

## EURISCO Updates and News

“EURISCO News” is a series of e-bulletins to provide feedback to National Focal Points (NFPs) as well a forum for NFPs and others to put forward their comments and suggestions. In order to make the EURISCO Catalogue sustainable and meet the NFPs and users needs, all of you are invited to contribute to the e-bulletin. All ideas, comments, suggestions, and questions are [welcome](#).

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

## Recent and ongoing activities

### **EURISCO Website**

Latest news in the special issue - July e-bulletin at: <http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/documents/eurisco-e-bulletin-july-2008-special-issue.pdf>

### **EURISCO factsheets reaching more people**

The two fact sheets are available in 11 languages (see or download them at: [http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/releases/fact\\_sheet.php](http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/releases/fact_sheet.php)) and further efforts will be made to make them available in other European languages. All these efforts are in kind contributions form the NFPs.

Azeri, Croatian, Czech, Danish, English, German, Norwegian, Romanian, Slovak, **Spanish**, Turkish

- **Spanish is here, Italian and Albanian are on the way**

The Albanian and Italian translations are on the way and should be available soon at the above link.

The fact sheets, in the different languages, have been a tool of an inestimable value for dissemination and public awareness activities regarding the EURISCO Catalogue. If you would like to contribute to these translations in your home-country language, [let us know](#).

### **EURISCO poster updating**

The EURISCO poster was updated and the October version is available to download at <http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/releases/posters.php> . Soon a new version will be online.

### **Website feedback implementation news**

Because we care and take into account users' feedback, we have a space for posting EURISCO feedback

implementation. In this space, you can see what has been done, updated, corrected or changed after evaluating the feedback we've received. [See it at: <http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/releases/news.php> ]

## **EURISCO at the GBIF Nodes meeting**

The Regional Meeting of the European Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) Participant Nodes took place in Copenhagen, Denmark on 16 to 18 September 2008.

The main objectives of this meeting were to discuss and review the GBIF work plan, its informatics strategy and long-term plans for development. During the meeting, a series of discussions was held to provide suggestions on the way forward for Nodes.

EURISCO was present as a model of the European Regional Thematic Network, and the EURISCO Coordinator was invited to present the EURISCO Network, its working model and its data sharing mechanisms with its participants as well as with the GBIF infrastructure. The presentation, entitled -"EURISCO as an example of a thematic European network sharing data with GBIF" described the Catalogue, its NFPs, its mode of operation, the challenges of sharing data, bottlenecks and its strategy of contributing to regional and global priorities.

At the end of the meeting summary conclusions were drafted and summarized as follows:

- "Use existing European regional meetings to improve the understanding and existing opportunities within research, environment, conservation groups and larger infrastructures.
- Prepare for joint and collaborative responses to EU calls, as well as support to ENB12.
- Use current MoU to provide a support officer aimed at assisting the existing initiatives with detailed problem solving.
- Carry on as we are, meeting, sharing experiences, and influencing specific areas of GBIF's work programme.
- Also the meeting welcomed the GBIF decentralization strategy
- The new working style of the Secretariat in identifying problems and seeking solution in a collaborative manner was appreciated."

At the meeting a survey to identify and prioritize the activities for the next biennium was distributed and feedback from Nodes representatives was sought in order to better refine the GBIF work plan. In addition, opportunities for upcoming discussions on European projects were brought to the attention of the participants. The meeting closed with a call for nomination for Chair and Vice-chair of the nodes. Elections took place at the GBIF Governing Body. [GBIF GB more at: <http://www.gbif.org/News/GB15rep> ]

## **Two Seminars and trainings took place this year**

- **EURISCO Seminar and Training, 3-4 November 2008, Madrid, Spain**  
[http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/contact\\_menu/training.php](http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/contact_menu/training.php)

A EURISCO Seminar and Training was held on 3-4 November 2008 in Madrid, Spain, and was organized by INIA-CRF, Spain and EURISCO/ECPGR/Biodiversity International. This is the first of a series of Seminars - Trainings envisioned to be held in other countries.

