



Report of the Steering Committee

Thirteenth Meeting
4-7 December 2012, Vienna, Austria



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Bioversity International is the only global non-profit research organization that places the use and conservation of agricultural biodiversity in smallholder farming systems at the centre of its work. Bioversity is a member of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Consortium, a global association of public and private members to create a food secure future.

Bioversity has its headquarters in Maccarese, near Rome, Italy, with offices in more than 20 other countries worldwide. The international status of Bioversity is conferred under an Establishment Agreement. Financial support for Bioversity's research is provided by more than 150 donors, including governments, private foundations and international organizations. For details of donors and research activities please see Bioversity's Annual Reports, which are available in printed form on request from bioversity-publications@cgiar.org or from Bioversity's Web site (www.bioversityinternational.org).

The European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) is a collaborative programme among most European countries aimed at contributing to national, sub-regional and regional programmes in Europe to rationally and effectively conserve *ex situ* and *in situ* Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and increase their utilization. The Programme, which is entirely financed by the member countries, is overseen by a Steering Committee composed of National Coordinators nominated by the participating countries and a number of relevant international bodies. The Coordinating Secretariat is hosted by Bioversity International. The Programme operates through nine networks in which activities are carried out through a number of permanent working groups or through ad hoc actions. The ECPGR networks deal with either groups of crops (cereals; forages; fruit; oil and protein crops; sugar, starch and fibre crops; vegetables) or general themes related to plant genetic resources (documentation and information; *in situ* and on-farm conservation; inter-regional cooperation). Members of the working groups and other scientists from participating countries carry out an agreed workplan with their own resources as inputs in kind to the Programme.

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Related background documents and presentations can be downloaded from:
http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/steering_committee/13th_sc_meeting.html

Opening session

(Chair: Gert Kleijer)

G. Kleijer, Chair of the Executive Committee, opened the meeting and gave the floor to the host country representative.

Hedwig Wögerbauer, Austrian National Coordinator for ECPGR, welcomed the participants on behalf of Ms Edith Klauser, Head of Department, Agriculture and Nutrition Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austria. She conveyed the sincere wishes of Minister Berlakovich, currently attending the UN Climate Change Conference in Qatar, for the success of the meeting. She was pleased to welcome the participants in the historic building of the former War Ministry at the time of the Habsburg Empire, in the heart of Vienna. She thanked ECPGR for having accepted the invitation to hold the 13th SC meeting in Vienna and the Secretariat for their support to the preparation of the meeting.

Austria has always been an active player in the preservation of agricultural biodiversity at national, European and global levels, in the belief that economic progress and sustainable conservation can be complementary in agriculture.

Austria has established several initiatives to consolidate rural areas such as the Austrian Programme for Environmentally Sensitive Agriculture (ÖPUL). These initiatives are of high importance for a country like Austria with a high proportion of less-favoured areas such as mountain farms, part-time farms and small and medium-sized farms. For example, mountain farming, which is often organic farming, plays a key role in safeguarding a sensitive ecosystem, a multifunctional landscape and the general living and working space. In such context, traditional production methods play an important role for on-farm conservation and sustainable use of traditional varieties and breeds. She was very pleased to welcome Shakeel Bhatti, the Secretary of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), who would present Austrian success stories.

Finally, she wished every success to the meeting and that the coming days in the beautiful city of Vienna could inspire decisions to help ECPGR to become more effective with its new operational structure and hosting arrangements.

G. Kleijer thanked very much the host country and particularly H. Wögerbauer and her staff for the organization of the meeting in Vienna. He brought back the memories of the initial meetings of ECPGR that he had attended in the early 1980s and reflected on the successes of the Programme throughout the years and the challenges ahead. He wished that good decisions for the future structure and mode of operations could be taken, in order to make ECPGR an increasingly effective programme.

The agenda was adopted with a few minor modifications.

ECPGR and the International Treaty

(Chair: Zofia Bulińska-Radomska)

Austrian initiatives and success stories ‘Regions of Delight’ and ‘Living Diversity’

Mr Shakeel Bhatti presented the Austrian initiative ‘Regions of Delight’, a systematic approach among partners of regional food chains to foster *in situ* conservation and biodiversity. As the conservation of genetic resources is promoted through a systematic food chain approach, this concept was applied to a number of rare crops in Austria. Functioning partnerships along the food chain and informed consumers are important aspects and are key requirements for a demand-driven and enhanced cultivation to ensure sustainable conservation and use of genetic resources. This approach was illustrated by the Styrian Pumpkin Seed Oil project based on a local variety that was developed from a soft-coated *Cucurbita pepo* mutant that was found in 1880 and developed into a local variety for edible oil production.

The initiative ‘Regions of Delight’ and its projects contribute directly to the implementation of several Articles of the International Treaty at the national level, including Articles 5.1.c, 6.1, 6.2.c, 6.2.f and 9 and thus cover a broad range of obligations for the implementation of the International Treaty at the national and local levels.

Discussion

In response to a question from Frank Begemann, S. Bhatti clarified that the success stories on the ITPGRFA Web site were examples of initiatives taken by the contracting parties with support from the Treaty to illustrate cases of successful implementation of the Treaty. They do not have a prescriptive nature, but are of an informative nature compiled in a Success Stories Kit, published by the Treaty.

The Treaty Web site is also open to host other initiatives and examples provided by any contracting party as long as there is sufficient material illustrating a clear impact.

Update on the International Treaty and collaboration with ECPGR

S. Bhatti summarized the areas of collaboration with ECPGR over the years, including the joint organization of inter-regional workshops in Uganda and Turkey, dedicated to the implementation of the Treaty. Collaboration with European countries regarded the development of the Easy-SMTA (Standard Multilateral Transfer Agreement), the design of the IT system and the provision of case studies on the methodology of inclusion of PGRFA in the Multilateral System (MLS).

The Easy-SMTA was developed to assist users with compiling and generating SMTAs and reporting on SMTAs concluded. It is a voluntary tool that combines SMTA generating and reporting functions. The system has a new design and workflow that guides users in a step-by-step process that is intuitive and easy to use. It is mainly dedicated to small and medium-size SMTA users/providers.

