementation at the genebank level of international agreements - proposal for a task force (<i>introduced by B. Visser</i>) <p><i>Discussion on 2-B and 2-C</i></p>
15 October 8:30 - 10:30	Item 3 IPGRI in Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional strategy of IPGRI in Europe (<i>J. Turok</i>) • Outcomes of a workshop on Sustainable national programmes in the independent states of the former Soviet Union held in St Petersburg on 11-12 October (<i>S. Alexanian</i>) • Proposal for a symposium on national programmes (<i>J. Weibull and E. Bettencourt</i>) <p><i>Discussion</i></p>

Coffee break		
11:00-12:30	Item 4 Programme Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of Networks and Working Group activities and recommendations for future actions on the basis of reports from WG Chairs, Network Coordinating Groups and Task Forces • Evaluation of project proposals for the establishment of new Working Groups: 1) Medicinal and aromatic plants (Minor crops Network); Vitis (Fruit Network); Solanaceae (Vegetables Network). <p><i>The Committee splits in four groups (1- Cereals + Industrial crops + Documentation; 2- Forages + Grain legumes + Minor crops; 3- Vegetables + Fruit; 4- Inter-regional + In situ and on-farm)</i></p>
Lunch		
14:00-15:30		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation: Report to plenary from the Groups. <p><i>Discussion and approval of recommendations</i></p>
Coffee break		
16:00-18:00	Item 5 Planning for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the objectives, structure and <i>modus operandi</i> during Phase VI. Functionality of the current structure <p><i>Preliminary discussion</i></p>
16 October		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to the Vavilov Institute: genebank facilities, herbarium and Vavilov's memorial museum; • Tour to the State Hermitage Museum
17 October 8:30 - 10:30	Items 5-A, 5-B and 5-C	<p>ECP/GR beyond Phase VI. Looking ahead.</p> <p><i>Points for discussion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5A) Proposal for a sub-group on the strategy for Phase VII (<i>Introduced by M. Smith</i>) • 5B) Complementarity with EU Programmes (<i>Introduced by J. Turok</i>) • 5C) Monitoring of GPA (<i>Introduced by M. Anishetti</i>)
Coffee break		
11:00-12:30	Items 5-D and 5-E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5D) Future membership of ECP/GR (<i>Introduced by L. Maggioni</i>) • 5E) Mode of operation of the Steering Committee
Lunch		
14:00-16:00	Report drafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting and finalizing the Steering Committee recommendations
Coffee break		
16:30-18:00	Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of recommendations • Any other business • Closing remarks
Social dinner		

Appendix VI. List of Participants

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