

# MEDICINAL AND AROMATIC PLANTS WG REPORT (2024–2025)

In preparation for the 18th Steering Committee Meeting, Tbilisi, Georgia, 2-4 June 2026

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## CONTRIBUTION TO ECPGR OBJECTIVES

Some member countries, in particular Albania, Portugal, Greece, Estonia and the UK contributed to the objectives of the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Working Group during 2024–2025 by strengthening national capacity for harmonized documentation and data mobilization relevant to *ex situ* and *in situ* plant genetic resources.

Through the project “Extension of EURISCO for Crop Wild Relatives (CWR) *in situ* data and preparation of pilot countries’ data sets”, Albania, as an example, prepared and provided *in situ* CWR passport datasets to EURISCO following agreed descriptors and data exchange formats; this work also captures a wide range of medicinal and aromatic plant taxa occurring within the same protected-area landscapes, as part of Albania’s wild plant genetic resources documented *in situ*.

In 2024, Albania prepared and uploaded *in situ* CWR data for two pilot protected areas (Shebenik–Jabllanicë National Park and the Buna River–Velipojë Protected Landscape/Drin–Buna area), covering around 110 CWR taxa across both sites. In February 2025, Albania delivered a consolidated dataset for Tomorri National Park to EURISCO, including 184 priority taxa (126 genera) and 536 records.

This progress supports ECPGR priorities on improving the availability and quality of *in situ* passport information in EURISCO and provides a transferable framework for improving the visibility, standardization and strategic use of MAP-related genetic resources occurring within Albania’s protected-area landscapes.

Greece uploaded data regarding *ex situ* conservation in the Balkan Botanic Garden Kroussia in EURISCO. Last year, through a collaboration with the Ministry of Environment (Organization of Natural Environment and Climate Change) and with a large group of botanists, it was possible to deliver an Excel database, from 14 Greek Botanic Gardens and their *ex situ* collections using the DARWIN CODE system, with the intention of subsequently linking it to DiSSCo (Distributed System of Scientific Collections).

Now, Greece has approximately 5,500 accessions, and it is likely that a lot of them belong to the MAPs family. A connection with the Botanic Garden Community would be useful.

Within Portugal, activities were primarily aligned with the project ‘Extension of EURISCO for Crop Wild Relatives (CWR) *in situ* data and preparation of pilot countries’ data sets.’

A national Task Force was established to supervise the development of the *In Situ* CWR National Inventory, extending coverage to the previously undocumented Azores and Madeira archipelagos.

The methodology involved updating national checklists, prioritizing CWR taxa, and compiling occurrence data to identify key populations for conservation and sustainable utilization.

While core activities – including data formatting for EURISCO integration – were finalized, ongoing initiatives continue to evaluate climate change impacts on CWR distribution, support the INIAV *in situ* database development, and engage with protected area authorities to facilitate active *in situ* conservation. MAP species are included in these national checklists.

In Estonia, the University of Tartu Botanical Garden conserves 661 species of MAPs. Ninety-three (93) of these species are local species, which were and are studied by the Institute of Pharmacy at the University of Tartu. This work will continue, and more species will be included. Furthermore, the botanical garden's collection of Estonian native plants also preserves 82 wild crop relatives from the priority list. The list of CWR, which was compiled by the Estonian committee, contains 145 species and 88 of them are in the priority list.

### 1.1. Achievements and success stories

- To efficiently conserve and provide access to unique germplasm in Europe through AEGIS and the European Collection  
During the reporting period, 4 accessions from PRT001 were distributed under SMTA
- To provide passport and phenotypic information of actively conserved European PGRFA diversity *ex situ* and *in situ* through the EURISCO catalogue  
All the passport data from the collections conserved are in EURISCO. The phenotypic data is being prepared to be uploaded to EURISCO
- To improve *in situ* conservation and use of crop wild relatives
- To promote on-farm conservation and management of European PGRFA diversity
- To promote use of PGRFA

To promote the use and valorization of PGRFA, BPGV has participated in "VILL'AROMÁTICA II Festa das Plantas Aromáticas e Medicinais" de Celorico de Basto may of 2024 and 2025

### 1.2. Gaps or constraints identified

We consider that the biggest constraint is the active involvement of the MAP WG members in the network.

