European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources

ECP/GR

ECPGR PHASE XI

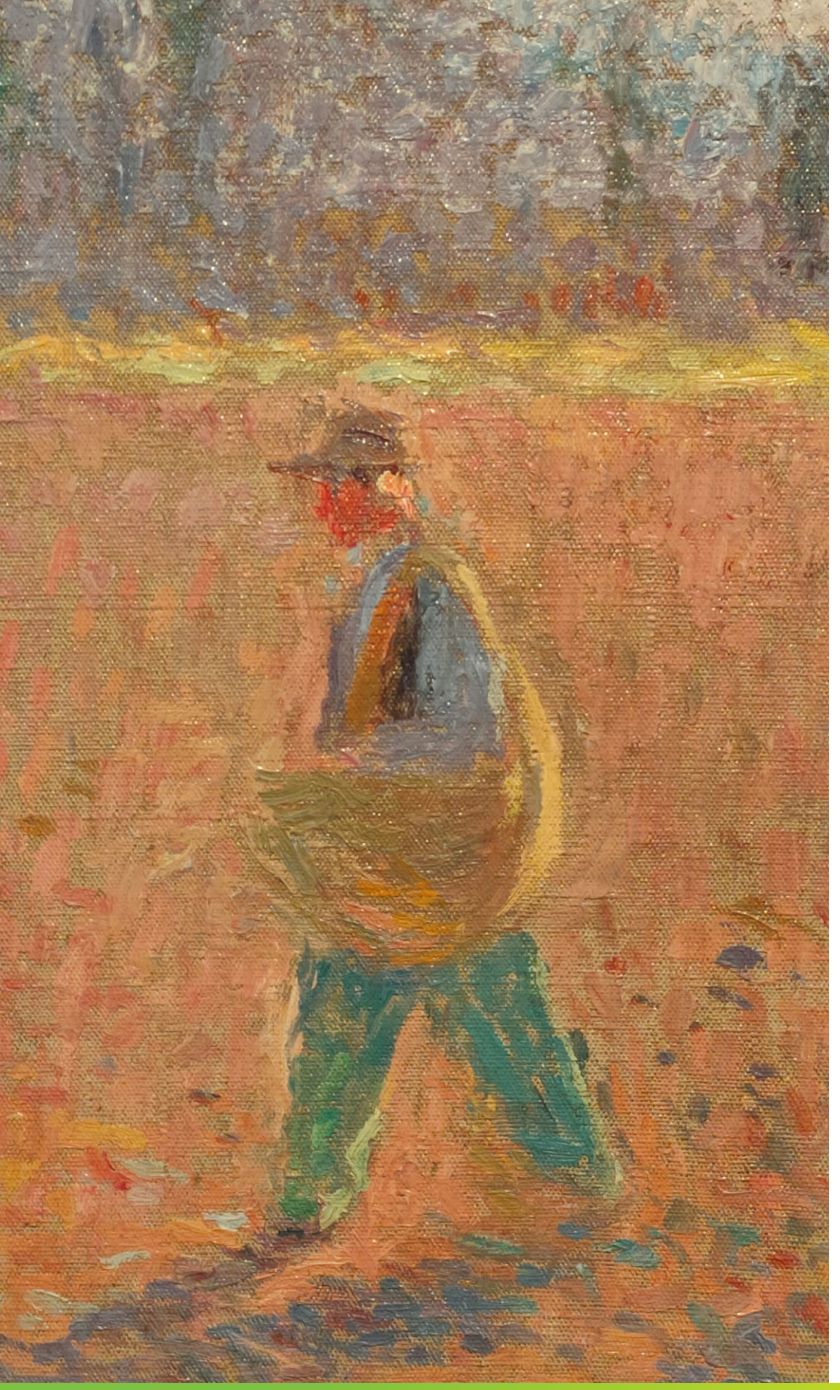
Lorenzo Maggioni

ECPGR Secretary

Third meeting of the Leafy Vegetables Working Group, Skierniewice, Poland, 7- 8 October 2026