An ITPGRFA-supported international training course on contemporary approaches to genetic resources conservation and use is being organized by the Wageningen University in April-May 2013. This course is devoted to analyzing plant genetic resources policies and their impact on conservation and use. It aims to support policy-makers and other stakeholders in the implementation of ITPGRFA in their own national context.

The Treaty’s Benefit-sharing Fund, supporting projects aimed at smallholder farmers in developing countries who conserve and sustainably use plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), has completed two cycles of approval of project proposals, mainly

supported by European countries (Ireland, Italy, Spain, Norway and Switzerland). A third cycle is being planned thanks to the support of the EC with 5 M €. The target areas of the first two cycles of benefit sharing overlap largely with the Vavilovian Centres of origin of crop plants and with the "Hunger Map".

Implementation of Article 6 on sustainable use of the Treaty is being carried out through the development of a programme of work that will be based on elements generated by a stakeholder consultation process. A Toolbox on sustainable use of PGRFA will also be developed in order to assist Contracting Parties with their implementation of Article 6.

At the political level, a second High-level Round Table was convened in June 2012, co-organized by Brazil, Norway and Italy, in the margins of the United Nations-Rio+20 summit. The focus of the discussions was on the interactions between economy, biodiversity and food security and on potential monetary and non-monetary benefits from PGRFA. The round table was concluded with the adoption of the Rio Six-Point Action Plan by the represented countries.

Discussion

Miodrag Dimitrijević asked whether benefit-sharing funds might be incompatible with the World Trade organization (WTO) recommendations to reduce subsidies in agriculture and whether projects involving the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) might be supported by the Fund.

S. Bhatti replied that both monetary benefit-sharing and the sustainable use programme of work are resources provided in the context of the benefit-sharing legal and policy framework. Therefore, they are acknowledged to be in support of sustainable use of biodiversity and of fair and equitable sharing of benefits. They will therefore not be perceived as subsidies and no criticism is expected regarding trade distorting effects.

The GMO issue was raised in one specific case of a proposal involving GMOs for the South Pacific that was submitted during the second project cycle. The Panel of Experts in that occasion took the view that such a project would not be accorded priority.

Considering the relationship between the Treaty and the European region, Bert Visser asked what the Treaty Secretariat could do to help ensure that more European accessions are included within the MLS by all European countries. Moreover, since the initiative for A European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS) will use the SMTA also for Non-Annex I crops, he asked what the view of the Secretariat on this is.

S. Bhatti commended the leading role of European countries in including material in the MLS. He acknowledged that it required a huge amount of work within the countries to make this possible. The Treaty Secretariat could produce case studies on this success and make the information available. To make further progress, work needs to be dedicated on a case-by-case basis with country focal points, explaining that material can be easily notified. Countries do require time. The approach taken by some countries of applying the same SMTA for all material is effective, efficient, and entirely at the discretion of each country. He also thought that providing access to Non-Annex I material according to the same terms and conditions of the SMTA is paving the way to prepare the ground for future discussions on expanding the list of MLS crops. With its approach, he thought that AEGIS is forward-looking and far-sighted.

H. Wögerbauer asked how the issue of widening the MLS could be put on the agenda of the next Governing Body, considering that this item would generate a lot of tension.

S. Bhatti said that it would not be an initiative of the Secretariat to make proposals for the agenda, which rather depends on the initiative of the contracting parties. His personal perception however is that it is now becoming possible to start discussions on such an issue, which was not the case some time ago. The reason of this 'de-sensitization' of the problem was probably due to the fact that countries have started to acknowledge that the Treaty is having good effects on many aspects.

Julian Jackson asked if it would be possible to use the Easy-SMTA for Non-Annex I crops and whether Mr Bhatti was aware of any detractors of the concept in the Rio+20 Action Plan on expansion of Annex I.

S. Bhatti replied that it was entirely feasible and that its use would be at the discretion of the user for Non-Annex I crops. Regarding the processing of the data, it is possible to deactivate the reporting clause for Non-Annex I material. Regarding concerns about the Rio+20 Action Plan, he had not heard or received any formal concerns or reservations. He had only heard that a few countries in one region had shown some reluctance, but this was never formally or explicitly articulated.

Z. Bulińska-Radomska asked what would be the appropriate way to distribute genebank material to the farmers for direct use, including for commercial purposes.

F. Begemann reported that each country could formulate the rules whereby this material can be made available. In the case of Germany, the providers are recommended to sign a simple paper where the recipients commit not to use the material for breeding, capacity building or research purposes and not to lend it to third parties for those purposes. However, it should be noted that it is not a function of the genebank to propagate germplasm material for the users.

S. Bhatti concurred with F. Begemann that this issue can be dealt with at the national level. The Ad Hoc Advisory Group on the SMTA also considered the transfer for direct cultivation and came to the same conclusion, with no distinction between direct use and commercial cultivation. When the material is transferred for cultivation rather than for breeding, research or training, this is the final step of the chain of transferring genetic resources and thus, the provisions can be left to national discretion.

Report on Phase VIII

(Chair: Alvina Avagyan)

Report of the ExCo Chair

(G. Kleijer)

See presentation.

Technical and financial report of Phase VIII

(Lorenzo Maggioni)

See background document.

Discussion – financial status

F. Begemann suggested clarifying the financial situation regarding the likelihood of receiving outstanding contributions from those countries that did not pay their fees for Phase VIII in order to get to a reliable bottom-line figure.

A. Avagyan requested the representatives of countries with outstanding contributions who were present in the meeting to indicate their expectation for the payment of the outstanding fees by their countries.

Armenia	Significant changes at Ministerial level indicate that it is unlikely to receive the contributions very soon.
Belgium	A technical problem is expected to be solved rather quickly.
France	A new law on genetic resources has paved the way towards a Ministerial decision about the formalization of the French commitment for ECPGR and therefore there are good expectations that the contributions will be paid regularly.
Georgia	The agreement to participate in ECPGR had been made by the National Academy of Science, which recently lost its administrative power. The responsibility was passed on to the Ministry of Education and Science and the National Coordinator will take steps to ensure that the government pays the contributions.
Hungary	Information will be provided.
Israel	The Ministry of Agriculture is in the process of paying the most recent dues. Regarding outstanding contributions dating back to the years before 2010, the responsibility belonged then to the Ministry of Science and the National Coordinator is trying to clarify the situation.
Serbia	There have been technical delays, but these will be resolved.
Spain	There have been technical delays, but the payments are being processed.
Ukraine	Part of the outstanding contributions is in the process of being transferred to ECPGR.

