

**FAO International Technical Conference
on Plant Genetic Resources**

**REPORT OF THE SUB-REGIONAL
PREPARATORY MEETING FOR
EUROPE**

**Nitra, Slovakia
24-27 September 1995**



**Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations**



Note by FAO

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I. INTRODUCTION

Opening ceremony

(1) Representatives from 35 countries met in Nitra, Slovakia from 24-27 September 1995. Representatives from 5 NGOs as well as FAO, the EC and IPGRI also attended the meeting.

(2) The meeting was opened by Mr Vincent Bíros on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic, who welcomed the delegates, expressed his satisfaction at hosting this important meeting and wished all a successful meeting.

(3) Mr Cary Fowler then addressed the delegates on behalf of FAO. He explained that this meeting was the sixth to be held in a series of eleven regional and subregional meetings as part of the preparatory process to the FAO Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources.

(4) Mr Dick van Sloten greeted the delegates on behalf of the Director General of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI). He emphasized the strong involvement of IPGRI, and particularly that of IPGRI's Europe Group, in the preparatory process of the Fourth Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources.

Procedural matters

(5) Mr Michel Chauvet of France was elected to chair the meeting and Mr Ladislav Dotlacil from the Czech Republic was elected as Vice-Chair. Mr Gert Kleijer from Switzerland was elected as rapporteur. The agenda was adopted by the meeting.



II. OVERVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL CONFERENCE ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES AND ITS PREPARATORY PROCESS

(6) Mr Cary Fowler of FAO gave an overview of the process leading to the Fourth Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources. He described the two documents which should result from this process and which will be submitted to the Conference in Leipzig in June 1996, namely the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources and the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources (GPA).

(7) He noted the participatory nature of the preparatory process which included the submission of country reports and the holding of subregional meetings. Both are important inputs into the two major documents for the International Technical Conference. These documents will be negotiated by the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources and adopted by the International Technical Conference. Mr. Fowler explained that this effort was within the context of the FAO Global System on Plant Genetic Resources.

(8) Mr Fowler stressed that the main purposes of the meeting were to review the situation in the region, examine common problems and opportunities, develop positions and recommendations for the Global Plan of Action and forge consensus. In addition, he observed that many delegates wished to extend the progress made in the ECP/GR meeting as a contribution to the International Technical Conference. He noted that IPGRI had prepared a very useful draft regional synthesis report as a background for discussions, though this report did not necessarily represent the views of FAO on substantive matters or regarding any government or the definition of the territory of any country.

(9) Mr Fowler stated that discussions during this meeting could cover the entire range of subjects from conservation to utilization and that plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, including forest genetic resources, were under consideration. While the region itself was the focus of the meeting, global considerations should be kept in mind. Concrete, pragmatic recommendations were solicited, for example on rationalization of collections, regeneration, characterization and evaluation, utilization and capacity building. In addition, guidance was sought on the nature of responsibilities at the national, regional and international levels.

(10) The host country was thanked again for its generosity. The assistance of IPGRI was cited with appreciation. Their contribution to the preparation and holding of the meeting was essential to the success of the effort.



III. PRESENTATION OF REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMES ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks (ECP/GR)

(11) ECP/GR was presented by Mr Gert Kleijer from Switzerland, Chairman of the mid-phase meeting of the Technical Consultative Committee (TCC) in Nitra, 21-23 September 1995. After an introduction on the programme's history and the successes obtained by its working groups, Mr Kleijer presented the new operational structure of ECP/GR as adopted by the TCC during its meeting. The TCC recommended that ECP/GR be used as the platform for the implementation of the GPA in the European Region as part of the FAO Global System on Plant Genetic Resources. The structure of ECP/GR was subsequently modified after adoption by the Programme's Steering Committee on 25/9/95. The final structure and recommendations of the TCC are shown in Appendix I. A summary on ECP/GR is attached as Appendix II.

European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN)

(12) Mr Jozef Turok, EUFORGEN Coordinator, presented this programme recently established in application of the Resolution 2 of the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe held in Strasbourg in 1990 and the Ministerial Conference held in Helsinki in 1993. Twenty two countries are currently members of EUFORGEN and a further eight have expressed strong interest in joining the Programme.

(13) The programme is managed by IPGRI in consultation with FAO, and is overseen by a Steering Committee consisting of the National Coordinators nominated by the Programme's member countries. Mr Turok went on to present the four existing Networks within the Programme and highlighted the activities currently ongoing. He further stressed the importance of forest genetic resources and drew attention to specific problems with their conservation and sustainable use. A summary on EUFORGEN is attached as Appendix III.



European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture (ESCORENA)

(14) Mr J. Serwinski of the FAO Seed and Plant Genetic Resources Service presented the activities of the European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture (ESCORENA) which was established in 1974 under the auspices of FAO. He introduced the main objectives of the system and listed research networks dealing with plants. Working groups with an element of plant genetic resources were highlighted. A presentation on ESCORENA is attached as Appendix IV.



IV. THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) AS PARTNER IN THE REGIONAL COLLABORATION ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

(15) Mr J.M. Bolivar of Spain gave a reading of the suggestions and conclusions by the EU and its member states as well as proposals for the GPA. This document addresses the aims of the GPA, a strategy to achieve these aims and policies and actions. The document is attached as Appendix V.

(16) Mr Richard Hardwick of the European Commission then presented an overview of the current legislation of the EU in the area of plant genetic resources. The EU Programme on genetic resources (EC) 1467/94 particularly addresses the conservation of ex situ collections. A first call for proposals was published in December 1994 and the results of the selection process are expected before the end of 1995. The representative of the Commission stated that 'A preliminary list of European Union legislation in the Area of Plant Genetic Resources' was available for distribution to the delegates. This explained the various modalities of support provided under European legislation for the conservation, characterization, collection and utilization of genetic resources in agriculture. This paper is attached as Appendix VI of this report.



V. PRESENTATION OF THE DRAFT REGIONAL SYNTHESIS REPORT

(17) Mr Emile Frison, Europe Regional Director of IPGRI, presented the Draft Regional Synthesis Report prepared by IPGRI for the Regional Meeting on Plant Genetic Resources.

(18) The meeting commended IPGRI and the secretariat for the quality of the report and is satisfied that the content represents a good synthesis of the information included in the Country Reports. No attempt was made by the meeting to reach a consensus on every element of the document but the secretariat accepted to take into account minor modifications suggested by the different countries. The meeting agreed to replace the recommendations for the GPA included in the draft report by those adopted by the meeting in the last Plenary session. The meeting commended the synthesis to the attention of the secretariat as a working document for the preparation of the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources. The Synthesis Report is annexed to this report.



VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

Context and Principles

(19) Recognizing:

- (a) that international cooperation and collaboration is essential to the success of the GPA which is an integral part of the FAO Global System for plant genetic resources;
- (b) the willingness for increased international collaboration present at national level;
- (c) that actions within the GPA must contribute to develop and strengthen this collaboration, and
- (d) that the measures decided in the GPA should be in harmony with the objectives formulated in Chapter 14G of Agenda 21 and comply with the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant international agreements,

(20) and taking into consideration:

- (a) the specific characteristics of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) which are fundamental for food security, and
- (b) the great interdependence of countries with regard to PGRFA,

(21) the Meeting encourages the establishment of a multilateral agreement for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and recommends:

- (a) that this multilateral agreement include both material collected prior to the coming into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity and material collected thereafter;
- (b) that this multilateral agreement include in principle all plant genetic resources for food and agriculture;
- (c) that this multilateral agreement ensure unrestricted access to the plant genetic resources covered by the agreement, to all members to the agreement, and
- (d) that this multilateral agreement encourage the involvement of the private sector and NGOs.