© Fernando Luque / ECPGR



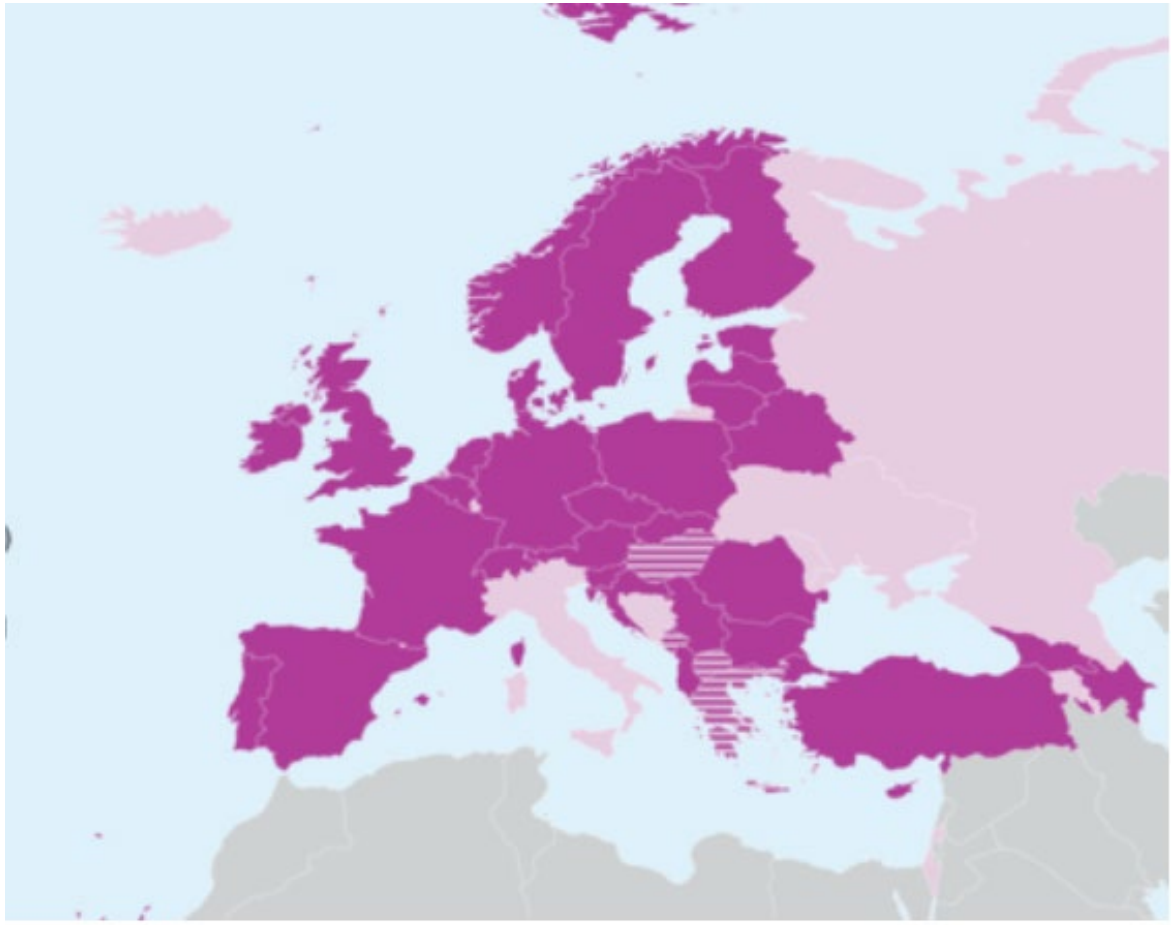
Contents

- Objectives, structure and mechanisms
- Pillar initiatives
- Budget and source of funds
- How the Working Group can operate
- A glance to the future

Henri Martin - The Sower, 1914-1920

ECP/GR

ECPGR Membership



- Founded in 1980 under the auspices of EUCARPIA, FAO and UNDP as an area of cooperation to be established between East and West Europe.
- Self-funded programme belonging to the participating countries. Member countries also contribute in kind to the programme, through collaborative PGR conservation and use activities.
- Currently 35 member countries

www.ecpgr.org

www.linkedin.com/company/ecpgr

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European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources

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ECPGR Objectives

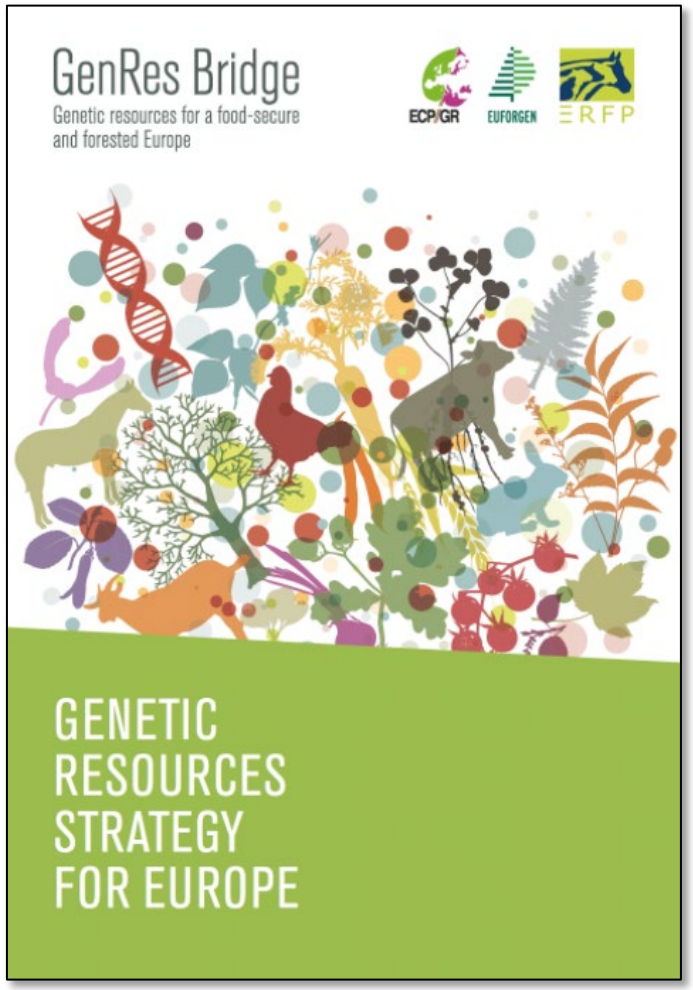


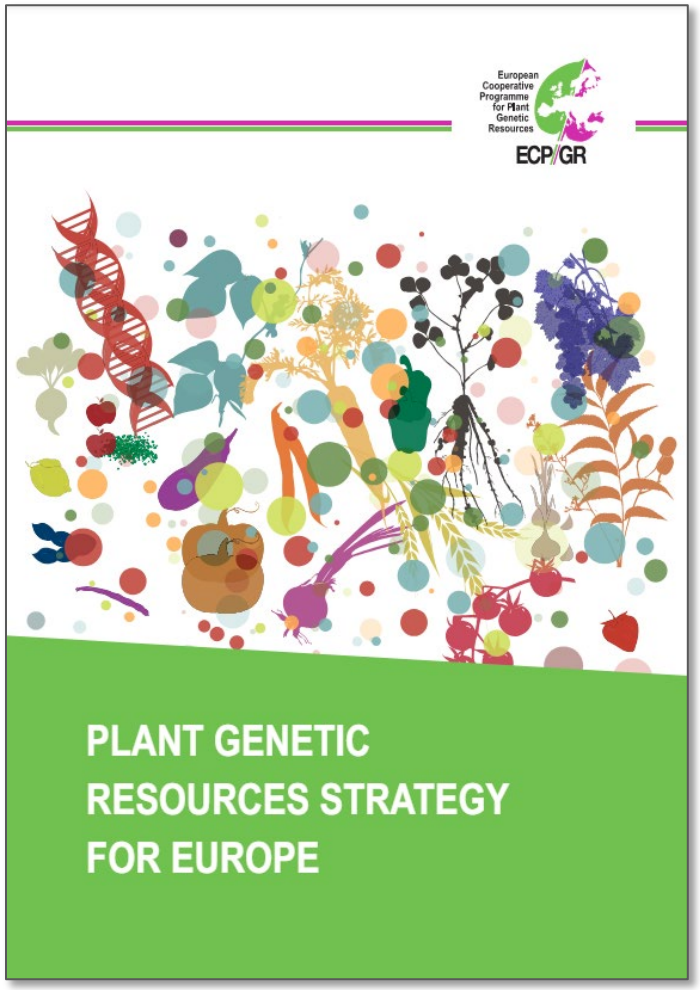


- Sustaining *ex situ* conservation
- Strenghtening the plant genetic resources information system
- Expanding *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives & wild food plants
- Promoting on-farm conservation and management
- Promoting sustainable use of plant genetic resources

Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe

Launched in Bruxelles, 30 November 2021





Developed via extensive consultations with experts and stakeholders

Identifies gaps and objectives to guide ECPGR priorities for the next decade

Implementation is subject to firm political will

GenRes Bridge Genetic resources for a food-secure and forested Europe

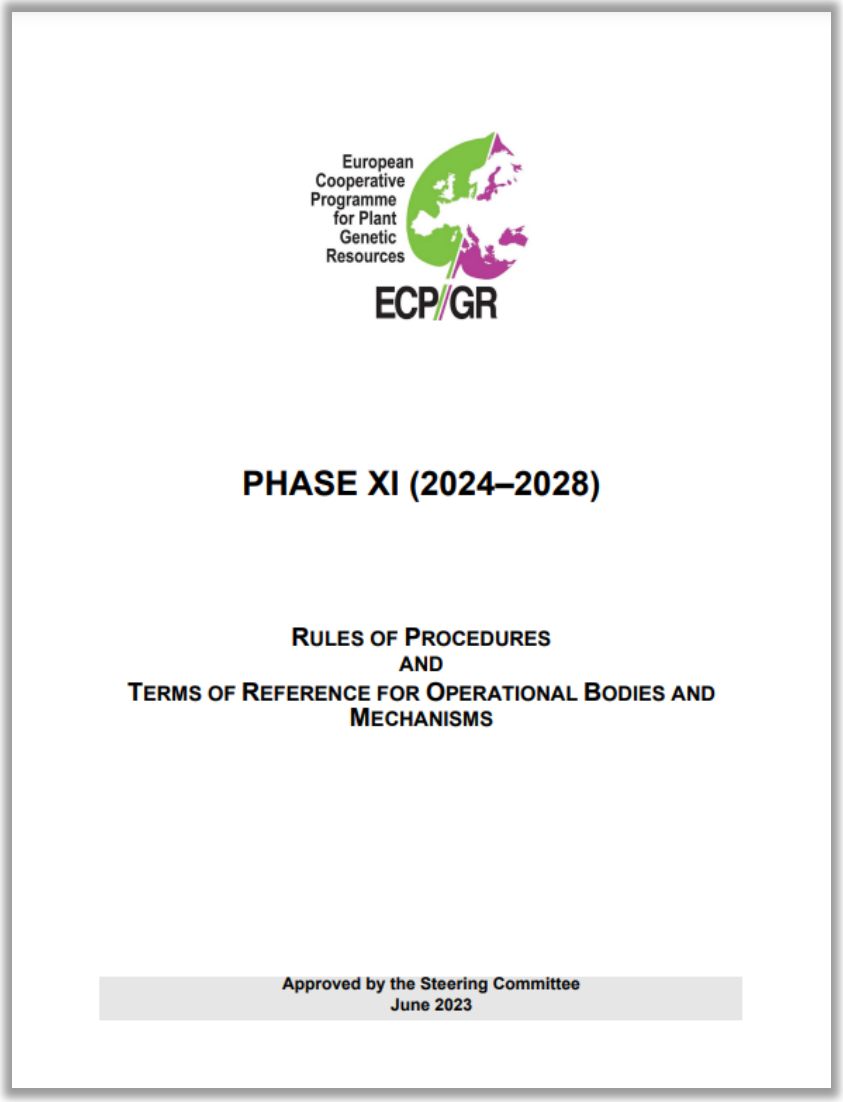
www.ecpgr.org/pgrstrategy21

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ECPGR Structure



ToRs of ECPGR for Phase XI


European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources
ECP/GR

PHASE XI (2024–2028)

RULES OF PROCEDURES
AND
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR OPERATIONAL BODIES AND MECHANISMS

Approved by the Steering Committee
June 2023

Available at this link.