The objective of this Seminar-Training was to strengthen national capacity in data exchange and the sustainability of EURISCO, and pursue improved data completeness by enhancing the quality and quantity of data flowing into the Catalogue and providing a one-to-one training to NFPs.

For more details see Newsletter for Europe N.38 page 14 or you click on the following link: [http://www.biodiversityinternational.org/nc/publications/publications/publication/?user\\_biodiversitypublications\\_pi1\[showUId\]=3153](http://www.biodiversityinternational.org/nc/publications/publications/publication/?user_biodiversitypublications_pi1[showUId]=3153)

The Seminar and Training outputs and recommendations were discussed at the end of each day; the summary the conclusions were:

- The need to address the difference between the quantity of the existing information between the Spanish NI (60.000) and in EURISCO (17.531) was evident.
- Due to the participant's general acceptance of making their information available in EURISCO, it was proposed to initiate the discussions between curators to decide, for each collection, which records to make available through EURISCO.

- It was realized that also there is a discrepancy between the NI and the collections maintained in the INIA network.
- A strategy and protocol were proposed for actions to follow up after the seminar:
  - Compare the information available in the network collections and that in the Spanish NI according to the agreed protocol.
  - CRF will send each curator a database with the NI information on these collections.
  - The curators are requested to check the NI dataset with their own collection databases.
  - And the CRF should receive a report from each collection:
    - In cases where the NI does not have the genebank passport information the genebank is required to send the information to CRF on these new accessions;
    - as well as the seed samples to be included in the national base collection;
    - and the CRF will assign to these new samples the NI catalogue number.

To facilitate this task, it is necessary to have a harmonized nomenclature that will be the Catalogue Number (CN). This CN will be the link between the NI database and with each of the collections maintained in the network of genebanks.

As a final conclusion of the session, the importance of the network of collections was highlighted along with the need to organize this kind of seminars more often to discuss PGR topics and strengthened network activities and its synergies.

At the closure of the meeting, the director of CRF, highlighted the increased necessity to establish bilateral discussions between INIA and the collections in order to proceed with registration of the MLS material in the NI for the International Treaty.



- **EURISCO Seminar and Training, 9-11 December 2008, Tirana, Albania**  
[http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/contact\\_menu/training.php](http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/contact_menu/training.php)

A EURISCO Seminar and Training was held on 9-11 December 2008, in Tirana, Albania, as part of the workshop organized by the Agricultural University of Tirana and the Albanian Genebank with support from FAO, SEEDNet and EURISCO/ECPGR/Bioversity International on documentation and information.

This workshop had several components, each with its own set of objectives. The FAO project was to undertake activity 3.2.2.1 "Training course on database systems establishment and management aiming at promoting the use of PGRFA"; the SEEDNet objective was to train for the adoption of SESTO in Albania and the server installation; and the EURISCO objective was to strengthen the sustainability of EURISCO and improve data completeness by enhancing the quality and quantity of data flowing into the Catalogue.

Hands-on training was provided to the Albanian NFP and other participants; it aimed at bringing all NFPs up to the same level of development and knowledge. The seminar involved genebank documentation system managers and the Chairs of the Sector for PGR and the documentation specialist for each of the Agricultural Technology Transfer Centers (ATTC). It provided up-to-date information to members of the Albanian network of data providers-ATTCs and the National Inventory as well as raised awareness of the importance of PGR information activities.

The workshop was attended by 15 participants: two representatives from the Albanian Genebank – Genebank Coordinator and the Documentation Officer - EURISCO NFP; two representatives of the 5 ATTCs, Lushnja, Korce, Shkoder, Vlore and Fushe Kruje (from each of these centers there was a Chair of the Sector for PGR and a documentation specialist); also the Chair and Vice-Chair of the IT WG for the SEEDNet project from the Agricultural University of Tirana; and a PGR specialist.