L. Maggioni added information that he received from Sergey Alexanian, Russian Federation, indicating that since joining Phase VIII, three Ministers of Agriculture have replaced each other, together with their deputies and support staff. The current Russian Ministry of Agriculture let him know that he was interested in paying the contributions and joining Phase IX. However, the current problem will not be resolved very quickly. Such situations may be avoided in the future only when the Law on Genetic Collections will be adopted. The draft law is being prepared by the N.I. Vavilov Research Institute for Plant Industry (VIR) together with the Department of Science, Ministry of Agriculture. This will be presented to the Government in early December. If their decision is positive, the proposed law will be passed to the State Duma for ratification in 2013.

A. Tan suggested finding a solution to the problem of outstanding contributions and countries continuing to benefit from the country quota and other ECPGR funds. It was clarified by G. Kleijer that the draft "Rules of procedures", to be discussed later in the meeting, include such a provision.

Discussion – technical report

B. Visser commented that progress of AEGIS had been slow, considering that only 143 accessions have been included in the European Collection so far and suggested that it might be necessary to re-convene the AEGIS Advisory Group and ask this Group to prepare an “AEGIS campaign” to speed up this process and establish clear indicators of performance and milestones that should be reached.

L. Maggioni appreciated the suggestion and explained that AEGIS had not progressed as quickly as expected because the inherent process that is built in the AEGIS mechanism of selecting European Collection accessions foresees that several steps need to be completed and decisions need to be taken by the Working Groups (WGs) and National Coordinators (NCs) before the accessions can be finally designated. This process is inevitably slow and it is also often hampered by the lack of quality data in the databases.

F. Begemann remarked that AEGIS intends to propose quality material and related information and therefore a more accurate selection of the material to be included in the European Collection is required, compared to the decision of which material to include in the MLS. The scenario is complex and the procedure is logical and very complicated. For many of the minor species ECPGR currently does not have WGs to oversee the selection process. He also suggested that other countries might consider following the German approach of offering unique material in its genebanks to AEGIS. Although we can try to make it less complicated, we should not abandon the vision that the European Collection should include only quality material, he argued. He also indicated that milestones of progress should be those to be indicated in the logframe of the ECPGR Objectives.

Petra Engel commented that Italy is in the process of verifying the possibility to comply with the AEGIS commitments signing the MOU. In principle there should be a positive conclusion, especially since many WG members are already actively engaged in the identification of candidate European Accessions.

B. Visser wished to remark that EC project funds will be essential for the future of ECPGR and therefore it might be beneficial to undertake an in-depth analysis of the negative results of the submission by the Secretariat of project proposals for funding under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). He suggested that possibly the Task Force on the EU-ECPGR relationship might be the best body to carry out this work.

F. Begemann thought that the reasons for unsuccessful submission were not the lack of fitness of the project proposal with the existing rules of the FP7 funding scheme but rather that the evaluators of the proposals were not familiar with the PGR domain and were probably not able to fully understand the issues. We should encourage more PGR experts to become members of the EC evaluation panels.

F. Begemann suggested that, starting from Phase IX, technical reports should present achievements against the ECPGR logframe outputs and activities.

Jens Weibull expressed uneasiness regarding the EURISCO and Central Crop Databases relationship. He would support a meeting to address this issue.

F. Begemann reported his experience of a meeting with National Inventory and Central Crop Database (CCDB) Managers, which was very useful. He reiterated that the ECPGR vision paper on information management puts the focus on the development of crop portals.

He supported the suggestion to have such a meeting and to provide examples of transferring the concept as outlined in the vision paper. He suggested sending the vision paper to all WGs.

Z. Bulińska-Radomska referred to the significant time requirements of information managers on EURISCO and ECCDBs and that these were voluntary contributions.

ECPGR Operational Structure

(Chair: G. Kleijer)

Task Force proposals

(B. Visser)

B. Visser presented the proposal made by the Task Force (see background document and presentation).

Secretariat's comment

(L. Maggioni)

L. Maggioni presented the comments from the Secretariat to the proposal made by the Task Force (see background document and presentation).

ExCo synthesis and proposal

(J. Weibull)

J. Weibull presented a proposal for the operational structure, as a synthesis of the Task Force proposal, Secretariat's comments and ExCo analysis (see presentation).

The meeting split in four groups to discuss the proposal made for the operational structure. Each group was chaired by an ExCo member.

J. Jackson reported the results of the four groups and the following decisions were made:

Recommendation 1

To maintain the WGs structure, to dissolve the Networks and to establish a process for the revision of the scope and number of WGs (expected to be in the range of 15-20). Proposals from NCs, offering inputs to the revision process should be submitted to the ExCo by the end of February 2013.

Recommendation 2

To maintain a country quota system (to be defined) and to establish pools of experts per Working Group, from which members can be drawn to organize and implement specified activities. (The criteria for the fields of expertise need to be specified).

Recommendation 3

- WG Chairs, in consultation with WG members, will take the initiative for proposing certain activities they have identified and prioritized for their own WG workplan, in addition to requests to the WGs to undertake activities from the part of the SC.

- Unless justified otherwise, it is recommended to limit participation to 12 members per activity (self-funded participation is allowed).
- Encourage WGs to include capacity building activities and mechanisms.

Recommendation 4

To establish an additional function for the Chair of a WG, i.e. the Chair to propose, after consultation of the Secretariat, members of the WG for a specified activity, taking into account the available expertise. On behalf of the Chair, the Secretariat will consult the NCs and seek their endorsement of the proposed membership. The ExCo will take a decision if no agreement can be reached. Terms of References (ToRs) of WG Chairs need to be prepared by the ExCo (April 2013).

Recommendation 5

To request the WG members to state an “expression of interest”, pledging their commitment and enabling accountability regarding the performance of an activity to which they can be or have been selected. A simple template for Expressions of Interests and a flow chart-explanatory document should be prepared by ExCo/Secretariat.

Recommendation 6

To facilitate bottom-up WG initiatives to undertake activities throughout the Phase, responding to the ECPGR logframe outcomes. This is to be implemented by reserving part of the ECPGR budget for such activities, in addition to activities requested by the SC.