ECP/GR

ECPGR Initiatives

Documentation



European Search Catalogue for Plant Genetic Resources

***Ex situ* genebank operations and quality management**



A European Genebank Integrated System

PGR access and use



European Evaluation Network for PGRFA

Dissemination



Genetic Resources

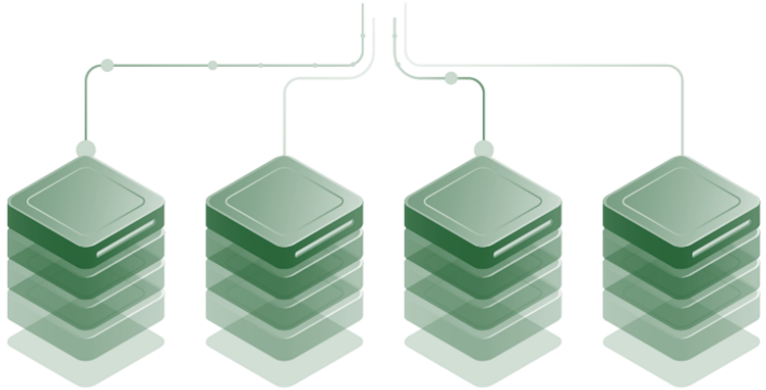
Open Access Journal
www.genresj.org

ECP/GR

Documentation

Online catalogue

- Information on European *ex situ* collections: passport, characterization and evaluation data
- Extension to *in situ* populations recently implemented
- Largest single PGR data provider at accession level
- Register for multilateral system and feeding into Genesys global database



Hosted by: IPK LEIBNIZ-INSTITUT

EURISCO: A central hub to make European PGR data publicly available

http://eurisco.ecpgr.org

ECP/GR

AEGIS – A European Genebank Integrated System

Conserving in a **collaborative way** and at **agreed quality standards**, the **genetically unique** and important accessions for Europe of **all crops** and making them **available** for breeding and research **through SMTAs**



36	Member countries
76	Associate Member Agreements
~122,000	AEGIS accessions
> 500	Genera

www.ecpgr.org/aegis

Leafy vegetable accessions in AEGIS

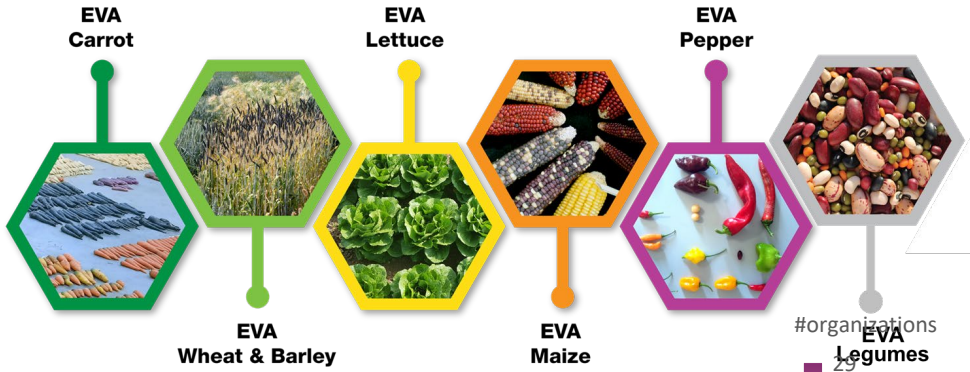
(all non-Annex I)

Lactuca	1674	Germany (569), Austria (1), Czech Republic (46), Slovenia (3), United Kingdom (119), Netherlands (830), Nordic Countries (106)
Cichorium	325	Germany (320), Austria (2), Nordic Countries (3)
Spinacia	284	Germany (126), Netherlands (110), Nordic Countries (32), United Kingdom (16)