- (e) That with the view to implementing the GPA, the multilateral agreement resulting from the negotiated revision of the International Undertaking include *inter alia*, and in harmony with other relevant international agreements, the following elements:
- an information network or system, including an inventory of genetic resources, promoting information exchange on material designated to the multilateral agreement, and
 - a multilateral framework to support the strengthening of technical capacity and to implement programmes which would ensure a fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from PGRFA, contributing, *inter alia*, to the realization of Farmers Rights.

(22) The Meeting also recommends:

- (a) that the FAO global system help facilitate unrestricted access to genetic material for bona fide users for research and breeding purposes;
- (b) that a mechanism be established by which the implementation of national, regional and global components to a Global Plan of Action can be monitored by governments;
- (c) that the institutes which have signed agreements with IPGRI (formerly IBPGR) making commitments for the unrestricted availability and the long-term conservation of collections designated under the previously called “IBPGR Register of Base Collections” place those collections under the auspices of FAO in the international Network of *ex situ* Collections;
- (d) that the International Network of *ex situ* Collections under the auspices of FAO be further developed;
- (e) that existing global initiatives which relate to the conservation and use of genetic resources for food and agriculture (taken by FAO, UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO, CGIAR, IUFRO, etc.) be coordinated on an objective-orientated basis and implemented in close collaboration within the context of the FAO Global System on PGR and in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- (f) that in the field of conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources, existing policy areas be better coordinated and the efficiency of existing and new global instruments improved, and
- (g) that public awareness about genetic resources be further promoted at all levels and with all relevant parties.



National Programmes

National commitment to conservation of PGRFA

(23) Recognizing:

- (a) the obligation of countries under the Convention on Biological Diversity to reflect adequately through coherent national policies their commitment to the long-term conservation of plant genetic resources;
- (b) that national plant genetic resources programmes are the basic building blocks of any international effort in this field;
- (c) the utmost importance of long-term national commitment to genetic resources programmes, in particular, for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture;
- (d) that national collections should contain the genetic resources required to meet national needs and international obligations, and that they may focus in particular on indigenous resources;
- (e) the value of regional and international collaboration;
- (f) that international and regional organizations derive their mandates from national governments;
- (g) that the availability of new funds is likely to be limited, and
- (h) the urgent need to translate commitment into practical action;

(24) the Meeting recommends:

- (a) that countries establish national programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources that include all relevant partners from relevant ministries, research institutes, universities, the private sector and NGOs;
- (b) that countries take steps as appropriate to ensure that national programmes rest on an adequate legal basis, consistent with relevant international agreements, and on appropriate policy and institutional framework in which clear responsibilities are assigned to relevant ministries and institutions;
- (c) that coordination mechanisms within countries, inter alia, between relevant ministries, be adequate to ensure the most effective prioritization in the deployment of financial and other resources;
- (d) that coordination mechanisms at operational level be effective in avoiding duplication and promoting a coherent effort;



- (e) that opportunities be taken for collaboration among countries in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of holdings and efforts;
- (f) that in organizing systems of conservation at national, regional and international levels, the differing *ex situ* conservation requirements of seed-propagated and vegetatively propagated crops, and the different strategies necessary for forestry resources (*in situ* conservation), be all taken into account;
- (g) that opportunities be taken to raise public awareness as a means of ensuring that the importance of plant genetic resources conservation is adequately recognized in the national political process;
- (h) that international organizations work with governments to develop the practical measures by which countries implement their international commitments, and
- (i) that coordinated and prioritized action at national level be complemented by an international system that is likewise coordinated and prioritized.

Collaboration between public and private sector

(25) Regarding the collaboration between the public and the private sector to ensure the long-term conservation and use of plant genetic resources,

(26) the Meeting recommends:

- (a) the active collaboration between all parties concerned with the conservation and use of plant genetic resources;
- (b) that adequate public safeguard be maintained over the collections which are held in collaboration with bodies outside the public sector, particularly in countries with economies in transition;
- (c) that primary characterization, evaluation and adequate documentation be considered as essential to facilitate collaboration with plant breeders and promote the sustainable use of plant genetic resources;
- (d) that the status of collections held by countries should be defined and a clear commitment for long-term conservation formulated for those collections considered as national genetic resources, and
- (e) that all countries hold inventories of their plant genetic resources conserved *in situ* or *ex situ*.

Privatization of public collections:

(27) Concerning privatization, the meeting expresses its concern at the increasing privatization of public plant genetic resources collections.



(28) the Meeting recommends:

- (a) that privatization initiatives, if considered, take account of the country's long-term commitment to conserve plant genetic resources, and that this commitment be supported by an adequate national policy framework, and
- (b) that in forestry, in particular, recognizing the long life cycles of forest trees and the need to secure the long-term conservation of genetic resources (including those in private forest stands) in countries with economies in transition, adequate consideration be given to the need for legal and financial support of the national programmes and that capacity-building programmes be envisaged for new forest owners.

Collaboration with NGOs

(29) Recognizing:

- (a) the role of NGOs and other actors in the informal sector in the implementation of programmes in conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, research, advocacy and public information at local, national, regional and international levels, and
- (b) that the collaboration with NGOs already involved in the area is essential to the success of programmes concerned with on farm conservation at regional and community level.

(30) the Meeting recommends:

- (a) that both NGOs and the formal sector work towards improving the benefits of collaboration, and
- (b) that the needs of, and opportunities of working with, NGOs be properly identified, and concrete actions be developed, particularly in the areas of training, access to reproductive material, national coordination of local initiatives, information, public awareness and assessing legal constraints to collaboration.



Regional and subregional collaboration

European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks

(31) Recognizing:

- (a) the role played by the European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks (ECP/GR), for the last 15 years, in developing a pan-European collaboration on plant genetic resources;
- (b) the experience gained in coordinating collaborative efforts in a cost-effective way;
- (c) the significant results obtained by the Programme;
- (d) the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the adoption by many European countries of Agenda 21;
- (e) the existence of various national, bilateral and regional activities in the European region;
- (f) the importance of international, regional and bilateral cooperation in the area of plant genetic resources, and
- (g) the potential role of ECP/GR in implementing the Global Plan of Action in the European region as part of the FAO Global System on Plant Genetic Resources.

(32) and considering that the objectives of ECP/GR are:

- (a) first and foremost, to ensure the long-term conservation and to facilitate and encourage the increased utilization of plant genetic resources in Europe,
- (b) to increase the planning of joint activities,
- (c) to strengthen links between east and west European plant genetic resources programmes,
- (d) to develop joint project proposals to be submitted to funding agencies,
- (e) to contribute to monitoring the safety of plant genetic resources collections and take appropriate action when required, and
- (f) to increase public awareness at all levels of the importance of plant genetic resources activities.



(33) Also considering:

- (a) the operational structure of ECP/GR;
- (b) that the Programme is overseen by a Steering Committee which has the following function:
 - it has overall responsibility for the Programme, approving its budget and providing technical and policy guidance to the Programme,
 - it takes decisions regarding the general scope of the networks and the establishment or termination of working groups,
 - it provides guidelines for and approves ad hoc activities,
 - it mandates the Coordinating Secretariat to carry out decisions of the Steering Committee and reviews the progress made by the networks, and
 - it can also make recommendations regarding ad hoc activities which are funded from other sources;
- (c) that the proposed framework does not imply a commitment by countries to fund activities which could be included in the framework.