The objectives of the workshop were all successfully met: the new Albanian NI was uploaded at the end of the workshop. It now has 1,146 accessions, which more than doubles the number of accessions available through

EURISCO from Albania. In addition, the SESTO genebank management system was confirmed to be adopted by Albania.

From the overall evaluation of the workshop and its training sessions, it was evident (and also expressed by the participants) that there is a further need for a subsequent training. Participants also highlighted the successful configuration of the workshop, with collaboration between diverse international actors in PGR and biodiversity activities, maximizing resources and knowledge.



This was the second series of Seminars and Trainings, and they are envisioned to be held in other countries. If you find this interesting and helpful and you would like it to be done in your country [let us know](#).

## Dissemination activities and News

### **New NIs available in EURISCO in 2008**

The most recent NIs to join the EURISCO catalogue were Turkey and Albania. Both joined during August and augmented value of the information made available in EURISCO and to NIs. With these, the Catalogue now represents 38 European countries of the European Region. We hope that other countries will follow in the upcoming year.

### **EURISCO report 2004-2008 for the 11th ECPGR Steering Committee**

Another important report produced this year was the "EURISCO Coordinator Report 2004 – 2008 ECPGR Phase VII" for the end of ECPGR Phase VII. The report, giving a full account of EURISCO activities for the above mentioned period, is available at:

[http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/SteeringCommittee/SC11/Docs/EURISCO\\_ProgressReport\\_SD.pdf](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/SteeringCommittee/SC11/Docs/EURISCO_ProgressReport_SD.pdf) .

### **Decision from the ECPGR 11<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee**

The Eleventh Meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of ECPGR was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina in September. The SC approved the Phase VIII of ECPGR (2009-2013) and its plans with an overall budget of €2,759,000 and it is expected that over 40 countries will participate in this Phase. [more in page 1 at: [http://www.bioversityinternational.org/nc/publications/publications/publication/?user\\_bioversitypublications\\_pi1\[showUId\]=3153](http://www.bioversityinternational.org/nc/publications/publications/publication/?user_bioversitypublications_pi1[showUId]=3153)]

At this meeting the SC agreed to use the EURISCO Catalogue as a service to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), by approving the proposed mechanism of registration of accessions in the Multilateral System (MLS), as well as an interim reporting procedure, at the national level, for reporting on the use of Standard Material Transfer Agreements (SMTA) [more in page 10 at: [http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/SteeringCommittee/SC11/SC11\\_FinalReport.pdf](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/SteeringCommittee/SC11/SC11_FinalReport.pdf)]

- **The new descriptors for EURISCO as a service to the International Treaty**

MLS and AEGIS registry status descriptors for EURISCO	
34.* MLS Status The coded status of an accession with regard to the Multilateral System (MLS) of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Provides the information on whether the accession is included in the MLS. 0 – not part of the MLS 1 – part of the MLS If the MLS status is unknown, the field stays empty.	(MLSSTAT)
35.* AEGIS Status The coded status of an accession with regard to the European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS). Provides the information on whether the accession is conserved for AEGIS. 0 – not part of AEGIS 1 – part of AEGIS If the AEGIS status is unknown, the field stays empty.	(AEGISSTAT)

Fig. 1. Registration procedure for European Material under the MLS of the ITPGR.