ECP/GR

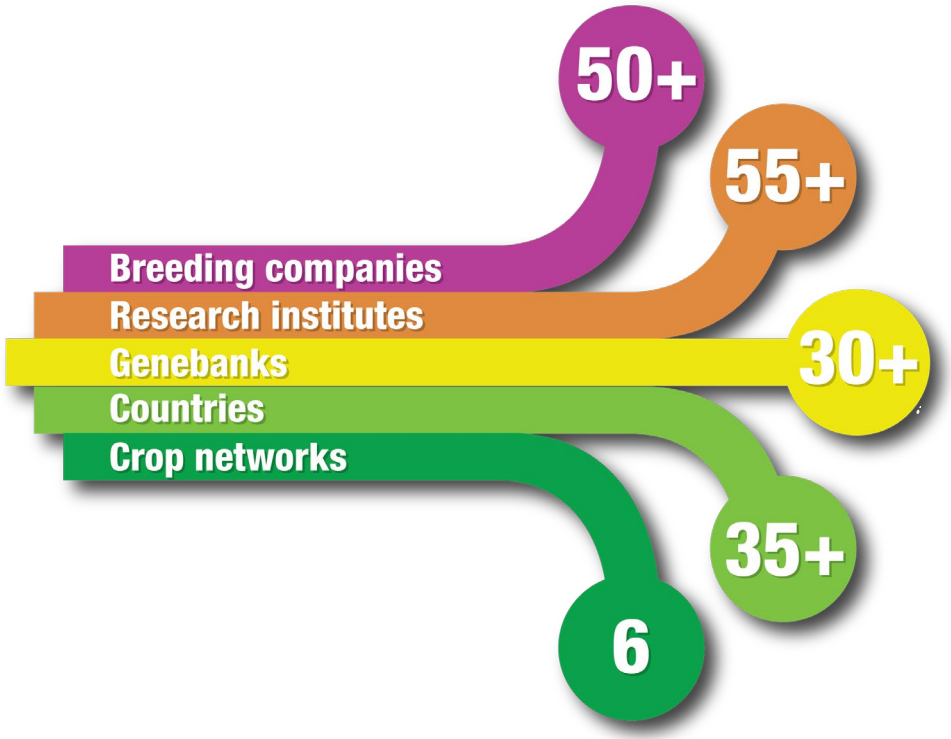
EVA
European Evaluation Network

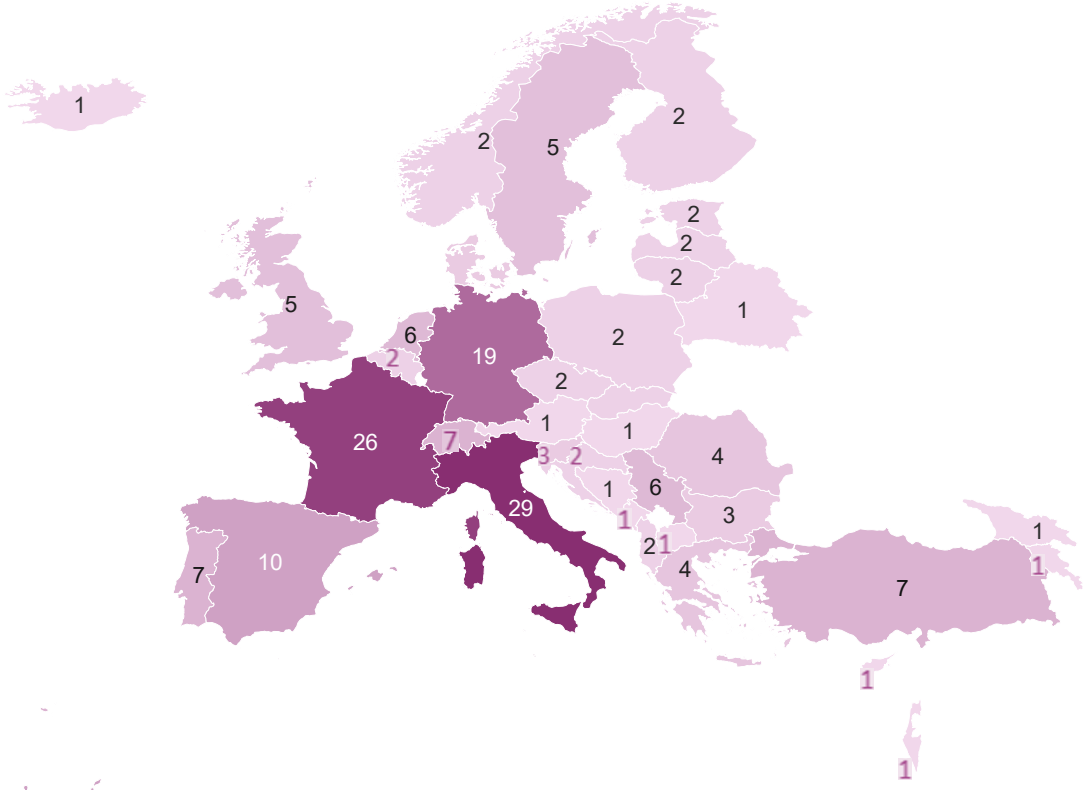
The European Evaluation Network



130 partners from 37 countries

www.ecpgr.org/eva





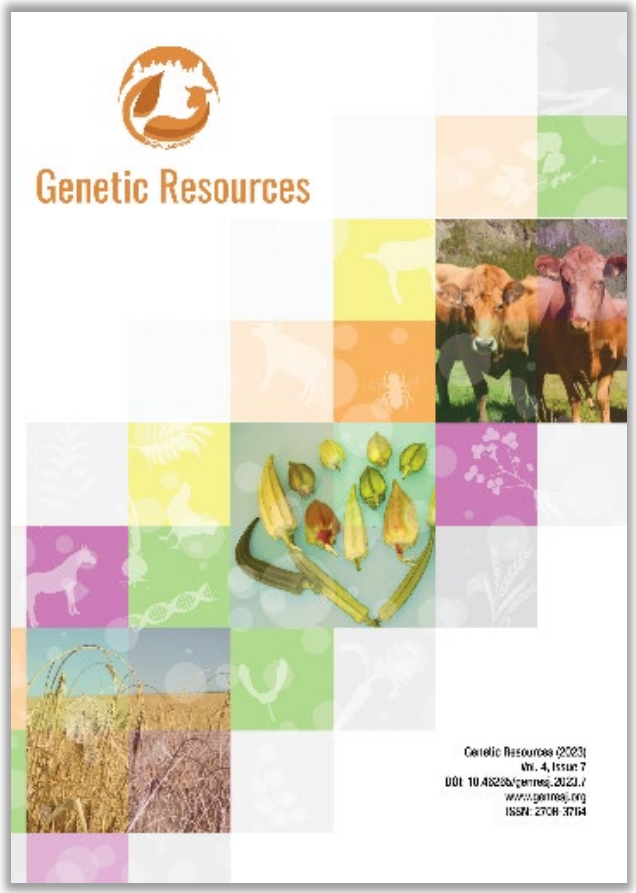
Includes also organizations participating in multiple EVA Networks

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Genetic Resources

Open-access journal for stakeholders



- Diamond open-access journal – free to publish and read
- Dissemination of research, opinions and other articles on genetic resources for food and agriculture
- Developed within H2020 project GenResBridge
- Published by ECPGR and ERFP

European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources
ECP/GR

ERFP

www.genresj.org

ECP/GR



ECPGR Network of European Genebank Managers

- Overall aim to strengthen the management of genebanks through the exchange of knowledge, cooperation and capacity building of genebanks, including the various aspects of leading and managing a genebank.