(34) The Meeting recommends:

- (a) that the European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks, the basis of which are active national programmes, be used as the platform to facilitate the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the European region as part of the FAO Global System on Plant Genetic Resources;
- (b) that, within the regional cooperative structure, priorities be given to:
 - crops having their primary or secondary centre of diversity within the region,
 - crops of high economic importance to the region,
 - crops which are highly threatened by genetic erosion, and
 - crops for which the efficiency of conservation management could be increased and overall cost reduced by collaboration;
- (c) that representatives of the EC and the MAB-Programme be invited to the Steering Committee of ECP/GR as full members and that ASSINSEL be invited as an observing member;
- (d) that activities on forestry be not, for the time being, included in the ECP/GR structure. EUFORGEN should provide this structure. Strong links between the two structures should be established;



- (e) that, in addition to existing bilateral and subregional activities, additional subregional activities be encouraged, and
- (f) that, in addition to existing links with NGOs and breeders, a closer collaboration at a regional level be encouraged; and
- (g) that priorities for funding proposals by other bodies such as the EU be encouraged to complement and add value to the activities of ECP/GR.

Subregional collaboration

(35) the Meeting recommends:

- (a) to formalize and strengthen subregional cooperation, such as that between the Nordic Gene Bank and the Baltic countries;
- (b) that initiatives to rationalize conservation, characterization and evaluation and to share responsibilities for these activities be encouraged. They could have a crop-specific focus (European field collections of Allium in the Czech Republic and in Israel, Dutch-German Agreement on plant genetic resources, etc.) or a regional or subregional focus (Nordic Gene Bank, Middle East Regional Genebank Endeavor - MERGE), and
- (c) that significant elements of the work related to primary characterization and pre-breeding activities be carried out within the framework of regional or subregional collaboration as they are seen as a public sector service to be carried out in close collaboration with the genebanks and breeders.

Complementarity between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation

(36) Recognizing:

- (a) that conservation and use of plant genetic resources *in situ*, on-farm and *ex situ* should be seen as complementary and an integral part of national and regional strategies;
- (b) that there is still a need for collecting of endangered wild relatives of crops and landraces, and
- (c) that many wild plants are gathered for food and that their conservation needs, *in situ* and *ex situ*, are inadequately addressed in current programmes;
- (d) that seed trade legislations are sometimes antagonist with the conservation of genetic diversity, *in situ* or *ex situ*.



(37) the Meeting recommends:

- (a) that a stronger collaboration on the conservation and sustainable use of wild plants be undertaken in the framework of international collaborative programmes on plant genetic resources;
- (b) that improved mechanisms for ensuring coordination and closer collaboration among responsible institutions be established;
- (c) that *in situ* conservation of wild relatives of crops be promoted through national, regional and international cooperation and funded according to needs and priorities, particularly in countries in which high levels of diversity are found;
- (d) that the establishment of *in situ* networks be considered at the European level;
- (e) that regional cooperative programmes to promote *in situ* conservation be encouraged. These should focus on ecogeographic sub-regions such as the Alps, the Carpatian region, the Balkans and the Mediterranean basin;
- (f) that the need for collecting of endangered wild relatives of crops and landraces be addressed through regional collaboration;
- (g) that regional policies such as the EU legislation on marginal agricultural areas or the legislation on seed trade be reviewed to evaluate their effects on PGR conservation and use, and where appropriate adapted to specifically promote on farm conservation in diversity rich areas, and
- (h) that appropriate measures be taken to conserve varieties that are no longer available commercially.

Underutilized species

(38) Recognizing:

- (a) the importance of underutilized species in Europe, in particular, indigenous species and their potential to contribute to agricultural and diet diversification, and
- (b) the experience gained by IPGRI's project on Underutilized Mediterranean Species (UMS),



(39) the Meeting recommends:

- (a) that as a first step, an inventory of underutilized species of Europe be established, which should contain the following information:
- a list of underutilized species, their distribution throughout the region and the level of utilization at local or subregional level,
 - the status of availability of germplasm in genebank collections,
 - an indication of the level of genetic erosion of the species,
 - a list of experts/institutions working on these species,
 - a list of on-going activities on these species, and
 - a list of relevant publications.
- (b) that actions be undertaken to select from the inventory those species which are most threatened and to ensure that they are included in the lists of endangered species of those countries where the threat is reported to occur;
- (c) that threatened species requiring emergency collecting and/or *in situ* conservation in protected areas be identified;
- (d) that the project on Underutilized Mediterranean Species (UMS) be considered as a model for the establishment of new subregional cooperations for the conservation and sustainable use of underutilized species, including research when appropriate, and
- (e) that coordination mechanisms between existing institutes and initiatives on underutilized species, such as UMS, the neglected crop species project of IPGRI/IPK Gatersleben, ICUC, etc. be improved.

Inventory of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture

(40) The Meeting recommends:

- (a) that a broad inventory of plant genetic resources conserved *ex situ* and *in situ*, be established and regularly updated;
- (b) that new information technologies be used to provide better access to information about collections to potential users and to decision-makers, and
- (c) that integrated information systems be developed to promote complementarity and standardization of characterization and evaluation data of *ex situ*, *in situ* and on-farm conserved plant genetic resources.



Research and training

(41) Recognizing:

- (a) the importance of research and training in the field of conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

(42) the Meeting recommends:

- (a) that research programmes dealing with the following aspects be given priority in allocation of international funds:
- storage and regeneration methods, particularly for non-orthodox seed,
 - possible impact of legal, economic and agricultural policy on plant genetic resources and biodiversity,
 - exploration and documentation of still existing knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities about plant genetic resources,
 - identification and promotion of underutilized crops with potential economic importance, and
 - development of methods for the assessment of the structure and evolution of genetic diversity, under natural and artificial constraints;
- (b) that capacity building and training in the area of plant genetic resources conservation and sustainable use be further developed at all levels, from technical skills to post-graduate training.

International collaboration

(43) Recognizing:

- (a) that the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources in developing countries should be promoted through development cooperation, and
- (b) the commitment of parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to increased international technical cooperation.



(44) the Meeting recommends:

- (a) that appropriate programmes, projects and activities be undertaken on a global level in the areas of:
- training,
 - technology transfer,
 - knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities,
 - policy coordination and coordination on a technical level,
 - research, and
 - the rationalization of collections;
- (b) that consideration be given, inter alia, to the following possibilities:
- improvement of capacity-building at regional or national level in other regions, both through the public sector and through other structures,
 - development of appropriate education, taking account of relevant existing experience and making use of local or regional capacity,
 - development of a crop information system on knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities gathered from relevant people, available to all actors in the field of conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA;
- (c) that more efficient conservation systems and improved utilization of PGRFA be aimed for by making use of synergistic effects of international cooperation;
- (d) that methods to establish core collections for important crops be further developed within the framework of international cooperation;
- (e) that international crop networks for the effective conservation, evaluation and utilization of plant genetic resources be further developed for the most important or potentially significant species, and
- (f) that several countries receive assistance in upgrading their storage facilities and carrying out emergency regeneration, based on the uniqueness of their national collections and the threat they are facing.



APPENDIX I

Recommendation made by the Technical Consultative Committee of ECP/GR to the European Meeting on Plant Genetic Resources (Nitra, 24-27 September 1995)

(Revised version as agreed in an extraordinary meeting of the Committee on 25/9/95).

Recognizing:

- the role played by ECP/GR for the last 15 years in developing a pan-European collaboration on plant genetic resources;
- the experience gained in coordinating collaborative efforts in a cost effective way;
- the significant results obtained by the Programme;
- the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the adoption by many countries of Agenda 21;
- the existence of various national, bilateral and regional activities in the European region;
- the importance of international, regional and bilateral cooperation in the area of plant genetic resources;
- the potential role of ECP/GR in implementing the Global Plan of Action in the European region as part of the FAO Global System on Plant Genetic Resources.