Recommendation 7

To invite NCs to nominate representatives of the broader user community for the WG pools, and to reflect this in the ToRs for the definition of the WGs’ pools of experts.

Recommendation 8

The SC is suggested to consider the establishment of a Task Force that considers how the engagement of users in ECPGR activities can be enhanced. The mandate for this Task Force should be proposed by a small group (Bela Bartha, Jens Weibull, Pascal Coquin and Marc Lateur) at the latest by the end of January 2013.

Recommendation 9

The SC members should communicate with the stakeholders in their country about optimal engagement of the country in ECPGR activities and about the use or application of outputs produced by ECPGR activities (to be reflected in revised ToRs of NCs).

Recommendation 10

To maintain the current functions and responsibilities of the Secretariat, but giving more emphasis to the joint effort with the ExCo and the SC for a lobbying and fund-raising function, without reducing the Secretariat’s supporting function to WG activities.

Recommendation 11

To revise the ToRs of the ExCo Chair, i.e. strengthening the ambassadorial function of this position, and to provide an operational budget line to support travel and part-time activity.

The new proposed operating structure consists of:

- **Steering Committee** (one NC per country)
- **Executive Committee** (composed of a Chair and four NCs with sub-regional representation – the leader of the ExCo takes the role of “ECPGR Ambassador” and maintains the supervision of the Secretariat.
- **Secretariat**
- **Working Groups (number to be defined)**
 - WGs are composed of pools of experts proposed by the NCs, on the basis of their expertise and/or interest.
 - WGs carry out activities mandated by the SC or proposed by the WG and approved by the SC (or ExCo).
 - Activities are carried out with a budget that, unless justified, should not exceed € 15 000 per activity and that can be used for various activities including meetings. Activities can also be carried out jointly by more than one WG. Unless justified otherwise, it is recommended to limit participation to 12 members per activity.
 - Participants in an activity are selected on the basis of an “expression of interest”, where the potential participants indicate their commitment.
 - Selection of the participants for an activity is made by the WG Chair from the established WG pools, after consultation with the Secretariat and in collaboration with the NCs who are consulted for endorsement. In case of objections by a NC, the ExCo will take final decisions.
 - Proposals for activities will be evaluated and approved every 6 months by ExCo. Proposals should indicate objectives, outputs, budget and active partners with their roles.
 - Normally each WG cannot carry out more than one activity per year, i.e. not spend more than € 15 000 per year.
 - Outputs of activities are circulated to the entire relevant WG(s) for information and comments.
 - A listserv should be established for the WG Chairs to communicate across WGs.
- **Task Forces:** as established by the SC or the ExCo.

Tender for hosting ECPGR Secretariat/EURISCO

(Chair: G. Kleijer)

A. Avagyan presented the bids received for hosting the ECPGR Secretariat and EURISCO, as well as the evaluation of the bids by the ExCo. Two bids (Global Crop Diversity Trust and Bioversity) were received for hosting the Secretariat and three bids for hosting EURISCO (Global Crop Diversity Trust, Bioversity and Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK)). The offer from the Trust proposed splitting of responsibilities, the Trust as contracting party hosting the Secretariat and managing the financial arrangements, the Centre for Genetic Resources, The Netherlands, sub-contractor supervising the strategic planning, community development and communication and the Nordic Genetic Resource Center, sub-contractor, developing and hosting the technical components of EURISCO.

The evaluation by the ExCo, based on the requested requirements and the detailed offer items, showed the high quality of all the bids and highlighted the differences between the bids, and that the overall scoring resulted in negligible difference.

The SC felt they lacked sufficient information about the bids for hosting the Secretariat to take a final decision during this meeting. It was noted that it would be possible to host EURISCO independently from the Secretariat. It was decided that the ExCo Chair would provide all the NCs with a copy of the bids before 12 December as well as the budget proposal including the costs requested by the hosting institutes. The SC decided to request additional information from the bidders on 1) their view of the future role of ECPGR, 2) what would be seen as synergies with ECPGR that could be generated through the hosting institute, and an additional question to the bidders for hosting the Secretariat on 3) how they can assure the visibility of ECPGR. The ExCo Chair will contact the bidders and provide them also with a copy of the evaluation of all the bids carried out by the ExCo.

Based on this additional information and on the bids as received before 20 November 2012, the ExCo will make a well-founded proposal for the hosting institute for the Secretariat and the hosting institute for EURISCO by the end of January 2013. The NCs will have the possibility to comment on the ExCo proposal and inform the ExCo Chair before the end of February 2013. The ExCo is mandated by the SC to take the final decision and inform the NCs by the end of March 2013.

Miscellaneous items

(Chair: Fernando Latorre)

Legal status of ECPGR

F. Latorre introduced the topic and provided a summary of the report prepared by Gerald Moore (see presentation and background documents).

Discussion and decision

B. Visser thought that ECPGR should retain the current status and not go under the burden of obtaining a legal status. He suggested looking for other opportunities to obtain more visibility and to have a clear own identity.

G. Kleijer agreed that it would be most convenient to keep the current status. The problem remains that the external review indicated that ECPGR should be made more visible. This objective could be obtained through negotiation with the host (such as using its own logo).

Rules of procedures, Terms of Reference of ExCo and of the ExCo Chair

The Rules of procedures, ToRs of ExCo and of the ExCo Chair were discussed and approved (See Annexes I, II and III).

The SC considered that it would be important to guarantee continuity to the work initiated by the current ExCo until the new mode of operation of ECPGR would be finalized. Therefore, the SC invited G. Kleijer to continue in its function of ExCo Chair and agreed that this part time activity should be compensated through an additional budget line. The ToRs of the ExCo were revised to accommodate this change.

The SC requested that the Secretariat should compile all the existing and new Terms of Reference in one single document and verify their overall consistency.

Relationship with the EU (introduction)

F. Latorre introduced the topic, provided an historical overview and summarized the strategy paper on the ECPGR relationship with the European Union/European Commission. (For the strategy paper, see presentation and background documents).

Discussion

J. Jackson requested some clarifications on the section related to *in situ* conservation.

F. Begemann replied that ECPGR needs clear concepts on both *in situ* and on-farm conservation and that these concepts should be developed for subsequent approval by the SC.

B. Bartha wanted to confirm that two concepts will be developed and that ECPGR should also consult with other stakeholders. The SC confirmed that this would be the case.