ECP/GR

Financial means



Edvard Munch, Geese in an Orchard, 1911

ECPGR Regular budget – Phase XI (2024-2028): €3.9 M

WG Activities total budget: €510,000

EURISCO Maintenance + development: €555,000

German-funded projects

Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity

TOTAL: €982,679 between 2021–2027



ECP/GR

Europe's crop wild relatives *in situ* data now in EURISCO

eurisco Finding seeds for the future

Background

Crop wild relatives (CWR) – wild plant species closely related to cultivated crops – are key genetic resources for crop improvement due to their rich and evolving diversity. As climate change intensifies, utilizing this diversity becomes more urgent. Global agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the FAO Global Plan of Action (GPA), and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) emphasize the importance of documenting and conserving CWR, especially *in situ*, i.e. in the natural habitats where they occur, and enabling their sustainable use. However, conservation efforts across Europe vary strongly, with scattered or missing data, making it difficult to find and access these resources.

An ECPGR project, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity, aimed to improve this situation by encouraging the establishment of national CWR inventories and integrating *in situ* data into the central European Search Catalogue for Plant Genetic Resources (EURISCO).

The project

The project successfully extended the EURISCO catalogue to include CWR *in situ* data. Early efforts focused on defining clear criteria for identifying CWR populations eligible for inclusion – specifically, those under active conservation and potentially available to users. These criteria were published in the document *Principles for the Inclusion of CWR Data in EURISCO*, developed in consultation with the ITPGRFA Secretariat and endorsed by project partners and the EURISCO Advisory Committee. A standardized data exchange format was established, and CWR National Inventory Focal Points were appointed to manage national data flows into EURISCO.

Pilot countries were supported in organizing their internal data collection processes and successfully submitted initial datasets, using EURISCO-specific descriptors. The data were reviewed and uploaded to the system, enabling broader access. As of January 2026, 16 countries have contributed data covering over 19,000 CWR populations. EURISCO now offers a centralized, searchable resource that links users to managing institutions or liaison contacts, facilitating access to the material.

This project marks a significant advancement in harmonizing CWR preservation and documentation efforts across Europe, supporting both conservation goals and crop improvement through better access to this valuable genetic diversity.

Funded by: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity



Aegis

AEGIS PLUS

Reinforcing European plant genetic resources *ex situ* conservation through AEGIS implementation and capacity building

Background

Genebanks across Europe safeguard more than 2 million accessions of plant genetic resources, providing breeders, farmers and researchers with access to germplasm essential for developing resilient crops in the face of climate change. In 2009, the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) established AEGIS (A European Genebank Integrated System) to coordinate conservation of unique European germplasm across a decentralized European Collection maintained with agreed quality standards. Today, AEGIS counts 35 member countries and 69 Associate Member institutions, with around 120,000 accessions flagged in the EURISCO database.

Despite this progress, significant gaps remain: conservation protocols, documentation systems and distribution policies vary widely, and only 54% of AEGIS accessions have been safety-duplicated. Funded by the German Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity (BMLEH), the predecessor project 'New AEGIS' (2024–2025) laid crucial groundwork for enhancing capacity and transparency through operational manuals, Standard Operating Procedures, a genebank metrics system, and reciprocal peer visits. AEGIS PLUS builds on these achievements to address the persistent gaps identified.