Considering that the objectives of ECP/GR are:

- first and foremost to ensure the long-term conservation and to facilitate and encourage the increased utilization of plant genetic resources in Europe;
- to increase the planning of joint activities;
- to strengthen links between east and west European plant genetic resources programmes;
- to develop joint project proposals to be submitted to funding agencies;
- to contribute to monitoring the safety of plant genetic resources collections and take appropriate action when required;



- to increase public awareness at all levels of the importance of plant genetic resources activities.

The Committee recommends that the European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks, the basis of which is active national programmes, be used as the platform to facilitate the implementation of the Global Plan of Action in the European region as part of the FAO Global System on Plant Genetic Resources.



APPENDIX II

The European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks (ECP/GR)

Introduction

ECP/GR was initiated in 1980 on the recommendations of UNDP, FAO and the EUCARPIA Genebank Committee to promote the conservation and utilization of crop genetic resources. From its establishment, this Programme has focused on strengthening international collaboration between east and west European countries through crop centered working groups in which experts in genetic resources management implement joint activities.

Through Phase I to Phase IV, ECP/GR has played an important role in accelerating the development of national programmes in several countries and has proved to be a valuable forum for the exchange of information, ideas and germplasm both within and beyond Europe. At the end of Phase III, the idea prevailed that the established networks should become independent. Consequently, the coordinator position was reduced to 1/4-time for Phase IV. During this fourth Phase, however, many expressed the wish to see the programme continue under the coordination of IPGRI, in order to maintain the momentum obtained during the first three Phases. The implementation of a fifth Phase (1994 to 1998), including the appointment by IPGRI of a full-time coordinator, was unanimously approved at the meeting of member states' representatives which was held in Bulgaria in August 1993. In September 1995, 30 countries actively participated in ECP/GR.

Objectives

The original objectives of ECP/GR include the creation of a system to facilitate direct contact between institutions involved in crop genetic resources activities. ECP/GR is to promote unhindered exchange of crop genetic resources and related data. Consequently, up-to-date information on collections held by public institutions and private breeders is to be made easily available to users. ECP/GR is also a framework in which joint activities such as collecting expeditions, characterization and evaluation of germplasm are implemented.

The following specific objectives were decided for Phase V of ECP/GR:

- first and foremost to ensure the long-term conservation and to facilitate and encourage the increased utilization of plant genetic resources in Europe;
- to increase the planning of joint activities;



- to strengthen links between east and west European plant genetic resources programmes;
- to develop joint project proposals to be submitted to funding agencies;
- to contribute to monitoring the safety of plant genetic resources collections and take appropriate action when required, and
- to increase public awareness at all levels of the importance of plant genetic resources activities.

Modus operandi

ECP/GR has operated for 15 years on the basis of crop-specific working groups. It was recognized by the Technical Consultative Committee (TCC) meeting on 21 - 23 September 1995 that this has allowed the establishment of a strong basis for collaboration throughout Europe, but that regional collaboration needs to be extended beyond a limited number of crops and that ECP/GR should adapt its operational structure to allow activities on other crops or themes to be carried out. To respond to this need for more flexibility a new programme structure was agreed upon.

According to this new structure, ECP/GR is overseen by a Steering Committee (former TCC), consisting of National Coordinators nominated by participating countries. The EC and MAB are invited to nominate a representative as full member of this Committee. FAO, IPGRI, the Nordic Gene Bank and ASSINSEL are invited as observers. The Programme operates through broad networks in which activities are either carried out in the framework of working groups or as *ad hoc* actions.

The Steering Committee has the overall responsibility of the Programme, approves its budget and provides technical and policy guidance to the programme. It takes decisions regarding the general scope of the networks and the establishment or termination of working groups. The Steering Committee provides guidelines for and approves *ad hoc* activities. It mandates the Coordinating Secretariat to carry out decisions of the Steering Committee and reviews the progress made by the networks. The steering committee can also make recommendations regarding *ad hoc* activities which are funded from other sources.

The Coordinating Secretariat is currently provided by IPGRI as appointed by the Steering Committee. The responsibilities of the Coordinating Secretariat are:

- to ensure the implementation of the programme in accordance with the mandate given by the Steering Committee;
- to coordinate the activities carried out in the framework of the programme;
- to be responsible for the financial management of the Programme;



- to provide technical and financial reports to the Steering Committee for approval;
- to provide support to working groups and ensure that the agreed workplans are carried out;
- to initiate ad hoc activities in accordance with guidance provided by the Steering Committee;
- to gather and distribute information;
- to assist in the formulation of project proposals for joint activities;
- to search for donors to support particular elements of workplans and ad hoc activities;
- to link with other regions, and
- to contribute to raising public awareness.

The networks are broad organizational structures that accommodate different types of activities contributing towards the general objectives of the Programme. The networks are crop or theme oriented. The networks are the structural elements through which progress of the Programme is reported and priorities are set.

The following networks have been established: Cereals network; Forages network; Grain legumes network; Industrial crops and potato network; Vegetables network; Fruits network; Minor crops network; Documentation and information network; *in situ* and on-farm conservation network; Technical cooperation network. The subject matter of networks and their number is reviewed periodically and modified as required.

Working groups focus their activity on specific crops, crop groups or thematic areas. They are initiated following the approval of the Steering Committee. ECP/GR provides funding for the organization of working group meetings and the publication of the resulting reports. National Coordinators are invited to nominate an Attending or a Corresponding Member to represent the country's interest in the genetic resources activities that the working group focuses on. The working groups are expected to meet once or twice during Phase V of the Programme. The actions carried out by the members of the working groups, for example, the management of European Crop Databases or the hosting of European Collections, are not a priori funded by the Programme. They are considered as an input in kind by participating institutions to the European cooperation on plant genetic resources. The continuation of a working group is decided on by the Steering Committee.



Ad hoc actions are initiated by the Secretariat, following the guidance of the Steering Committee. *Ad hoc* actions contribute towards the general objectives of the Programme and are carried out in the framework of the Programme's networks. *Ad hoc* actions can be *inter alia*: meetings of small groups dealing with specific technical issues or with crops not yet covered by existing working groups; technical symposia dealing with methodological aspects of plant genetic resources conservation; collaborative actions with other international and regional programmes and projects, and facilitate the participation of institutions from non-EU countries of the region in projects submitted to and accepted by the European Commission.



APPENDIX III

The European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN)

The genetic diversity of European forests, while it has attracted far less attention than the tropical rainforests, has proven to be particularly vulnerable due to the recent forest decline. Concern about European forests was expressed at the first Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe held in 1990 in Strasbourg. That conference recommended the development of a flexible mechanism coordinating the conservation efforts of individual countries. A follow-up committee of Resolution 2 ('Conservation of Forest Genetic Resources') initiated an international survey on the present status of forest genetic resources in Europe and prepared the basis for collaboration in pilot networks. The International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), then proposed the establishment of the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN). The Programme was endorsed by the second Ministerial Conference (Helsinki in 1993) and became operational in October 1994. EUFORGEN now has 22 member countries with a further eight expected to join soon.

The main activities of the Programme are concentrated into four pilot species networks. The selected set of species reflects national priorities for the conservation of most threatened genetic diversity at a species level and covers different types of ecogeographical (and probably genetic) distribution patterns as well as different reproductive systems. In the networks, forest geneticists and other forestry specialists meet and work together to analyze countries' needs, exchange experiences and develop jointly conservation strategies and methods. Besides that, EUFORGEN aims at providing a contribution to international collaborative initiatives and at facilitating the information flow among countries.