SMTA reporting descriptors for EURISCO	
1. SMTA Institute Code IAO Institute Code [or another official code] for the institute acting as Provider. Example: DEU146	(SMTAINST)
2. SMTA Number This number serves as a unique identifier for the SMTA contract within an institute, and is assigned by the institute acting as Provider. Example: IFS00724	(SMTANUMB)
3. SMTA Date Date on which the SMTA contract was concluded as YYYY:MM:DD. Missing data (MM or DD) should be indicated with hyphens. Leading zeros are required. Example: 20020620	(SMTADATE)
4. SMTA Total Number of Accessions Total number of accessions transferred by the SMTA. Example: 345	(SMTACCE)
5. SMTA Number of Accessions per Genus The field is used to elaborate on the number of accession per genus transferred by the SMTA. Prefix genus name in Latin, initial uppercase letter required, and a colon followed by the number of transferred accessions for the genus without space. Separate entries referring to different genera by semicolons without space. Example: Allium:120;Beta:25;Hordeum:200	(SMTAGENUS)
6. SMTA Category of recipient The coded category of the Recipient of the accessions transferred by the SMTA. 1 – genebank 2 – botanical garden 3 – public research institute 4 – private breeder 5 – private individual, non-profit association 6 – education 9 – other (Elaborate in REMARKS field)	(SMTARECIP)
7. SMTA Remarks The remarks field is used to add notes or to elaborate on descriptor(s) with value 9 (=Other). Prefix remarks with the field name they refer to and a colon. Separate remarks are separated by semicolons without space. Example: SMTARECIP: museum	(SMTAREMARK)

Fig. 2. Interim module for reporting the use of SMTA of the MLS of the ITPGR for European providers.

## MLS and AEGIS flags implemented in EURISCO

We are pleased to announce that both fields are now available and searchable in EURISCO, meeting the decision by the 11th ECPGR Steering Committee, September 2008, on implementation of the MLS and AEGIS new fields in EURISCO.

"Decision - The SC approved the proposed mechanism of registration of accessions in the MLS and AEGIS (two new fields in EURISCO on "registry status") ..."

You can search it at: <http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/>.

## Countries registering MLS through EURISCO reached 14% in 2008

It is likely that EURISCO will become the European PGR information hub, providing access to passport and related information from all European National Inventories (NIs) and all crops, contributing to the Multilateral System (MLS) of the International Treaty as a reporting mechanism in line with the decision made at the last ECPGR SC meeting. The MLS and AEGIS flags are already implemented in the database structure and the former already been populated with data.

The first countries to register their material under the MLS in EURISCO were Germany and The Netherlands in November, and in December, the Czech Republic. We hope that other NIs will follow in the upcoming year.

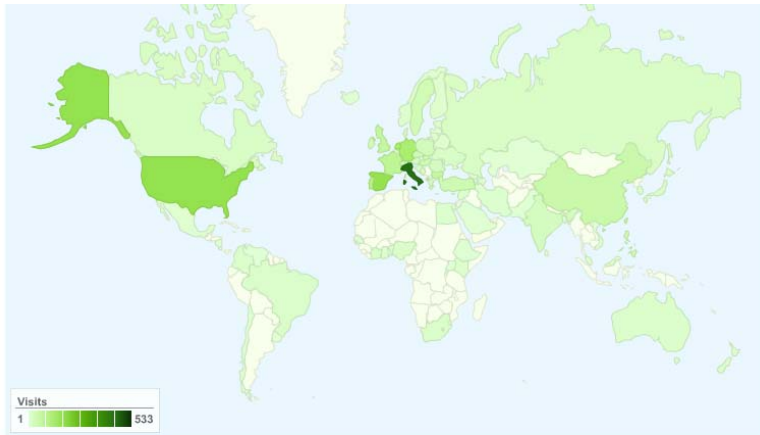
The German NI has registered 71% of the material maintained in its NI in the MLS; The Netherlands 69% and the Czech Republic 67%.

The three NIs together have registered in the MLS a total of 158,488 accessions, representing 14% of total of the material searchable in EURISCO which is, which currently equals 1,133,695 accessions.

## Who and from where people are searching in EURISCO

The monitoring-of-visitors log in the new EURISCO website provides a good overview of who is looking for information and on what.

Since acquiring its new look (16 July), the number of visitors to EURISCO has reached almost 3,000 visits, with a 50% increase in new visitors, and almost 50% of visitors returning. The information maintained in EURISCO has been searched from 86 countries.



2,873 visits came from 86 countries/territories

### Taxonomic and GIS reports

These reports are being generated and, after the necessary verification, they will be sent out to the NFPs in the New Year.