## GRANT SCHEME ACTIVITIES, WG MEETINGS AND EVA ACTIVITIES

- **Grant Scheme proposals (submitted:0; approved:0)**
- **Total number of partners involved in Grant Scheme: n/a**
- **Meetings held**
  - None
- **Total number of partners involved in WG Meeting: n/a**
- **Reports and related data**
  - None
- **Funds mobilized**

The grants mobilized to the Working Group have been mainly of national origin. The implementation of CAP has allowed financial support to the plant genetic resources in general and MAP species in particular. In 2025, in Portugal, started a

new project that will support GR collecting missions, conservation, characterization and evaluation, documentation and information.

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES (CROSS-WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES, LINKS WITH OTHER NETWORKS, PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES)**

- **Cross-Working Group activities:** Over time, the MAP WG has sought to integrate its activities with those of the CWR WG.
- **Others:** In Portugal, activities with the MAP Competence Centre, an interprofessional structure for the MAP sector, which congregates producers, transformation and commercialization, have been implemented. With the responsibility of INIAV/BPGV MAP genetic resources, conservation and valorization actions have been carried out.

## **WORKING GROUP DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS**

Serrano, C.; Lopes, V.; Serra, O.; Gaspar, C.; Barata, A.M.; Soares, A.; Oliveira, M.C. Metabolomic Profile and Antioxidant Capacity of Methanolic Extracts of *Mentha pulegium* L. and *Lavandula stoechas* L. from the Portuguese Flora. *AppliedChem* 2026, 6, 3. <https://doi.org/10.3390/appliedchem6010003>

Mateus, A.R.S.; Serrano, C.; Almeida, C.; Soares, A.; Rolim Lopes, V.; Sanches-Silva, A. Beyond Thymol and Carvacrol: Characterizing the Phenolic Profiles and Antioxidant Capacity of Portuguese Oregano and Thyme for Food Applications. *Appl. Sci.* **2024**, *14*, 8924. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app14198924>

Póvoa, O.; Farinha, N.; Lopes, V.; Machado, A.M.; Figueiredo, A.C. Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum* L.) from Alentejo (South Portugal)—Ethnobotany and Potential Industrial Use. *Foods* **2024**, *13*, 929. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods13060929>

Violeta Lopes - Herbs Aromatic and Condimentary In the Field on the Table, and in History July 2025, Conference: 3rd International Gastronomy Symposium of Alto Minho. Portugal Since 1125. Gastronomy Heritage: Ponte de Lima, Portugal

## **EXPECTED ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

Towards MAP Genetic Resources Conservation:

- **A compilation of a European inventory of MAP species in Europe**, their degree of endangerment and their conservation status, would support the proposal of a **Strategy for European MAP Conservation**.
- **Expand the original “priority list” of MAP species, identified by the WG members:** the list needs to be expanded, to show the existence of some common regional strategies and priorities. This expanded priority list will be used to produce a document showing the level of threat and the Red List status for MAP species in Europe and give support to the Strategy for European MAP Conservation.

- Compile **systematic information that contains 'key aspects' of the MAP species** [e.g. annual or perennial spp.; type of seed (orthodox, intermediate, recalcitrant); optimum germination conditions; optimum storage conditions; in- or out-breeding; the most appropriate technique of propagation and key aspects to field collection conservation].
- **Systematic actions for Documentation of ex situ collections and in situ populations:** information organized according to EURISCO (to be forwarded to the National Focal points for upload), need to be considered in this phase.

The MAP WG is preparing a proposal to be submitted to the ECPGR Grant Scheme (Phase XI)