Network members and other scientists and forest managers from participating countries carry out an agreed workplan with their own resources as inputs in kind to the Programme. First meetings of the *Populus nigra* and *Quercus suber* EUFORGEN networks were held in 1994. In early 1995, another *Quercus suber* meeting and the first meeting of the *Picea abies* (Norway spruce) network took place. Another *Populus nigra* network meeting was held in September 1995. The approved workplans of all three networks focus on inventories of genetic resources of the species concerned, development of joint databases and lists of descriptors, identification of common research needs, efforts to submit joint project proposals, development of conservation strategies and guidelines, and promotion of the establishment of national gene reserve forests and complementary measures as part of national conservation programmes. The initial meeting of the 'noble hardwoods' network will be organized in March 1996.



EUFORGEN is overseen by a committee of national coordinators nominated by the participating countries. A meeting of this Steering Committee will be held in November 1995. Among other matters, the member countries will discuss creation of new networks for additional species, representation of countries in the networks, interaction with other regional/global programmes and promotion of public awareness about forest genetic resources in Europe. At the occasion of that meeting, a workshop addressing most important European forest genetic resources issues will be convened offering an input to the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources.



APPENDIX IV

The ESCORENA system of cooperative research networks in agriculture

FAO's European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture (ESCORENA), is characterized by two basic elements: a truly cooperative and voluntary research approach and an awareness of the need for sustainability of rural/agricultural systems and for a constructive environment-sound agricultural production approach.

The main objectives of ESCORENA are:

- to promote voluntary exchange of information and experimental data on selected subject matters;
- to support joint applied research on selected subject matters of common interest according to an accepted methodology, agreed division of tasks and timetable;
- to facilitate voluntary exchange of resources (e.g. germplasm, technology transfer and persons);
- to establish close links between European researchers and institutions working on the same subject/problem, and stimulation of interaction; and
- to accelerate the transfer of European technological advances to, and cooperation with developing countries.

Cooperation in the ESCORENA research networks is voluntary. Each network develops its own programme and ways of implementation, draws up its own applied research programme, organizes the exchange of information on the latest scientific experiences, prepares methods of work best suited to its specific requirements and divides the tasks among cooperating institutions in accordance with their interests, capabilities and fields of specialization. The cooperating institutions are free to choose the subject matter in which they cooperate and exchange information. The networks have a simple and flexible organizational set-up and their activities are basically self-regulated. Their decisions are generally taken by consensus. Each network carries out activities on a few well-defined subjects and not on a complete inventory of topics drawn from all the respective fields. For each topic in which a sufficient number of countries has expressed interest, a sub-network or working group is established. These working groups have specific tasks and a determined life span and are easier to convene and to terminate upon completion of their tasks.



The networks which concentrate activities on plants are the following:

- Citrus Improvement for the Wider Mediterranean Region (Working Group: Germplasm Collection, Conservation, Evaluation and Exchange).
- Inter-Regional Cooperative Network on Nuts (Working Group on Tree Nut Genetic Resources, Identification, Evaluation and Conservation).
- Olive Genetic Variability Network (Working Group: Conservation and Utilization of Genetic Resources).
- Research Network on Sunflower.
- Research Network on Soybean.
- Research and Development Network on Pastures and Fodder Crops (Working Group: Mediterranean Forage Resources).
- Research Network on Cotton.
- Inter-Region Research Network on Rice.
- Research Network on Flax (Working Group: Breeding and Genetic Resources).
- Mediterranean Fruit Inter-Country Network (MESFIN) (Working Group: Sub-network on Plant Genetic Resources Conservation).

The coordination centres, network coordinators and the chairmen of the working groups are chosen by the network participants themselves, generally for a renewable period of four years. The network coordinators are responsible for the implementation of the agreed work programme and collaborate with FAO in convening workshops, technical meetings and network consultations, and in organizing coordination board meetings. The working group chairmen follow-up the implementation of the adopted programmes and organize workshops, as well as prepare reports, proceedings, studies and guidelines. The Coordinating Board, consisting of the network coordinator and the working group chairmen, meets every two years to review the progress achieved, problems encountered and future programme of activities and identifies areas where cooperation can be improved and proposes the phasing out of activities.

An important more recent feature of ESCORENA network cooperation is the creation of specific inter-regional cooperative research networks on commodities of mutual interest to the European and Near East Regions i.e. cotton, nuts, rice, olives and buffalo and the gradual extension of activities to an increasing number of selected national institutions in interested countries outside the European Region.

ESCORENA and its programmes are regularly monitored and guided by the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA), according to FAO priorities; they are approved by the FAO Governing bodies. Furthermore, the European



Research Network's Advisory Committee (ERNAC) was established in 1989 to periodically review on-going activities of ESCORENA, to advise on the usefulness and feasibility of programmes and assess the value of topics proposed for new networks as well as the discontinuation of those networks that have accomplished their task. ERNAC is composed of three highly respected academics/professionals and operates as the overall scientific advisory and evaluating authority of ESCORENA. ERNAC last met on 17 October 1994 in Athens (Greece) to review ESCORENA's activities and discuss its future role in the light of the reorientation of FAO's programmes and priorities as approved by the 106th Session of the Council.

A total of 450 national/regional institutions and laboratories (V) and 2497 experts from 86 countries (VI and VII) participated in ESCORENA activities in 1994: 32 FAO Member Nations from the European Region (REU), 12 Member Nations from the Near East Region (RNE), three belonging to both RNE and REU, 31 FAO Member Nations from other regions and eight from non-Member States from Eastern Europe.

To date, eleven of the networks disseminate written information to the members and interested institutions through a well-established communication system: mostly in the form of a newsletter. In 1994, ten technical reports were published in the REU publication series and eleven meeting reports were published directly by the networks and meeting organizers. Two Experts Consultations were held (Animal Waste Management and Sheep and Goat Research) and the reports printed.

Since the early 1990's, a major effort was made to develop a subregional approach to ESCORENA: first in the Mediterranean Subregional context, in close collaboration with FAO\RNE and the CIHEAM (International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Studies) and more recently in the Central and Eastern European Sub-region (CEE).

The decision to establish ESCORENA in the early 1970's was based on the principle that in a period of rapid technological and scientific developments, it was difficult or even impossible for any institution or country to undertake in isolation the necessary scientific and technological research on any subject matter. Well-defined cooperation arrangements among interested national institutions have, therefore, a multiplying effect as each cooperating institution relies not only on its own activities but benefits from the results achieved and the experience gained by those involved. Today, in a period during which we are being confronted with an ever increased need for continuous technological innovation while we are witnessing a general decrease in agricultural research capabilities, the principle of purposeful and well-oriented cooperative research is even more valid than in the past. ESCORENA is an FAO supported operation, based on the people's participation principle.



Facing the new challenges as well as the effects of changing farm structures and production and management systems in a sustainable but also environment-friendly way, presupposes the development and application of technically sound and innovative policies. In this context, ESCORENA has played and can play an even more catalytic and goal-orienting role. During the next biennium the Networks can and should play a pivotal role in the implementation of the three important agreements launched by FAO during 1994:

- Agreement on the Cooperation between FAO and Academic and Research Institutions in Member Nations;
- Agreement Concerning the Use of Experts for Technical Cooperation Amongst Developing Countries (TCDC);
- Agreement Concerning the Use of Experts for Technical Cooperation Amongst Countries in Transition (TCCT).