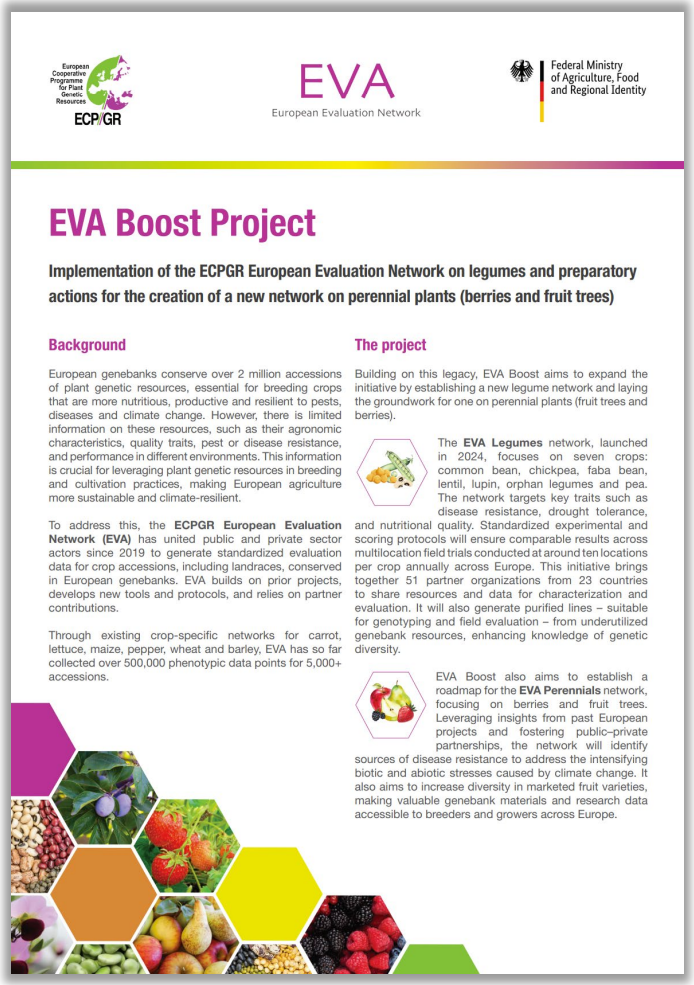
The project

AEGIS PLUS is a focused capacity-building initiative running from November 2025, funded by BMLEH. The project aims to enhance genebanks' operational quality and capacity, and ensure accessibility and use of the collections through a diverse range of activities:

Documentation & monitoring: A 2-day workshop will support up to ten genebanks in integrating the Genebank Metrics Tool into their documentation systems, enabling real-time operational monitoring. An expert group will simultaneously revise the genebank operational manual template to make it more user-friendly.

ECP/GR

Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity



ECP/GR

EVA

European Evaluation Network

Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity

EVA Boost Project

Implementation of the ECPGR European Evaluation Network on legumes and preparatory actions for the creation of a new network on perennial plants (berries and fruit trees)

Background

European genebanks conserve over 2 million accessions of plant genetic resources, essential for breeding crops that are more nutritious, productive and resilient to pests, diseases and climate change. However, there is limited information on these resources, such as their agronomic characteristics, quality traits, pest or disease resistance, and performance in different environments. This information is crucial for leveraging plant genetic resources in breeding and cultivation practices, making European agriculture more sustainable and climate-resilient.

To address this, the **ECPGR European Evaluation Network (EVA)** has united public and private sector actors since 2019 to generate standardized evaluation data for crop accessions, including landraces, conserved in European genebanks. EVA builds on prior projects, develops new tools and protocols, and relies on partner contributions.

Through existing crop-specific networks for carrot, lettuce, maize, pepper, wheat and barley, EVA has so far collected over 500,000 phenotypic data points for 5,000+ accessions.

The project

Building on this legacy, EVA Boost aims to expand the initiative by establishing a new legume network and laying the groundwork for one on perennial plants (fruit trees and berries).

The **EVA Legumes** network, launched in 2024, focuses on seven crops: common bean, chickpea, faba bean, lentil, lupin, orphan legumes and pea. The network targets key traits such as disease resistance, drought tolerance, and nutritional quality. Standardized experimental and scoring protocols will ensure comparable results across multilocation field trials conducted at around ten locations per crop annually across Europe. This initiative brings together 51 partner organizations from 23 countries to share resources and data for characterization and evaluation. It will also generate purified lines – suitable for genotyping and field evaluation – from underutilized genebank resources, enhancing knowledge of genetic diversity.

EVA Boost also aims to establish a roadmap for the **EVA Perennials** network, focusing on berries and fruit trees. Leveraging insights from past European projects and fostering public–private partnerships, the network will identify sources of disease resistance to address the intensifying biotic and abiotic stresses caused by climate change. It also aims to increase diversity in marketed fruit varieties, making valuable genebank materials and research data accessible to breeders and growers across Europe.

ECP/GR

EC Horizon projects:

AGENT
PRO-GRACE
COLiBRI
GENIUS

ca. € 850,000



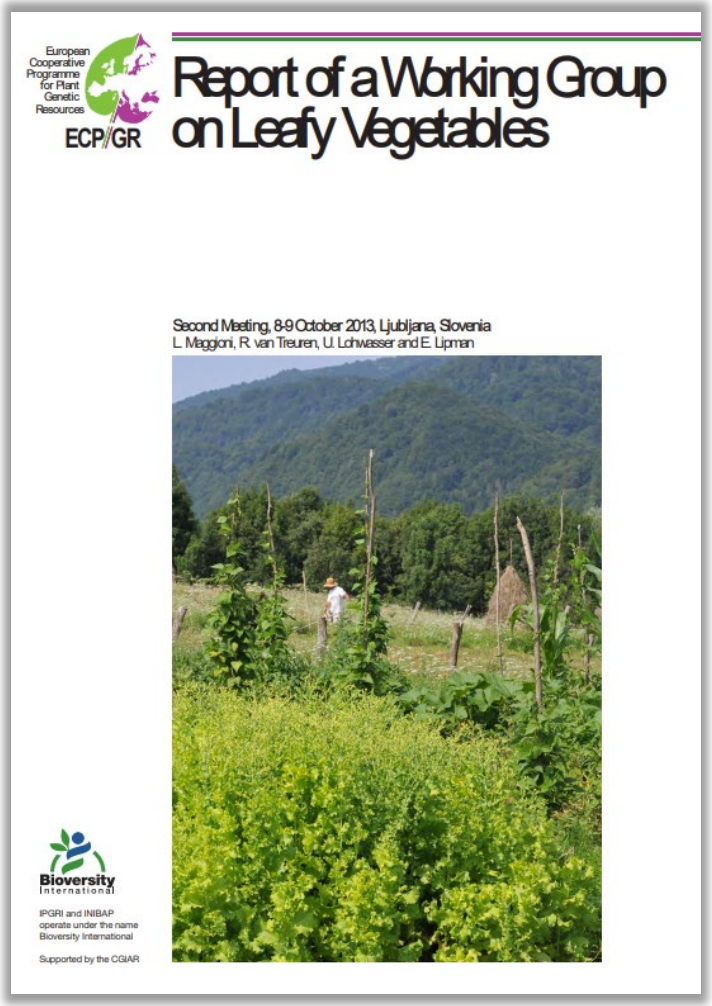
Leafy Vegetables Working Group

- Started in 2003 (Ad hoc Group in Skierniewice)
- Chairs:
  - Ietje Boukema (2003–2007)
  - Rob van Treuren (2007–2015)
  - Jelka Šuštar Vozlič (2015–2026)