Paul Freudenthaler stressed the need to lobby with 'one voice' and to actively support the concepts in Brussels.

P. Coquin suggested using the status and relationship of the European Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) with the EU as an example of organizing the PGRFA interests in Europe. However, we should be aware of the potential risk that such an approach might create members with a different status. He suggested that we should not proceed with the inclusion of a 'legal hook for the *ex situ* conservation' in the European seed legislation that is currently being developed.

M. Lateur thought that the ExCo should take action to assess the way the EPPO relates to member states and what we can learn from them. He also stated that we need to take action as proposed by the Task Force and that ExCo would be well placed to lead this process.

F. Latorre suggested continuing the mapping exercise that the Task Force initiated on areas of common interest in the EU/EC and ECPGR with respect to bodies and programmes in the EU and identifying opportunities for our work on PGRFA. He stated that there are a number of key words and concepts such as climate change, food security, sustainable agriculture and others across a range of programmes and fora in the EU that do not identify a role of PGRFA. He suggested ECPGR consider developing concept notes on these linkages.

Z. Bulińska-Radomska expressed her concern that ECPGR is not being recognized by the EU/EC and that we should address and resolve this, possibly by being more assertive.

F. Latorre noted that the ExCo Chair is our ambassador and he should play an active role in strengthening the links with Brussels; the NCs are also encouraged to contribute to the strengthening of our links with the EU.

B. Visser pleaded for a continuation of the Task Force as further steps have to be taken to follow up the recommendations of the Task Force. ExCo cannot be requested to take up these responsibilities. He favours the establishment of a new Task Force on relationship with the EU/EC.

F. Begemann indicated that the strategy paper shows entry points to Brussels. As the individual issues are very different, they require actions at very different entry points. For

this we do not need a Task Force, but split the tasks and assign them on the basis of priorities to individuals or bodies and thus start implementing the strategy. ExCo is well positioned to develop a concrete action plan and to propose a time frame for their implementation. A number of actions such as the development of concepts on *in situ* and on-farm conservation can already be undertaken without further delay.

B. Bartha expressed concern to proceed in an isolated manner, in particular on the *in situ* and on-farm concepts. There is a need to involve partners outside the ECPGR networks in the preparation and thus to show that there is a system of collaboration.

M. Lateur suggested assigning the preparation of these two concepts to the respective Network and to build on the activities included in the logframe.

B. Visser said that there is a risk of overloading the agenda of ExCo, therefore it would be helpful to have a Task Force. Such a body could also help the *In situ* Network to prepare the concept notes and to help the ExCo Chair to prepare visits to Brussels.

G. Kleijer suggested to leave the decision up to the ExCo whether they can live up to the tasks or to create a Task Force.

Decision

The SC appreciated the document and approved its recommendations.

Objectives of ECPGR

(Chair: J. Weibull)

J. Weibull gave a background description of the ECPGR logframe of goals, objectives, outcomes and outputs that were developed during the 12th Steering Committee Meeting in Bratislava (December 2010). While the document has been circulated electronically among the National Coordinators and the WG Chairs during 2011, the logframe has not yet been fully completed. In particular, the logframe will need to include additional indicators in order for the SC to fully evaluate programme development and progress. The SC discussed the process in order to complete the logframe during the remaining year of Phase VIII, and considered the option to also include capacity building as an objective of its own. On the latter issue the SC concluded that the aspect of capacity building is already harnessed within the existing objectives.

The SC decided to establish a small group consisting of the AEGIS coordinator, the ExCo (represented by J. Weibull), the Coordinators of the *In situ* and On-farm and of the Documentation and Information Networks, respectively, and the Secretariat. B. Visser and M. Lateur volunteered to take part in the work. The group, who will operate through e-mail correspondence, will complete their work by the end of 2013. A finalized draft logframe will be circulated to the SC for final approval. The SC also decided to follow-up on the objectives at the mid-term Meeting during Phase IX.

Budget for Phase IX

(Chair: J. Weibull)

The discussion on the ECPGR budget for the remainder of Phase VIII (2013) and Phase IX was introduced by J. Weibull. He drew the attention to a few essential components, including the tentative carry-over from Phase VIII to Phase IX, and the outstanding contributions of some countries – for Phase VII as well as for Phase VIII. He also raised the issue on whether an annual adjustment of 2% for inflation could be considered for Phase IX. He concluded that establishing the budget for Phase IX was intimately linked to the outcome of the decision on the tender.

The proposed budget for 2013 was approved on the assumption of incoming contributions and with the addition of a new budget line for remunerating the ExCo Chair, as concluded in the approved Terms of References for that position (see Annex IV). The SC furthermore decided not to accept an adjustment for inflation that had been proposed for Phase IX.

Due to the fact that the updated UN Assessment scale, applied on the budget for Phase IX, suggested significant increases of the annual contribution for several ECPGR Member States, a reappraisal of the current ECPGR contributions was requested. Two proposals were presented to the SC:

- Option 1: the original budget as presented in the background documents, adjusted for country contributions not likely to be provided (€ 533 000 per annum) and without inflationary increase.
- Option 2: an alternative budget based on the budget for Phase VIII – with revised contribution categories – adjusted for country contributions not likely to be provided (€ 510 000 per annum).

Wrap-up and decisions about the budget

(Chair: G. Kleijer)

The NCs expressed their preference for the alternative budget (option 2), with revised contribution categories (see Annex V). In the case of Germany, no objections were made to option 2, with the understanding that the national Parliament would also have to approve it. Also in the case of Spain option 2 was preferred, but it was not possible to guarantee the payments at this stage.

It was agreed that a letter explaining the need and the reasons for an increased budget, which was being requested by several countries, should accompany the invitation to join Phase IX of ECPGR. The letter should also elaborate on the value of the collaborative Programme and its expected benefits for PGRFA conservation and use in Europe.

The SC realized that a budget of € 510 000 per annum would severely limit the possibility to implement the new mode of operation with regard to the Working Group activities.

Additional sources of funds would therefore need to be raised by various means:

1. The selection of the hosting arrangement will require giving priority to the financial consequences of the choice to be made.