APPENDIX V

Suggestions and Conclusions by the European Union and its Member States - Proposals for a Global Plan of Action

Text incorporating amendments agreed by PROBA 21 September 1995. Suggestions and Conclusions by the European Union and its Member States¹.

Proposals for a Global Plan of Action

1 The AIM of the Global Plan

The general aim of the Global Plan should be to help all interested parties, working together, to conserve (*in situ* and *ex situ*), to characterize, evaluate, sustainably utilize and, as necessary, to collect, plant genetic resources in the interests of current and future agriculture (including forestry, industrial crops and horticulture).

The Global Plan should aim specifically to implement the revised International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, in harmony with other relevant international agreements, as part of the global system of plant genetic resources of the FAO.

2 The STRATEGY to achieve the above aim

2.1 Associated measures

The Global Plan should be accompanied by the following associated measures:

- a multilateral framework agreement to make germplasm and relevant information from each specific collection available to users;
- a multilateral framework for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits between the providers and the users of plant genetic resources for agriculture and forestry, through which, *inter alia* Farmers' Rights can be realized.

2.2 Technical aspects: (1) Existing work

The Global Plan should help to achieve a better consistency of existing programmes in the field of plant genetic resources, at regional and at global level, in order to improve the overall efficiency of such programmes and to avoid duplication of efforts.

¹**Important note:** These Suggestions and Conclusions for the Global Plan of Action are made without any engagements as to its eventual financing. Nothing is to be inferred as to the negotiation of a financial mechanism, or commitment to funding, by the European Union and its Member States.



To that end, and in order to know what work is already in hand, a bank of information or inventory is required. This inventory should list projects and activities that are under way at global, regional, national and local level. It should show who pays for the action, who does the work, and for what purpose.

The inventory should be compiled, so far as possible, from the existing sources, and duplication of data collection should be avoided.

The inventory should be used, *inter alia*, to encourage the diffusion of existing knowledge and the use of existing conserved material, and to help the review and evaluation of existing projects and activities, and the establishment of priorities.

2.3 Technical aspects: (2) Future activities

The Global Plan should encompass activities at global, regional, national and local level (legislative, administrative or policy activities, as appropriate) which contribute towards the overall Aim in order to achieve a better integration of existing programmes.

Due regard should be paid to the activity's cost, and potential benefits.

The following should be considered:

- the activity's relevance to the achievement of local, national, regional and global priorities for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources;
- the activity's direct value for sustainable agriculture (including forestry);
- the activity's potential value for enhancing the development and employment of national and regional expertise, the development of human resources, and genetic resource science and technology.

2.4 Technical aspects: (3) Management

The Global Plan should include measures to review progress, and to assess results, at fixed intervals. This will assist the permanent updating of priorities at regional and global level.

3 Policy and Actions:

Priorities should be based on the information that has been collected on the programmes, projects and activities, at local, national, regional and global levels.



The situation of, and the trends in, conservation, characterization, evaluation, utilization and collection of plant genetic resources in agriculture including forestry should continue to be monitored.

Rather than creating new management structures, measures should be taken to better coordinate ongoing efforts. Emphasis should be put on facilitating access to information, to training and to transfer of relevant technology, making maximum use of modern information and other technologies.

Encouragement should be given to the active involvement and cooperation of public and of private organizations, and to the free exchange and dissemination of germplasm and associated information between all interested parties.

Generally, there should be an emphasis on the conservation, characterization, evaluation and sustainable utilization of existing plant genetic resources in agriculture including forestry, rather than on the collection of new ones.

Scientific research and technological development that contributes towards the achievement of the aims of the Global Plan should be encouraged; so as to improve the conservation, and to improve and accelerate the characterization, evaluation and utilization, of plant genetic resources in agriculture including forestry.

Finally, it is important that participants in activities under the Global Plan should aim to ensure the practical utilization of their efforts, to the benefit of sustainable agriculture and to the security of food supplies.



APPENDIX VI

A preliminary list of European Union Legislation in the Area of Plant Genetic Resources

An annotated list of European Union legislation, following the structure of the document “Introductory Guidelines for Countries Reports” (International conference and programme for plant genetic resources; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome)

Introduction: Europe and its Agriculture

The Treaty establishing the European Economic Community lays down (Article 38) that the common market shall extend to agriculture and trade in agricultural products. It establishes a common agricultural policy (Article 43), whose objectives shall be (Article 39):

- (a) to increase agricultural productivity by promoting technical progress (...)
- (b) thus to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community (...)
- (c) to stabilize markets
- (d) to assure the availability of supplies
- (e) to ensure that supplies reach consumers at reasonable prices.

Subsequent evolution of the C.A.P. was governed by a number of legal instruments. These include the Structural Funds, which have the task, amongst others, “to preserve the countryside (inter alia by securing the conservation of natural agricultural resources)” .

In June 1992 the Council of Ministers adopted a package of reforms of the common agricultural policy.

There are five main objectives:

- (a) To maintain the Community’s position as a major agricultural producer and exporter by making its farmers more competitive on home and export markets.
- (b) To bring production down to levels more in line with market demand.
- (c) To focus support for farmers’ incomes where it is most needed.
- (d) To encourage farmers to remain on the land.
- (e) To protect the environment and develop the natural potential of the countryside.



Indigenous plant genetic resources: Forest Genetic Resources

In a document prepared by the services of the European Commission on the basis of the opinion of the Standing Forestry Committee (preparation of a European Union position on forestry issues at the agenda of the third meeting of the UN commission on sustainable development (CSD)) the European Union states that the Union is fully committed to sustainable forest management.

The European Union and its Member States are signatory parties to the Resolutions of the Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe. The sustainable management of natural forests is the subject of Resolution 2 of the Ministerial Conference. The signatory states committed themselves to implement in their own countries, using whatever methods seem most appropriate, a policy for the conservation of forest genetic resources.

Other Wild Species and Wild Relatives of Crop Plants

The Community is party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Some of the species covered by Commission Regulation (EC) No 558/95 of 10 March 1995 are native to the Community.

Landraces (“Farmers’ Varieties”) and Old Cultivars

Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 protects geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

Council Regulation (EEC) No 2082/92 establishes a scheme of certificates of specific character for agricultural products and foodstuffs. Food products that are made from landraces and old cultivars have opportunity of special protection, so far as the production has either a limited geographical origin, or so far as the production is based on particular traditional raw materials.

Moreover, a Commission proposal is currently under consideration by the Council and by the European Parliament which aims at completing the legislation on the marketing of plant propagating material by a legal basis for the mandate to establish specific conditions to take account of developments in the area of the conservation of genetic resources, such as “on farm conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources through growing and marketing of landraces and varieties which are naturally adapted to the local and regional conditions and threatened by genetic erosion”. This proposal also includes provisions for environmental risk assessment and for food safety assessment in the case of transgenic varieties of plants, to be accomplished at the time of official acceptance of those varieties.



Regulation (EC) No 1467/94 provides for the support of actions on the conservation, characterization, collection and utilization of genetic resources in agriculture. In such actions, the recording of traditional regional experience and knowledge of farmers and horticulturalists on methods of cultivation, specific uses, processing, taste, etc is an eligible activity.

Conservation Activities

Regulation (EC) N, 1467/94 introduces a first five year programme aimed at the effective development and coordination of the conservation, characterization, collection and utilization of genetic resources in agriculture. All the topics covered in Chapter 3 are eligible for support under this programme.