- 52 Working Group members

- Databases:
  - International Chicory Database (GEVES)
  - International *Lactuca* Database (CGN)
  - International Minor Leafy Vegetables Database (IPK)
  - International Spinach Database (CGN)
  - Lettuce Portal (CGN)

- Grant Scheme Activity: CCLEAFY (2016-2017)



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How to use the budget line ‘WG activities’

- **Grant Scheme**: Annual Calls launched and evaluated by the Executive Committee. WG Chair submits proposals

- **Meetings** (on a first-come, first-served basis). WG Chair requests with justification:

    1) Which specific achievements are expected to be reached, in terms of facilitating the implementation of ECPGR priorities.
    2) Cost-effectiveness and synergies with other initiatives, e.g.:
        - Meetings in preparation for an EC project
        - Planning of new EVA Networks
        - Training of genebank information system officers, etc.

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Table of priorities

https://www.ecpgr.org/grant-scheme/call-for-proposals

Tables 1 to 6: Objectives and targets of the Plant Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe (PGR Strategy) and associated priorities for ECPGR Phase XI

Tables correspond to the objectives as identified in section 2 (Conserving and sustainably using plant genetic resources) of the PGR strategy.
Priorities are indicated as follows: **P1 – high** (starting or continuing at the beginning of Phase XI); **P2 – medium** (based on mid-term progress in the implementation of P1 activities and depending on available funds, could be supported by ECPGR in the 2nd part of Phase XI); **P3 – low** (Activities are too premature to be supported by ECPGR in Phase XI and should be considered for implementation during Phase XII)

Priorities highlighted in green (P1) or blue (P2) are open for possible Grant Scheme funding in 2024

Table 1: Expanding *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants

PGR Strategy for Europe Objectives	PGR Strategy for Europe Targets	Responsibility (main level/ responsible bodies)	Type of action that ECPGR could undertake	Potential sources of funding to cover the ECPGR action	Executive Committee (ExCo) proposal for activities to be included in Phase XI work plan
By 2030, Europe has significantly **increased** its **Crop Wild Relatives (CWR) and Wild Food Plants (WFP) inventories** to enable a more comprehensive view of available CWR and WFP genetic diversity, to better understand how this diversity is distributed across the region and its neighbouring countries, and to identify which are the priority populations to actively conserve.	1. All countries in Europe have included CWR and WFP conservation in national PGR programmes and actions	National	Support of Crop Wild Relatives WG activities contributing to Target 1	National funds/ European Commission (EC) project or external donor/**ECPGR Grant**	• **P1** - Disseminate methodologies and support documents and organize webinars on how to do diversity and gap analysis and how to develop National CWR strategies. • **P1** - Develop or improve an ECPGR CWR Portal compiling links to existing national checklists and inventories and the respective diversity and gap analysis to determine priority CWR populations. • **P2** - Work towards the preparation of an online map of European hotspots. • **P3** - CWR Working Group to develop Wild Food Plants conservation guidelines.
	2. All countries in Europe have identified CWR priority taxa and populations – including those in protected areas – forming the basis of their national and a European *in situ* network of CWR	National	Support of Crop Wild Relatives WG activities contributing to Target 2	National funds EC project or external donor **ECPGR Grant**	• **P1** - Extend the list of countries that prepare (or have already prepared) national inventories or lists for CWR priority taxa and provide *in situ* population data to EURISCO.

Examples of priorities for action (Grant Scheme)

- Support to countries to identify and include material into AEGIS, including regeneration and safety duplication (*ex situ*)
- Compilation and transfer of existing C&E data to EURISCO (documentation)
- Support to the creation of crops' public–private partnerships (use)
- At country level, prepare lists of CWR priority taxa and provide *in situ* population data to EURISCO (*in situ* CWR)

☛ More information on Grant Scheme: https://www.ecpgr.org/grant-scheme/faq

ECP/GR

ECPGR Working Group members roles and responsibilities



Watch the video at: https://bit.ly/ECPGR-WG

Outlook: Decisions of the Steering Committee (June 2026)



Camille Pissarro, The Meadows at Éragny, Apple Tree, 1894

Main decisions of the ECPGR Steering Committee (June 2026)

- Small revisions to:
  - Genebank Managers Network – can apply for funds
  - Phase XI budget: all costs covered until the end of the phase
  - Table of Priorities: small additions
  - Hosting Arrangements: still at Bioversity, Rome
  - ECPGR ToRs: non-payment allowed for one year
- Preparation for Phase XII (2029–2033)
  - Updating PGR Strategy → ECPGR Strategy
  - Communication Task Force

Acknowledgements: ECPGR Secretariat



Lorenzo Maggioni



Sandra Goritschnig



Loredana Maria



Nora Capozio



Stephan Weise

New ECPGR Secretariat

(as of 1 January 2027)



Rosemary Navarrete



Sandra Goritschnig



Loredana Maria



Nora Capozio



Stephan Weise

ECP/GR

Thank you for your attention

Second meeting, Ljubljana, October 2013