### EURISCO in facts and numbers -2008

During this year, the EURISCO Catalogue has been through a lot of changes and further improvement. Looking through the information available in the Catalogue from January to December, some facts and numbers are worth highlighting. These are:

- The total number of accessions has increased during this year by 44,443, reaching a total of 1,133,695 accessions documented in the Catalogue.
- There are two new Nis - Turkey and Albania. With the newcomers, the Catalogue now covers 38 European Region.
- The total number of participating institutes conserving plant genetic resources material has now reached 251 with an increase of 21 data sources during this year.
- At the same time, the number of species represented in the germplasm collections maintained in these 251 institutes has increased by 46 species and is now 8739 (this is a approximate number).
- A significant increase has been registered in updates of the NIs, and this is reflected by the increase of the number of accessions in NIs which ranges from 248 to 9,747 accessions.
- As for the type of material maintained in these NIs and searchable through EURISCO, examples of "wild" increased by 15%, "landraces" by 7%, "breeding research material" by 16% and "founder stock-base population" by 42%.
- The most recent news, MLS registration, covers already 14% of the total accessions made available through EURISCO.

### Newsletter for Europe - articles

- **EURISCO - European PGR information hub for germplasm conservation**

It is likely that EURISCO will become the European PGR information hub, providing access to passport and related information from all European National Inventories and all crops, contributing to the Global Information System and to the Multilateral System (MLS) of the International Treaty as a reporting mechanism. With this in view, the current year has been considered the year of change. [more in page 3 at: [http://www.bioversityinternational.org/nc/publications/publications/publication/?user\\_bioversitypublications\\_pi1\[showUId\]=3153](http://www.bioversityinternational.org/nc/publications/publications/publication/?user_bioversitypublications_pi1[showUId]=3153)]

- **EURISCO Seminar and Training, 3-4 November 2008, Madrid, Spain**

With a view to strengthening national capacities on PGR data handling, seminars and trainings on EURISCO were organized in Spain in November, and in Albania in December, with the main objective to strengthen

national capacities and increase the availability of National Inventories (NIs) to EURISCO. [more in page 15 at: [http://www.biodiversityinternational.org/nc/publications/publications/publication/?user\\_biodiversitypublications\\_pi1\[showUId\]=3153](http://www.biodiversityinternational.org/nc/publications/publications/publication/?user_biodiversitypublications_pi1[showUId]=3153)

- **GIGA - providing access to worldwide genebanks information**

EURISCO will be the European component of the Global Information on Germplasm Accessions (GIGA) Project, addressing breeders', crop researchers' and other users' specific needs on PGR information and management protocols. [more in page 19

at: [http://www.biodiversityinternational.org/nc/publications/publications/publication/?user\\_biodiversitypublications\\_pi1\[showUId\]=3153](http://www.biodiversityinternational.org/nc/publications/publications/publication/?user_biodiversitypublications_pi1[showUId]=3153)]

In addition, many other activities and actions have been carried out during 2008. Further information can be found on the EURISCO website at <http://eurisco.ecpgr.org>.

Through the 'EURISCO E-Bulletin', we hope to inform you about EURISCO activities and benefits. You are receiving this bulletin either because you have previously indicated an interest in receiving our news, or because you are associated with an organization that has an interest in biodiversity and biodiversity data.

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If you wish to contribute to or comment on the e-bulletin, please contact [s.dias@cgiar.org](mailto:s.dias@cgiar.org) or use the sign-up form on the EURISCO website at: [http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/releases/e\\_bulletin.php](http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/releases/e_bulletin.php)

You can find the previous issues of the e-bulletin at <http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/releases/issues.php> .

## Planned meetings

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Date</b>
Doc & Info Network and Inter-regional Coop. Network - Inter-regional workshop on IT implementation	Entebbe, Uganda (tbc)	June (tbc)
Doc & Info Network - Meeting of National Inventory Focal Points	Prague, Czech Republic	29-30 June



*Photo: S. Dias, Biodiversity International*

### Season Greetings

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