***In situ* Conservation Activities**

In situ conservation activities are supported by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2078/92 “on agricultural production methods compatible with the requirements of the protection of the environment and the maintenance of the countryside”. This Regulation provides, “aid for farmers who undertake: ... to use other farming practices compatible with the requirements of protection of the environment and natural resources, as well as maintenance of the countryside and the landscape, or to rear animals of local breeds in danger of extinction; ... to ensure the upkeep of abandoned farmlands or woodlands; ... to set aside farmland for at least 20 years with a view to its use for purposes connected with the environment, in particular for the establishment of biotope reserves or natural parks or for the protection of hydrological systems...”.

Also, Council Regulation (EEC) No 2328/91 “on improving the efficiency of agricultural structures “establishes measures which aim to contribute to the safeguarding of the environment and the preservation of the countryside, including the long term conservation of natural farming resources” ...” measures to protect the environment and safeguard the countryside by encouraging appropriate farming methods”.

***Ex situ* Conservation Activities**

Use of *ex situ* collections by researchers is encouraged by Council Decision of 23 November 1994 “adopting a specific programme of research, technological development and demonstration in the field of agriculture and fisheries (including agroindustry, food technologies, forestry, aquaculture and rural development (1994 to 1998)”. The Decision notes that “A la suite de la conférence des Nations unies sur l’environnement et le développement qui a eu lieu à Rio de Janeiro en 1992, la Communauté est déterminée à oeuvrer pour la conservation, la caractérisation et l’utilisation de ressources génétiques en agriculture et pour la protection et la gestion durable des forêts. Lors des conférences ministérielles sur la protection des forêts en Europe (Strasbourg, 1990 et Helsinki, 1993) elle s’est engagée à contribuer activement à une série d’activités coordonnées au niveau



européen, qui devraient permettre une meilleure protection et une gestion écologiquement viable des ressources forestières. Pour que ces objectifs puissent être atteints, des travaux de recherche sont nécessaires.”

Storage Facilities

As already mentioned, Regulation (EC) No 1467/94 provides for actions on the conservation, characterization, collection and utilization of genetic resources in agriculture.

Documentation

As already mentioned, Regulation (EC) No 1467/94 provides for actions on the conservation, characterization, collection and utilization of genetic resources in agriculture.

Evaluation and Characterisation

As already mentioned, Regulation (EC) No 1467/94 provides for actions on the conservation, characterization, collection and utilization of genetic resources in agriculture.

Regeneration

The European Union's specific programme of research, technological development and demonstration in the field of agriculture and fisheries (including agroindustry, food technologies, forestry, aquaculture and rural development 1994-1998) includes among its research tasks “Preservation and encouragement of the genetic heritage and biodiversity in crops”.

Forest Genetic Resources

The essential role of forests in “maintaining basic equilibria, particularly as regards the soil, water resources, climate, fauna and flora” is recognised by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2158/92 of 23 July 1992, which provides measures to help protect areas of high fire risk.

Use of PGR Collections

As regards access by farmers to genetic resources, the EU presented Declarations for the Union and its Member States on Conditions of Access to Plant Genetic Resources for Agriculture, and on Farmers' Rights, both at the Extraordinary Session of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources (Rome, 7-11 November 1994), and at the Sixth Session of the same FAO Commission (Rome, 19-30 June 1995) (the text of the latter declaration is given in Annex to this paper).



Improving PGR Utilization

As already mentioned, Regulation (EC) No 1467/94 provides for actions on the conservation, characterization, collection and utilization of genetic resources in agriculture. The programme puts emphasis on directing work at Community level, in particular, towards improving the quality of agricultural products and finding new uses for traditional or new agricultural products with a view to increasing their added value. The programmes' accompanying measures include the promotion of the utilization of results.

Goals, policies, programmes and legislation

Council Regulation (EC) No 1467/94 of 20 June 1994 "on the conservation, characterization, collection and utilization of genetic resources in agriculture" introduces a first five year programme which will help coordination of individual actions by the Member States.

Training

As already mentioned, Regulation (EC) No 1467/94 provides for actions on the conservation, characterization, collection and utilization of genetic resources in agriculture.

The programme's "Accompanying measures" provide for the support of training and mobility schemes for specialist personnel.

Other related legislation

In addition to the rules concerning the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food agriculture, the European Union has developed a comprehensive set of legislation relating to:

- the protection of plants including plant genetic resources, to prevent the introduction into the Community or the spread within the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products (phytosanitary legislation). For Community products, the concept of plant health inspection at the place of production has been implemented and the "plant passport" system has been introduced. The Commission has in 1992 set up a Community Plant Health Inspectorate to monitor and assist national inspectorates.
- Council Directive 77/93/EEC of 21 December 1976 on protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community (OJ No L 26, 31.01.1977, p. 20), as last amended by Commission Directive 95/41/EC (OJ No L 182, 02.08.1995, p. 27)
- the quality of plant propagating material of agricultural and horticultural crops and of forests (legislation on the marketing of plant propagating material). The seed marketing Directives prescribe minimum quality standards for



seeds, to ensure that purchasers are insured of receiving seeds of a reasonable and uniform quality, and require checks to be made on seed health, on varietal and analytical purity and germination; they also prescribe conditions and procedures for the official certification of propagating material including official field inspections of crops and testing of seeds.

Seeds of agricultural plant species may only be marketed if they have been officially certified in accordance with the requirements of the appropriate Directives, and if the variety in question is listed on the EU Common Catalogue. To achieve the listing status, the variety must undergo official tests for Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability (DUS) and - in the case of agricultural plant species - official trials for Value for Cultivation and Use (VCU).

- Council Directive 66/400/EEC of 14 June 1966 on the marketing of beet seed, as last amended by Directive 90/654/EEC (OJ No 353, 17.12.1990, p. 48).
- Council Directive 66/401/EEC of 14 June 1966 on the marketing of fodder plant seed, as last amended by Commission Directive 92/19/EEC (OJ No L 104, 22.04.1992, p. 61).
- Council Directive 66/402/EEC of 14 June 1966 on the marketing of cereal seed, as last amended by Commission Directive 93/2/EEC (OJ No L 54, 05.03.1993, p. 20).
- Council Directive 66/403/EEC of 14 June 1966 on the marketing of seed potatoes, as last amended by Council Directive 93/3/EEC (OJ No L 54, 05.03.1993, p. 21).
- Council Directive 66/404/EEC of 14 June 1966 on the marketing of forest reproductive material (OJ No 125, 11.07.1966, p. 2326/66) as last amended by Council Directive 90/654/EEC (OJ No L 353, 17.12.1990, p. 48).
- Council Directive 68/193/EEC of 9 April 1968 on the marketing of material for the vegetative propagation of the vine (OJ No L 93, 17.04.1968, p. 15) as last amended by Council Directive 90/654/EEC (OJ No L 353, 17.12.1990, p. 48).
- Council Directive 69/208/EEC of 30 June 1969 on the marketing of seed of oil and fibre plants, as last amended by Commission Directive 92/107/EEC (OJ No L 16, 25.01.1993, p. 1).
- Council Directive 70/457/EEC of 29 September 1970 on the Common Catalogue of varieties of agricultural plant species, as last amended by Council Directive 90/654/EEC (OJ No L 353, 17.12.1990, p. 48).
- Council Directive 70/458/EEC of 29 September 1970 on the marketing of vegetable seed, as last amended by Council Directive 90/654/EEC (OJ No L 353, 17.12.1990, p. 48).



- Council Directive 91/682/EEC of 19 December 1991 on the marketing of ornamental plant propagating material and ornamental plants (OJ No L 376, 31.12.1991, p. 21).
- Council Directive 92/33/EEC of 28 April 1992 on the marketing of vegetable propagating and planting material, other than seed (OJ No L 157, 16.06.1992, p. 1).
- Council Directive 92/34/EEC of 28 April 1992 on the marketing of fruit plant propagating material and fruit plants intended for fruit production (OJNoL 157, 10.06.1992, p. 10).

