

EURISCO News

This “EURISCO News” is a series of e-bulletins to provide feedback to National Focal Points (NFP) as well as being a forum for NFP and others to put forward their comments and suggestions.

In order to make the EURISCO Catalogue sustainable and meeting the NFPs and users needs I would like to invite all of you to contribute to the e-bulletin. All ideas, comments, suggestions, and questions are welcomed.

This second e-bulletin provides information on: [*Recent and on ongoing activities](#), [*Planned Meetings](#), [*Dissemination activities](#) and [*News](#).

Recent and ongoing activities

2006 – An overview

Everybody is aware that resources, whatever angle one looks at it, are limited. Being this a fact, priorities have to be established ensuring that those resources are used in a judicious, wise and sustainable manner.

In doing so, who decides on the priorities is aware that, whatever priorities were established, according to whatever criteria, the decisions will not please everybody. After all, as the old saying goes “Two heads, two sentences”. Besides, if everybody would have the very same ideas, what use would it be to have so many people? One would do ...

Having set priorities, during 2006 special effort was put into EURISCO’s substance (contents) rather than in the form. Regular contacts with the NFP, encouraging them and supporting them in their efforts to strength the links between the NI and EURISCO, were, in the end, very fruitful.

A few facts:

In 2005 EURISCO held information on ca. 920,000 accessions. In the end of 2006, the Catalogue holds information on ca. 998,000 accessions. That’s an increase of about 8.5% in the number of accessions for which EURISCO maintains information on.

During 2006, one more NI became part of EURISCO. Today, they are 34 the number of NI that contribute with data to EURISCO.

In 2005 EURISCO had a total of 900 visitors. That number more than doubled during 2006 and, as today, EURISCO have had 1,826 visitors.

Not surprisingly, the number of hits has sharply risen during 2006 as well. If in 2005 the hits numbered 39,982, in 2006 that number mounted to 60,895, which are 52.3% more.

Monitoring

During 2006 a survey took place. The exercise involved the NFP in order to assess the EURISCO Catalogue and identify ways of improving the system to better serve the PGR community. A thorough analysis of the results of the survey was made available in the first EURISCO e-bulletin (May 2006).

As a result the most visible change in the system was a re-shaping and added features in the “Download mechanism”, which is, undoubtedly, more user-friendly, more thorough and more functional.

Planned meetings

This link provides information on ECPGR forthcoming meetings, dates, venues and countries.

<http://www.ipgri.cgiar.org/networks/ecpgr/meetings/nextmeeting.asp>

Dissemination activities

Making EURISCO more visible, known and utilized was a constant concern during 2006.

Besides the continuing contacts with the NFP other activities were undertaken directed to the scientific community and the public in general. Two dissemination articles were published in the Newsletter for Europe and three oral presentations were made in scientific meetings. Besides, two other presentations were made in house to disseminate and demonstrate the platforms to partners in on-going European projects.

As public awareness materials, two fact sheets were produced and profusely distributed in scientific and technical meetings in Europe.

These public awareness materials, originally in English, are being translated into other European languages in order to be more effective and reaching a bigger audience. The effort of translation has been kindly undertaken by the NFP as an input in kind to the system in a laudable and commendable gesture.

The electronic version of these materials will be made available through the EURISCO site and we hope they will play an important role in raising the public awareness to the effort that, throughout Europe, has been made by the NFP and the importance of the EURISCO Catalogue in assisting the scientific community and the public in general in "Finding seeds for the future". After all, EURISCO is "A window to Europe's plant diversity".

We hope that 2007 will be the year of greater efforts to consolidate the Catalogue as the "one stop shop" for information on *ex situ* plant collections that enables users to search and access information on crops, forages, wild and weedy species, farmers' varieties and breeding lines, maintained in the European *ex situ* germplasm collections. Besides continuing to taking a firm stand in pursuing the road to a greater substance of the Catalogue, strengthening its contents, hand in hand, efforts will be made to make it even more user-friendly, more useful and more attractive.

I am confident, and the Catalogue's evolution supports me, that more data, in quantity and quality, can be made readily, widely and timely available through EURISCO, thus contributing to promote sustainable utilization of these materials.

News

EURISCO in GBIF

I am delighted to inform you that following the recent signature of an MOU with GBIF, Bioversity International became an 'Associate Participant Organization' in the GBIF network.

As a result of this MOU, EURISCO has taken an important step forward in its mission to promote the conservation and sustainable utilization of biodiversity in general and of agro-biodiversity in particular, becoming a Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) data provider, helping to disseminate data and information on conserved germplasm and also promoting the European collections.

Users can now search data stored in the EURISCO and SINGER databases through the GBIF portal together with USDA, GRIN, NGB and IPK. Today, essential passport information about more than 2 million accessions stored in *ex situ* collections are for the first time cross-searchable globally.

The story highlighting this agreement between GBIF and Bioversity International has been posted on the GBIF website: <http://www.gbif.org/Stories/STORY1159376959>

EURISCO going on one million

One of EURISCO's main objectives is to promote the conservation and facilitate the sustainable utilization of these materials for the benefit of the present and future generations and that goes hand in hand with the mission of making information and associated germplasm data, widely, freely and readily available to users through the Internet.

(See full article: Newsletter for Europe, No. 33 – November 2006, p. 7)

EURISCO for 2007

- Improve data quality and availability
- Search features improved
- Web site updating
- Strategic partnership with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)
- Promote similar networks in other regions (*e.g.* Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa)
- Expand to cover *in situ* and on farm information
- Contribute to international treaties and related initiatives (*e.g.* CBD, ITPGREFA)

Temporary changes

I will be on maternity leave from January – April 2007. Milko Skofic will be acting on my behalf during this period. As we have set up a work plan for quality data assessment and improvement I am certain that you all will be contacted to contribute and be part of it.

From this date on, and during this period, for EURISCO issues please contact Milko Skofic, m.skofic@cgiar.org

Season's Greetings



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