



Minutes of the 12th ECPGR Executive Committee meeting

12 December 2018, San Fernando de Henares, Madrid, Spain

Present:

Eva Thörn (Chair)
Marc Lateur (Belgium)
Vojtech Holubec (Czech Republic)
Küllli Annamaa (Estonia)
Flavio Roberto De Salvador (Italy)
Lorenzo Maggioni (ECPGR Secretariat)

Observers:

Jan Engels (ECPGR Secretariat)
Benvindo Maças (Portugal)

The Agenda for this meeting is available online ([here](#))

The ExCo members had attended the Workshop 'Assessing current practices and procedures to strengthen AEGIS', 10-12 December 2018 and met immediately after its end.

1. Evaluation of AEGIS Workshop and next steps

The ExCo members were positively impressed by the outcome of the workshop, noting that many participants had expressed good feelings that progress had been made.

Regarding the 22 Action Points decided by the workshop, the ExCo commented the following, also indicating follow-up needed:

- AP 1: During the preparation of the flow diagram describing the AEGIS implementation process, the Secretariat should take note of the suggestion to describe the flagging procedure with a very clear checklist of maximum ten points. The draft description should be circulated to the ExCo for comments.
- AP 8c: Regarding the de-flagging procedure, it should be made sure that de-flagging takes place always and only after alternative accessions have been flagged. Alternative to de-flagging is to formalize the 'duplicate' accession as a safety-duplicate.
- AP 11: Some lack of clarity remains on what should come first, flagging or AQUAS compliance. The Secretariat will draft the flow diagram as per AP1 (where it will be clarified that flagging comes first, unless the country autonomously decides differently).
- AP 11d: It is not fully clear what kind of capacity building will be required, but it will be up to the requesters to specify their needs.
- AP 15: Apart from France, Spain also informed the ExCo that they hoped to sign soon the AEGIS MoU, either at INIA level, or as a Letter of Intent signed at ministerial level, thus following the French model. Spain aims to include in AEGIS its core collections of apples, cereals and cucurbits.
- AP 18: It was not clear to the ExCo what kind of questions will need to be resolved about non-food/feed uses of AEGIS, but they will be looking forward to the process.
- AP 22: As key points for the letter to be sent to Ministries, the importance of PGR in each country and at European level should be stressed, linking this point to AEGIS and thanking the country for its participation in the system. We should also ask for continuing country support to the Associate Members and for taking action at the EU Council of Ministers level, when relevant.

2. Progress towards implementation of decisions made by the 15th meeting of the Steering Committee

2.1. Structure and Mode of Operation during Phase X

The proposed Mode of Operation of the Working Groups (WGs) and structure of ECPGR during Phase X had been circulated to the Steering Committee (SC) and eventually endorsed, including the establishment of a WG on Maize. The proponents of the Maize WG should be informed about the approval of their proposal. Another proposal to establish a WG on Berries, recently submitted to the Secretariat, was evaluated by the ExCo as good, justified and of relevance for the society as a whole, owing among others to the health benefits of anthocyanins contained by several berries. A request for approval will be sent to the SC.

During the AEGIS workshop, the idea of proposing a new WG on Olive had been informally raised by the Spanish National Coordinator (NC), who indicated the possibility that specific funds might be offered by Spain. The idea received general support, especially from Italy and Portugal, upon consideration of the ongoing *Xylella* threat in Southern Europe. The Spanish NC will be invited to join forces with Italy, Portugal and possibly France and Greece to formulate a specific proposal to the attention of the SC.

The appointment of WG Chairs should take place after a request to the National Coordinators to indicate possible candidates for replacement. Replies received by mid-January will be evaluated by the ExCo for appointment. The remaining Phase IX Chairs will then be approached by the Secretariat to verify their availability to continue in their role. The NCs should also be prompted to nominate contact persons in each WG, when relevant.

2.2. Global Information System

As requested, the Chair of the EURISCO Advisory Group had sent a statement on 31 May 2018 to encourage all the National Focal Points to assign DOIs to their accessions.

2.3. Communication Strategy

A revised version prepared by the Task Force was discussed. A few issues remained pending, such as the motto of the vision and details in the logframe, specifically related to targets, priorities, responsibilities and budget. The ExCo agreed to comment on the existing revised draft by the end of January. A new draft will then be prepared for submission to the SC. Among the priorities to be identified, the preparation for the 40th anniversary of ECPGR in 2020 was mentioned.

3. Information from the Secretariat (GenRes Bridge, ongoing Horizon 2020 initiatives, EVA workshop on Wheat and Barley in Berlin 27-28 November)

The project "GenRes Bridge", recently funded by the EC under the Call SFS 28-2018, will hold its kick-off meeting on 15-17 January 2019 in Rome. The main ambition of the project is the preparation of a European Strategy on Agrobiodiversity, with the support of the three networks (ECPGR, EUFORGEN and EFRP). At the end of the project, the strategy would be offered to the EC for adoption and implementation. Funding received by the Secretariat as part of Genres Bridge should enable to cover part of the ECPGR personnel costs, the costs of some EURISCO training and those of one Steering Committee meeting, to be held end of 2020 or beginning of 2021, at the time of the presentation of the draft strategy by GenRes Bridge to the three networks' Steering Committees.

The Secretariat was invited to join as a partner in various consortia, who are preparing proposals for the Horizon 2020 Call SFS 28-2019: "Genetic resources and pre-breeding communities", with first stage deadline on 23 January 2019. Through its participation in these

projects, the Secretariat aims to promote the ECPGR objectives, possibly raising complementary funds.

The workshop for the establishment of a European Evaluation Network (EVA) on wheat and barley held in Berlin on 27-28 November 2018 was very successful. A number of breeding companies participated and were eventually committed to enter into agreement towards the establishment of EVA. A draft plan of action was prepared, which will be submitted for funding to Germany. External funds should cover coordination, adaptation of EURISCO, multiplication of seed and genotyping, while the evaluation for disease resistance on the same genebank material and on multiple sites in Europe, would be carried out by the breeding companies at their own cost. A second EVA workshop to establish a vegetables-EVA component is planned for March 2019.

4. Budget situation

The level of expected carry-over from Phase IX will vary significantly, depending on the ability of Italy to pay their outstanding two years' dues, while it is not expected that either Azerbaijan or Spain will provide further contributions to Phase IX. A precautionary estimate indicates a carry-over of net € 64 500 from Phase IX to Phase X. It is estimated that GenRes Bridge will provide about € 100 000 in complementary funds to ECPGR. Therefore, in the worst case, a minimum of ca. € 541 700 will be available for WG activities during Phase X (€ 377 200 from the regular budget Phase X + € 64 500 from carry-over Phase IX + € 100 000 from GenRes Bridge). This total is roughly equivalent to 18 WG activities (worth 15k each) plus 361 participants in meetings (16 participants per WG over 23 WGs), over five years.

5. Planning for next call of the Grant Scheme

The preferred dates for the launch of the First Call for proposals under the ECPGR Grant Scheme were mid-February, with deadline mid-May 2019. An ExCo meeting should be planned at the beginning of June for the evaluation of the proposals.

6. Other business

The ExCo discussed to prepare for the replacement of Eva Thörn in the role of ExCo Chair, owing to her wish to step down in the near future. A number of candidates were identified and Eva will start to approach them following an agreed order.

The ExCo extended grateful thanks to Roberto De Salvador for his solid and thoughtful contribution to the Committee in the past four years. Benvindo Maças, Portugal, will replace Roberto in representation of the Southern region in a broad sense, as of 1 January 2019.