Intellectual Property Rights

- Community plant variety rights

Legislation:

- Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 of 27 July 1994 on Community plant variety rights (OJ No L 227, 01.09.1994, p.1).
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 1238/95 of 31 May 1995 establishing implementing rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 as regards the fees payable to the Community Plant Variety Office (OJ No L 121, 01.06.1995, p.31).
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 1239/95 of 31 May 1995 establishing implementing rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 as regards proceedings before the Community Plant Variety Office (OJ No L 121, 01.06.1995, p.37).
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 1768/95 of 24 July 1995 on implementing rules on the agricultural exemption provided for in Article 14 (3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 on Community plant variety rights (OJ No L 173, 25.07.1995, p.14).

The Community has established a system of Community plant variety rights as sole and exclusive form of Community industrial property right for plant varieties as a measure for the completion of the Internal Market. This Community system will co-exist with those which already exist on the territory of Member States and provides for the grant of a uniform protection with effect throughout the entire European Union, upon a single application by an interested plant breeder and through a single decision of the Community Plant Variety Office. This Office created by Regulation No 2100/94 is an independent body of the Community and is operational since April 1995 under a provisional address in Brussels.



The Community system is shaped in accordance with the UPOV-Convention of 1991. In consequence, a Community plant variety right can only be granted to a plant variety being distinct, uniform, stable and new, and to a plant breeder (or his successor in title) who has bred or discovered and developed such variety. If such protection is granted, only its holder is entitled to effect acts relating to propagation, production, conditioning, marketing etc of propagating material and, where appropriate, harvested material of the protected variety or to authorize third persons to effect such acts.

Since such protection covers also acts relating to propagation, the use of farm-saved seed by farmers for propagating purposes (“farmer’s exemption”) would fall under its scope. In this respect, the Community made use of the option provided for under Article 15 (2) of the UPOV-act 1991 and authorized - in form of a derogation from the general effects of a Community plant variety right farmers to save - in respect of certain agricultural crops - the product of their harvest for sowing within their holding. Such authorization is in particular accompanied by the requirement to pay an equitable remuneration to the holder which shall be sensibly lower than the relevant amount charged for the licensed production of propagating material of the same variety; small farmers are exempted from that obligation.

- Other matters linked to research:

Council Decision of 21 November 1994 “concerning the rules for the dissemination of the research results from the specific programmes of research, technological development and demonstration of the European Community” lays down particular rules for researchers working in Community-supported projects.

Other Policies

As regards policy on exchange of plant genetic resources, and the export of plant genetic resources, the EC made a detailed statement (3 pages) on Conditions of Access to Plant Genetic Resources for Agriculture, and on Farmers’ Rights, at the Extraordinary Session of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources (Rome, 7-11 November 1994).

International Collaboration

The call for proposals for the specific programme for research and technological development and demonstration in the field of cooperation with third countries and international organizations (Official Journal N, C 64/8 of 15.3.95), provides for scientific and technological cooperation with developing countries. In particular research actions are called for on “... relationships between urban settlements, equitable economic growth and sustainable management of natural resources ... interactions between soils, water and biotic resources in



agriculturally converted or more natural ecosystems ... enhance productivity including maintenance of adequate levels of biodiversity and maintenance of diversity in production systems and cultures ...”.

Research on “tools to characterise biodiversity” is eligible for support under the specific programme of research and technological development, including demonstration, in the field of biotechnology (1994-1998) ((OJ L 361 of 31.12.94)).

UNCED

The Union is a signatory to Agenda 21.

Convention on Biological diversity

The Community is a party to the Convention on Biological diversity (Council Decision 93/626/EEC of 25 October 1993 concerning the Conclusion of the Convention on Biological diversity; OJ 13 December 1993, 36 L309 page 1).

FAO GLOBAL SYSTEM

The Union is a member of the FAO, and a signatory to the Undertaking.

International Agricultural Research Centres: The CGIAR

The Community (DG I, budget line Latin America and Asia) subscribes annually to the CGIAR for the core budget of specific institutes.

On 29 September 1994 the Council (of European Research Ministers) announced that it was taking an European initiative for international agricultural research, to improve coherence and cost effectiveness. The Commission is charged to elaborate and report on the matter at the Council of Ministers of Research in June 1995. A document “Europe and Agricultural Research for Development”, comprising a Political Statement and an 8 page Memorandum, was presented by the CGIAR European Donors at the CGIAR Ministerial level meeting (Lucerne, Switzerland, February 9-10, 1995). A process of reflection has started and the Commission will report to the Council of Ministers of Research in June 1995.

The Commission has collaborated, and is collaborating with the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), Rome, on databases of European collections of plant genetic resources, and on crop plant descriptors.

Regional intergovernmental initiatives

The Union collaborates closely with ECP/GR.



Bilateral intergovernmental initiatives

The European Environment Agency coordinates the “European environment information and observation network”. This provides the Community and the Member States with objective, reliable and comparable information to enable them to take the measures necessary to protect the environment, as well as to be able to assess the results of these measures. It will also ensure that the public is properly informed about the state of the environments. The network includes information on, notably, the state of the soil, fauna, flora and biotopes; land uses and natural resources.



ANNEX

Declaration of the European Community and its member states for the sixth session of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources (Rome, 19-30 June 1995)

The European Community and its Member States consider that the Scope of the Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources should relate to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) as a basis for meeting present and future needs for the growing world population.

The European Community and its Member States recognize that plant genetic resources constitute a global public good on which all countries, both developed and developing are largely interdependent; plant genetic resources have a crucial input to both farming and plant breeding operations, therefore their conservation, characterization, evaluation and sustainable utilization are of utmost importance as an insurance against genetic erosion and in view of future needs at local, national regional and global levels.

A multilateral agreement is vital to guarantee access to the required diversity and to the specific characteristics of plant genetic resources, and for a fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from them.

Because of the mutual benefits of an unrestricted access to PGRFA and the expected difficulties for making a distinction between those acquired prior the entry into force of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) and those acquired thereafter, the multilateral agreement should, in principle comprise all kinds of PGRFA designated to it, irrespective of the date of acquisition by the contracting party.

The European Community and its Member States agree to the “Farmers’ Rights” as a socio-economic concept which recognizes the contribution of farmers to conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources as a major investment in food security. The implementation of “Farmers’ Rights” should form an essential element in an integrated strategy for conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources, promotion of training and transfer of technology in the context of sustainable agriculture.

Priorities and programmes necessary to give effect to that integrated strategy have to be developed at local, national, regional and global level. The existing regional and international networks provide a mechanism for implementing programmes which strengthen technical management capacity, and for implementing country programmes which would ensure a fair and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from plant genetic resources and “Farmers’ Rights”. Eligibility for participation in these programmes might include the following criteria:



- (a) the participation in the multilateral agreement system to make germplasm available;
- (b) the existence of a viable national programme for the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture;
- (c) the support of in-situ conservation in areas of crop diversity as a strategy to address both evolution and equity;
- (d) the risk of genetic erosion, and
- (e) the strategic value of the crop(s) for the country/region as a major investment in food security.

As far as the “Global Plan of Action” is concerned, the European Community and its Member States express their thanks to the FAO secretariat for the “Outline of the Global Plan of Action for the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture” (document CPGR-6/95/11).

As to the modalities for the preparation of the Global Plan of Action, the Community and its Member States note that the Global Plan of Action is to be based on Country Reports, and on the discussion at regional meetings. The European Community therefore looks forward to the European Regional Meeting at Nitra in September 1995 for an appropriate exchange of views.