



Minutes of the 19th ECPGR Executive Committee meeting

13 December 2021
Online (Teams)

Present:

Marianne Lefort (Chair)
Vojtěch Holubec (Czech Republic)
Birgitte Lund (Denmark)
Benvindo Martins Maçãs (Portugal)
Beate Schierscher (Switzerland)
Lorenzo Maggioni (ECPGR Secretariat)

1. Information about the outcome of the GenRes Bridge final meeting in Brussels (30 November – 1 December 2021)

L. Maggioni and M. Lefort informed the ExCo members who were not present in Brussels about the outcome of the various meetings held around the launching event of the Genetic Resources Strategies by the GenRes Bridge project (for reference, see the [minutes of the 18th ExCo meeting](#)).

Regarding plans for lobbying towards the strategies' implementation, it will be important that the current Slovenian Presidency of the EU include genetic resources as a recommendation for priority in its final report. Even though it may be too late to raise the issue at a very high level during the next French Presidency of the EU, the French Ministry of Agriculture will support a specific event on this issue, in coordination with other relevant Ministries. Marianne Lefort, François Lefevre and Coralie Danchin will contact M. Omrani at the French Ministry of Agriculture (contact person for this event) to meet her at the beginning of 2022 and better define the expectations for such an event. INRAE will also support the organization of the event.

V. Holubec informed that the Czech Republic will hold the following EU Presidency, after France. He is already involved in the preparation process and will provide any possible help to raise the case of genetic resources during this period.

The ExCo proposed to organize a webinar at the end of January 2022, to better inform the ECPGR Steering Committee about the PGR Strategy and coordinate possible lobbying with policymakers. This webinar should inform the SC about what happened in Brussels on 30 November and about the ongoing actions, as well as prepare messages to promote further public awareness actions by the member countries. In time for this occasion, the Secretariat should also complete a policy brief (4-page flyer) that could be used for public awareness of national and European policymakers (EU Commission, Parliament, representatives in the EU Council) on the PGR Strategy.

The ExCo agreed that the policy brief could use the text in Section 1 of the PGR Strategy about the need for urgent action and also highlight the importance of raising funds to implement the recommendations in Section 4. These would be essential to enable a transition to a fully functional European system for conserving and using PGR.

The webinar could also be an occasion to inform the SC about the planned preparation of the Mid-Term Steering Committee meeting (see below).

2. Preparation of Mid-Term Steering Committee meeting

The offer made by NordGen to host the ECPGR Mid-Term Steering Committee meeting in Alnarp, Sweden, on 7–9 June 2022, was supported by the ExCo.

The preparatory process was discussed, based on draft elements and a draft agenda prepared by the ExCo Chair with the Secretariat.

The ExCo agreed on the following principles:

- The Mid-Term meeting should look at the progress made so far during Phase X through a report by the Secretariat, without requesting detailed reporting of the National Coordinators or Working Group (WG) Chairs.
- The meeting should look forward to the preparation of Phase XI of ECPGR, taking into account that the PGR Strategy represents the evolution of ECPGR's objectives and that this is the occasion to rethink what kind of structure and mode of operation ECPGR could give itself for optimal effectiveness.
- The ExCo, with the Secretariat, should analyze which components of the PGR Strategy can be embedded into a proposal for Phase XI. This analysis should set priorities and identify the most effective way to achieve targets within reach of the regular ECPGR budget.
- For the preparation of a proposal for Phase XI, it will be important to involve the WG in order to clarify their potential role for the PGR Strategy implementation.
- A meeting between the ExCo and the WG Chairs should be organized around April. A short questionnaire should be prepared for compilation by the Chairs, in advance of the Chairs' meeting. This questionnaire should enable the Chairs to give their pros and cons feedback on ECPGR's current mode of operation and express their expectation about WGs' role for the implementation of the PGR Strategy, as well as the type of support that they expect to receive from ECPGR.
- A preliminary agenda for the SC meeting was accepted by the ExCo, to be circulated to the entire SC for feedback in due time.
- The Secretariat should seek the position and conditions of Bioversity regarding the continuation of hosting the Secretariat during Phase XI.

The following background documents should be prepared for the SC meeting (to be circulated possibly one month in advance):

- Technical and Financial report of the first part of Phase X (Secretariat)
- Report of ExCo activities (ExCo)
- WGs' feedback about the role of WGs for the implementation of the PGR Strategy during Phase XI (Secretariat/ExCo, resulting from Chair's meeting)
- Proposal for priorities in Phase XI and definition of budget lines for the implementation of specific priorities (Secretariat/ExCo)
- Bioversity/others? preliminary offer for hosting arrangements (Bioversity/others?)

Timeline of ExCo/Secretariat actions in preparation for the SC meeting:

Organize meeting with WG Chairs

- January 2022: Agree with WG Chairs on meeting dates and prepare/send questionnaire for the Chairs
- End of February: Receive back the filled-in questionnaire
- March: elaborate preliminary proposal for priorities and activities during Phase XI/Prepare WG Chairs meeting
- April: hold meeting with Chairs and finalize proposal for priorities

Prepare Mid-Term Steering Committee

- Beginning of May: all background documents uploaded on the ECPGR website

3. Revision of BiDifferent proposal

The ExCo had received clarifications from the Wheat WG Chair and the Activity Coordinator of the proposal 'BiDifferent' on 'Binkel wheat', submitted under the Fifth Call for proposals of the Grant Scheme. These clarifications were partly satisfactory, but the ExCo asked the ECPGR Secretary to directly contact the proponents and clarify verbally whether additional accessions (such as from Switzerland) could be used for the evaluation and obtain assurance that all tested accessions would be included in EURISCO and an AEGIS Associate member genebank.

4. Update on replacement of ExCo member from the East sub-region

V. Holubec had been involved in preliminary but not conclusive interactions to identify a possible new member of the ExCo, representing the East region, at the expiration of his term at the beginning of March 2022. The Secretary clarified that the East region is not strictly defined and that the most important point is that countries from the East should feel adequately represented by the new ExCo member. The ExCo suggested V. Holubec ask for volunteers or nominations among the National Coordinators of the Eastern countries and then report back to the ExCo.