2. Voluntary contributions will be sought from member countries, as part of the letter of invitation to join Phase IX. These contributions could be targeted to specific types of activities (1-AEGIS, 2-EURISCO, 3-Capacity development of the Working Groups' activities) or contribute without restrictions to the budget line for Working Group activities. It was noted that an incentive should be given to countries offering voluntary contributions possibly in the form of country quota and the ExCo was given the mandate to keep this aspect in mind when they propose a suitable country quota mechanism for ECPGR operations.
3. A revision of the budget, including the amount of the country contributions, could be considered at mid-term, depending on the financial status of the Programme and the evolving economic situation in Europe. This possibility should be indicated in the Letter of Agreement to join the Programme. The ExCo received the mandate to analyse the situation during 2015 and decide on the feasibility of proposing revised country contributions for the last two years of Phase IX.

Conclusion

Report of the meeting

The NCs were given the opportunity to read the draft report at the end of the meeting and this was then adopted with a few modifications.

It was also agreed that the future reports should be limited to a summary of the issues discussed and of clarifications given, with a separate chapter including all the decisions. Such a shorter report should be prepared for adoption by the SC at the end of the meeting.

Any other business

Thorsteinn Tomasson announced that this was his last meeting and remembered when he became introduced to PGR during a visit to Iceland by Erna Bennet. At that time (late 1970s) she was engaged in a tour aiming to convince the European countries to take part in the establishment of ECPGR.

The delegates thanked Thorsteinn for his contribution to ECPGR, indicating that he will be missed in the Steering Committee.

Thanks were given to G. Kleijer for his decision to accept extending his period as ExCo Chair for another two years and he was offered a book of personal memories "On the origin of ECPGR".

The Austrian MoU for membership to AEGIS was presented to the Secretariat, making Austria the 33rd member country.

Closing remarks

G. Kleijer concluded the meeting with the positive note that important decisions had been made, especially regarding the new operational structure which was completely defined. Unfortunately it had not been possible to take a decision about hosting arrangements and concerns remained regarding the budget for Phase IX. He thought that the Programme had proven its value throughout the years and made important progress and alluded to the risk of wasting 30 years of efforts and results, if an adequate budget would eventually not be secured through various ways to raise resources.

He then wished to thank a certain number of persons, starting with Ms H. Wögerbauer and her staff for the excellent organization of the meeting, access to facilities and enjoyable social dinner. The study tour to Klosterneuburg had also been very interesting. He also thanked the ExCo members for the work done over the last two years and especially for the preparation of the options paper and of this SC meeting. He thanked the SC members for their constructive and friendly participation in the meeting. Special thanks were addressed to all the staff of the Secretariat who offered continuous and effective support, which was unaffected by the stressed conditions over the last two years, due to the uncertainty of the future location of the Secretariat. Finally, he mentioned the pleasure being in contact with and meeting the ECPGR people, which was an important aspect of the Programme's success.

Annex I. Rules of procedures of the ECPGR

The European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) is a collaborative Programme among most European countries aiming at ensuring the long-term conservation and facilitating the increased utilization of plant genetic resources in Europe.

• Rule 1. Membership

1. Membership of ECPGR is open to countries in the European region.
2. Full membership is granted following signature of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the country and the Director of the hosting institute of the Secretariat for the respective Phase.
3. Associate membership is open to eligible countries in the process of becoming full members.
4. The Membership fee is calculated using the UN Scale of Assessments.
5. Each member country will designate a National Coordinator (NC) who is also member of the Steering Committee (SC).
6. Each member country has a participation quota, based on the level of membership fee for attending meetings organized by ECPGR.
7. In case of non-payment of (the) outstanding membership fee(s) for 2 calendar years the member country will lose the right to use any ECPGR funds and the right to vote as long as the contributions have not been paid. A 3-months advance notice of this occurrence will be sent to the implementing agency having signed the Letter of Agreement (LoA) (NC in copy).

• Rule 2. Structure

The operational structure of ECPGR during Phase IX and onwards will be elaborated by the SC. Any change to this operational structure must be approved by the SC.

• Rule 3. Secretariat

1. The Head of the Secretariat of ECPGR shall be the ECPGR Secretary. The ECPGR Secretary shall act in that capacity in all meetings of ECPGR.
2. The ECPGR Secretary shall provide and direct the staff required by ECPGR.
3. The ECPGR Secretary is nominated by the Steering Committee of ECPGR.

• Rule 4. Meetings

1. The Steering Committee of ECPGR will meet at least once every two and a half years. All members of the Steering Committee and Focal Persons of Associate Members are invited to attend these meetings.
2. Meetings of Working Groups, Task Forces and other bodies will be organized when necessary and based on the availability of funds.
3. No such meetings should be held during the period of three months before and after a Steering Committee meeting.

• Rule 5. Agenda and documents for the Steering Committee meetings

1. The Executive Committee shall prepare a provisional agenda, subject to approval by the Steering Committee at the beginning of each meeting.

2. Any Member of the Steering Committee of ECPGR may request the Executive Committee to consider inclusion of specific items in the Provisional Agenda.
3. The Provisional Agenda shall be circulated by the ECPGR Secretary at least two months in advance of the session to Members of the Steering Committee, Associate Members and Observers.
4. Documents to be submitted to the Steering Committee at any meeting should be provided by the Executive Committee to the Members of the Steering Committee, Associate Members and Observers one month in advance of the session.

- **Rule 6. Decision-making procedure**

1. During its meetings, the SC shall make every effort to reach agreement on all matters by consensus. If all efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted and no agreement has been reached, subject to paragraph 2, the decision shall, as the last resort, be taken by a two-thirds majority of the Members of the SC present and voting. The SC can only take decisions with a quorum of two thirds of the Members.
2. Notwithstanding paragraph 1, all decisions concerning financial and budgetary matters involving amounts larger than € 5000, shall be taken by consensus.
3. Decisions of the SC can also be taken by electronic means when deemed necessary. Any decisions taken by electronic means shall be taken by consensus. In the case of decisions taken by electronic means a lack of response, in a fixed period of time, shall be interpreted to mean that the issue at stake/proposal is accepted.

- **Rule 7. Associate Members and Observers**

The SC may invite Associate Members and observers to attend the meetings of the SC. Observers can be permanent or can be invited for a specific SC meeting. Associate Members and Observers do not have the right to vote.

