

POTATO WG REPORT (2024–2025)

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

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1. CONTRIBUTION TO ECPGR OBJECTIVES

1.1. Achievements and success stories

- To efficiently conserve and provide access to unique germplasm in Europe through AEGIS and the European Collection

Europe has many potato genebanks, and potato collections often contain the same cultivars under different names. AEGIS helps by identifying duplicates through molecular and historical data, assigning only one institute to maintain each unique accession, allowing other institutes to keep working copies if needed, but without duplicating conservation responsibilities. This reduces costs and improves conservation quality. Although not all partners have yet formally associated accessions, several European countries are actively working toward contributing potato material through the EURO-POTATOES Project and earlier AEGIS Potato projects. This means more countries are expected to contribute potato accessions once uniqueness and quality criteria are fully met.

- To provide passport and phenotypic information of actively conserved European PGRFA diversity *ex situ* and *in situ* through the EURISCO catalogue

In potato, there are various databases. EURISCO is coordinated at IPK, Germany, and ECPD (European Cultivated Potato Database) at SASA, United Kingdom. Changes to AEGIS composition are audited in EURISCO. EURISCO collects passport information (origin, taxonomy, collection site, holding institute, acquisition details) for potato accessions maintained across Europe. The catalogue includes data from 400 institutions in 43 countries, covering more than 2 million accessions, including also potatoes. For potato specifically, national inventories submit their passport data to EURISCO, ensuring that all European potato germplasm (*ex situ* and *in situ*) is represented in a harmonized format. This includes cultivated varieties, breeding lines, landraces, and wild *Solanum* species held in genebanks such as IPK Gatersleben, CGN, CPC, and VIR. Regardless, the WG of Potato has genetic materials already uploaded to EURISCO; however, additional efforts are still necessary.

- To improve *in situ* conservation and use of crop wild relatives

In potato, the *in situ* conservation is not applied, because this crop plant originated from South America, including its genetic resources. Wild relatives of potato are used in European breeding programmes to transfer valuable traits of interest, such as disease resistance traits for potato germplasm improvement.

- To promote on-farm conservation and management of European PGRFA diversity

On-farm conservation is not relevant for potato in Europe.

- To promote use of PGRFA

The members of Potato WG have shown their interest in this topic. Such projects are: EURO-POTATOES ECPGR Grant Scheme Activity for genetic identifications of duplicates in genebank collections; BYTE2BITE Project – Unlocking the complex genomes of European potatoes (ERC / Horizon Europe, which is funded with 2 MEur over 5 years (2025-2030)), aiming to combine new genomic technologies with conventional breeding to pave the way for efficient diploid potato breeding; SUSTAIN POTATO II Project (2023-2026) aims to develop more robust and competitive Nordic potato varieties, with private actors, universities and NordGen collaborating in a PPP project including more than 300 different potato varieties. SustainPotato II brings together three plant breeding programmes for potatoes in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, together with researchers from these countries and also Estonia. The main focus of the project is to lay the foundation for the development of more robust potato varieties that are better adapted to cope with several skin blemish diseases and late blight (*Phytophthora infestans*); MainPotRe project was a BSR Interreg-funded project in 2023-2025 including partners from Estonia, Finland and Latvia. In the MainPotRe Project, potato breeders, gene bank holders, research institutions, authorities, and NGOs worked together to enhance the self-sufficiency of communities and food security in the region by improving access to planting material of local potato cultivars.

1.2. Gaps or constraints identified

EURO-POTATOES Project has described the challenges related to the conservation, documentation, coordination, and use of potato genetic resources across Europe. In potato, there has been a gap with providers in terms of genotyping services, and now there is information provided that the new DNA array of potato from the private company portfolio would be ready in spring 2026. A lot of activities on the subject have been carried out nationally and through separate project actions.

2. GRANT SCHEME ACTIVITIES, WG MEETINGS AND EVA ACTIVITIES

- **Ongoing Grant Scheme proposals (Phase X: submitted:1; approved:1)**
 - [EUROPOTATOES](#) (Get Potatoes United – Collaboration Action for Updating the Virtual European Potato Collection)
- **Total number of partners involved in Grant Scheme: 20 from 19 countries**
 - ECPGR-funded: 19 from 19 countries
 - Self-funded: 1 from 1 country
- **Meetings held**
 - EURO-POTATOES Kick-off meeting, 19-20 March 2024, Młochów and Radzikow, Poland
- **Total number of partners involved in WG Meeting:**

Partners from 17 countries (Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, and Switzerland) and the ECPGR Secretariat (Italy) attended the organized kick-off meeting, and the workshop held in Poland in 2024.

- **Reports and related data**

Interim Technical Report Potato WG 2024

- **Funds mobilized (Phase X)**
 - ECPGR granted funds: €29,999.99
 - Inputs in-kind declared in Grant activities: €10,000

3. OTHER ACTIVITIES (CROSS-WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES, LINKS WITH OTHER NETWORKS, PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES)

- **Cross-Working Group activities:**
No activity with other ECPR WGs.
- **Others:** Link with MainPotRe project, which was a BSR Interreg-funded project in 2023-2025 including partners from potato sector of Estonia, Finland and Latvia. Link with NordGen's Vegetables and Potato WG.

4. WORKING GROUP DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Implementation of the Potato WG can be found on <https://www.ecpgr.org/working-groups/potato/euro-potatoes>

5. EXPECTED ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The preparation of a strategy for conservation of potatoes, including duplicates, and also increased global collaboration in potato genebank networking would be important future activities.