- **Rule 8. Reports**

1. Before closing each Meeting, the SC of ECPGR shall approve a meeting report.
2. The report of the SC of ECPGR shall be circulated by the Secretariat to all Members of the SC, Associate Members and Observers and will be made available on the ECPGR Web site.

- **Rule 9. Language**

The official language of ECPGR is English.

- **Rule 10. Expenses**

Expenses incurred by representatives of Members of the SC for their participation in sessions of the SC, shall be borne by ECPGR.

- **Rule 11. Amendments and suspension of the rules**

1. Amendment of or additions to these Rules may be adopted by consensus, provided that not less than 6 weeks' notice of the proposal for amendment or addition has been given. Proposals for such amendments or additions should be submitted to the ECPGR Secretary.
2. Any of the above Rules may be suspended by consensus, provided that not less than a 6 weeks' notice of the proposal for suspension has been given.

Annex II. Terms of Reference of the ECPGR Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee consists of a Chair, appointed by the Steering Committee (SC) on his/her personal capacity, four members of the Steering Committee, elected by the SC for a 5-year term of office and representing the European sub-regions (North, West, East and South, in a broad sense), and ex officio the ECPGR Secretary who will be without voting rights. To ensure continuity, one member of the Executive Committee is replaced by a new member on an annual basis. A re-election is possible only after a break-period of 5 years.
2. The Executive Committee proposes each year a new member of the same sub-region as that of the outgoing member, in consultation with the SC. This member will be elected by the SC.
3. The Executive Committee plans or executes the activities of ECPGR as decided upon by the SC.
4. The Executive Committee prepares the SC meetings supported by the ECPGR Secretariat.
5. The Executive Committee identifies strategic issues important for ECPGR and brings proposals to the attention of the SC.
6. The Executive Committee mandates the Secretariat to carry out its decisions, offers guidance to the Secretariat and the Chair assumes the technical supervision of the ECPGR Secretary.
7. The Executive Committee establishes short-term Task Forces (TFs) for well-defined topics as required and develops their Terms of Reference (ToRs). These TFs can be composed of one to five experts. The TFs report directly to the Executive Committee or may also report to the SC if so requested by the Executive Committee.
8. The Executive Committee reports on its activities and outputs to the Steering Committee at each Steering Committee meeting.
9. The Executive Committee members, especially the Chair, represent ECPGR externally, including to the EU and other relevant international and European organizations and assure the good visibility of ECPGR.
10. The Chair of the Executive Committee coordinates fund-raising activities of ECPGR
11. The Executive Committee will meet when necessary. The decision to meet must be taken by the Executive Committee members on the proposal of the Chair. The minutes of these meetings will be sent to the members of the SC as appropriate.
12. The travel and lodging costs of the Executive Committee meetings will be covered by the ECPGR budget and are subject to available funds.
13. The Executive Committee can deal with financial issues up to € 5000 each, without approval of the Steering Committee.
14. Decisions of the Executive Committee are made by consensus and can also be taken by electronic means when it is deemed necessary to do so.

Annex III. Items for the Terms of Reference of the ECPGR Secretary

1. Develops his activities under the responsibility and in close collaboration with the ExCo and the Steering Committee.
2. Prepares the budget and is responsible for the financial affairs.
3. Reports annually to the ExCo and the SC on activities carried out within the Programme framework.
4. Assists to the Steering Committee meetings without the right to vote.

Annex IV. Agreed budget for 2013 expenditures for ExCo Chair, Crop Networks and Thematic Networks (in €)

Budget item	Expenditure in €
ExCo Chair Operation	15,000
Crop Networks	
Cereals Network	
Wheat precise stocks conservation project	4,000
<i>Avena</i> ad hoc meeting [AEGIS activities]	10,000
Forages Network	0
Oil and Protein Crops Network	
Grain Legumes WG meeting 2013 Novi Sad	17,750
Fruit Network	
Fruit Database development and maintenance	6,624
<i>Prunus</i> ad hoc meeting [AEGIS activities]	10,000
Fruit-related activities	5,000
Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops Network	
Monitoring of genetic reserve <i>Beta patula</i>	5,000
NCG meeting for project preparation	6,135
Vegetables Network	
Cucurbits develop algorithms safety-duplicates	825
Solanaceae develop algorithms safety-duplicates	4,920
Solanaceae safety-duplication	2,920
Garlic project	9,800
Umbellifers - Wild relatives project	7,840
Leafy vegetables project	7,840
Umbellifers WG meeting 2013 St Petersburg	12,227
Cucurbits safety-duplication in National Programmes	5,365
Leafy Vegetables meeting	13,520
Total Crop Networks	129,766
Thematic Networks	
<i>In situ</i> and On-farm Conservation Network	0
Documentation and Information Network	
Inter-regional Workshop IT	8,415
NCG meeting 2013	3,280
Inter-regional Cooperation Network	
Inter-regional workshops on IT implementation	15,000
Total Thematic Networks	26,695
GRAND TOTAL	171,461

Annex V. ECPGR annual contributions during Phase IX (2014-2018)

a. List of countries with expected commitment

Country	UN rates (%) ⁽¹⁾	Category ⁽²⁾	Proposed annual contribution (Phase IX) (in €)	Difference from Phase VIII
Montenegro	0.004	A	2,750	0
Macedonia (FYR)	0.007	A	2,750	0
Albania	0.010	A	2,750	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.014	A	2,750	0
Azerbaijan	0.015	A	2,750	0
Serbia	0.037	B	3,500	750
Bulgaria	0.038	B	3,500	750
Latvia	0.038	B	3,500	750
Estonia	0.040	B	3,500	750
Iceland	0.042	B	3,500	-3,500
Belarus	0.042	B	3,500	750
Cyprus	0.046	B	3,500	-3,500
Lithuania	0.065	C	6,500	-500
Croatia	0.097	C	6,500	-500
Slovenia	0.103	C	6,500	-500
Slovakia	0.142	D	7,500	500
Romania	0.177	D	7,500	500
Hungary	0.291	E	11,000	0
Czech Republic	0.349	E	11,000	0
Israel	0.384	E	11,000	0
Ireland	0.498	F	12,000	1,000
Finland	0.566	F	12,000	1,000
Turkey	0.617	F	12,000	1,000
Greece	0.691	F	12,000	1,000
Denmark	0.736	F	12,000	-6,200
Poland	0.828	G	12,500	1,500
Austria	0.851	G	12,500	-5,700
Norway	0.871	G	12,500	-5,700
Sweden	1.064	H	19,000	800
Belgium	1.075	H	19,000	800
Switzerland	1.130	H	19,000	800
Netherlands	1.855	I	20,000	1,800
Spain	3.177	J	22,000	3,800
Italy	4.999	K	52,000	2,000
France	6.123	K	52,000	2,000
UK	6.604	K	52,000	2,000
Germany	8.018	K	52,000	2,000
Annual Total:			510,250	
Total 5 years:			2,551,250	

b. List of potential participating countries

Country	UN rates (%) ⁽¹⁾	Category ⁽²⁾	Proposed annual contribution (Phase IX) (in €)	Difference from Phase VIII
Moldova	0.002	A	2,750	0
Armenia	0.005	A	2,750	0
Georgia	0.006	A	2,750	0
Liechtenstein	0.009	A	2,750	0
Malta	0.017	A	2,750	0
Ukraine	0.087	C	6,500	-500
Luxembourg	0.090	C	6,500	-500
Portugal	0.511	F	12,000	1,000
Russian Federation	1.602	I	20,000	1,800
Annual Total:			58,750	
Total 5 years:			293,750	

⁽¹⁾ UN Scale of Assessments approved for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012, as established by General Assembly Resolution 64/248

⁽²⁾ Key to calculation of annual contribution to ECPGR

(with x = UN rate %)	Category
x < 0.030	A
0.030 <= x < 0.050	B
0.050 <= x < 0.120	C
0.120 <= x < 0.200	D
0.200 <= x < 0.400	E
0.400 <= x < 0.800	F
0.800 <= x < 1.000	G
1.000 <= x < 1.500	H
1.500 <= x < 3.000	I
3.000 <= x < 4.500	J
4.500 <= x	K

Annex VI. Agenda

Thirteenth meeting of the ECPGR Steering Committee 4-7 December 2012, Vienna, Austria

Monday, 3 December 2012

14:00 – 18:00 Meeting of the ExCo
Arrival of participants

Tuesday, 4 December 2012

Registration

8:00–9:00 Conference venue at the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management Austria, Stubenring 1, 1012 Vienna, Austria

Opening (*Chair: G. Kleijer*)

9:00–9:30 Opening statements by representatives of the host country
9:30–9:45 Adoption of the Agenda

ECPGR and the International Treaty (*Chair: Z. Bulińska*)

9:45–10:15 Austrian initiatives and success stories “Regions of Delight” and “Living Diversity” (*S. Bhatti*)

10:15–10:45 *Coffee break*

10:45–11:15 Update on the International Treaty and collaboration with ECPGR (*S. Bhatti*)
11:15–11:45 Discussion

Report on Phase VIII (*Chair: A. Avagyan*)

11:45 –12:00 Report of the ExCo Chair (*G. Kleijer*)
12:00 – 12:30 Discussion

12:30–14:00 *Lunch*

14:00–14:30 Technical and financial report of Phase VIII (*L. Maggioni*)
14:30–15:30 Discussion

15:30–16:00 *Coffee break*

ECPGR Operational Structure (*Chair: G. Kleijer*)

16:00–16:30 Task Force proposals (*B. Visser*)
16:30–16:45 Secretariat’s comment (*L. Maggioni*)
16:45–17:05 Questions (only for understanding)
17:05–17:25 ExCo synthesis and proposal (*J. Weibull*)
17:25–17:45 Questions (only for understanding)
17:45–20:00 Split in four groups to discuss operational structure (groups chaired by ExCo members)

20:00 *End of meeting (no dinner organized)*

Wednesday, 5 December 2012

ECPGR Operational Structure – continued (*Chair: G. Kleijer*)

8:30–9:30 Reports of the four groups (*Rapporteurs*)
9:30–10:30 Discussion and adoption of recommendations

- 10:30–11:00 *Coffee break*
- 11:00–13:00 Discussion continued and decisions about operational structure
- 13:00–14:30 *Lunch*
- Tender for hosting ECPGR Secretariat/EURISCO** (*Chair: G. Kleijer*)
- 14:30–15:30 Introduction to the results of the selection of best offers (*A. Avagyan*)
- 15:30–16:30 Discussion
- 16:30–17:00 *Coffee break*
- 17:00–18:00 Discussion (continued)
- 18:00–18:30 Wrap-up and decisions on hosting the ECPGR Secretariat/EURISCO
- 18:30 (or later) *End of meeting – to follow: social dinner*

Thursday, 6 December 2012

Miscellaneous items

 (*Chair: F. Latorre*)

- 8:30–9:00 Legal status of ECPGR (introduction)
- 9:00–9:30 Discussion and decision
- 9:30–10:00 Terms of reference of ExCo and of the Executive Secretary (introduction)
- 10:00–10:30 Discussion and decision
- 10:30–11:00 *Coffee break*
- 11:00–11:30 Rules of procedure (introduction)
- 11:30–12:00 Discussion and decision
- 12:00–12:30 Relationship with EU (introduction)
- 12:30–13:00 Discussion and decision
- 13:00–14:30 *Lunch*

Objectives of ECPGR

 (*Chair: J. Weibull*)

- 14:30–15:00 Introduction
- 15:00–16:30 Discussion
- 16:30–17:00 *Coffee break*

Budget for Phase IX

 (*Chair: J. Weibull*)

- 17:00–18:30 Discussion
- 18:30–19:00 Wrap-up and decisions about the budget (*G. Kleijer*)
- 19:00 (or later) *End of meeting (no dinner organized)*

Friday, 7 December 2012

Study Tour

- 08:30–15:00 At the invitation of the Host Government, visit to a Higher School in Klosterneuburg with emphasis on Oenology and Pomology

Conclusion

 (*Chair: G. Kleijer*)

- 15:00–15:30 Reading of meeting's report
- 15:30–18:30 Discussion and approval of report
- 18:30–18:45 Election of one new ExCo member
- 18:45–19:00 Concluding remarks of the meeting
- 19:00 (or later) *End of meeting (no dinner organized)*

Annex VII. List of participants

Thirteenth meeting of the ECPGR Steering Committee 4-7 December 2012, Vienna, Austria

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