

EURISCO Newsletter, No. 5

December 2017

The EURISCO Newsletter is a series of electronic bulletins that provide feedback to National Focal Points (NFPs) and serve as a dissemination vehicle for NFPs and other partners to put forward their contributions regarding plant genetic resources issues/themes. The new EURISCO Newsletter is the successor of the previous EURISCO e-bulletin. In order to ensure that the EURISCO Catalogue is sustainable and meets the NFPs' and other users' needs, everyone is invited to contribute to this newsletter. Thematic papers, ideas, comments, suggestions and questions are all welcome.

Coverage of EURISCO

Since the last issue of the EURISCO Newsletter (No. 4, August 2017), the number of accessions documented in EURISCO increased by 7,218, reaching a total of 1,969,819 accessions from 43 National Inventories and 392 individual holding institutions by 13 December 2017. These accessions represent 6,323 unique genera and 43,045 species, respectively. The number of AEGIS accessions labelled in EURISCO rose during the same period by 546, bringing the total number to 33,337. Details can be found on the EURISCO website.

Between August and December 2017, the number of characterisation and evaluation (C&E) data records rose by 154,183, reaching a total of 624,842. So far, C&E data were provided by six countries – Germany, Latvia, The Netherlands, Poland, Romania and the United Kingdom (in alphabetical order). More data will be welcome anytime.

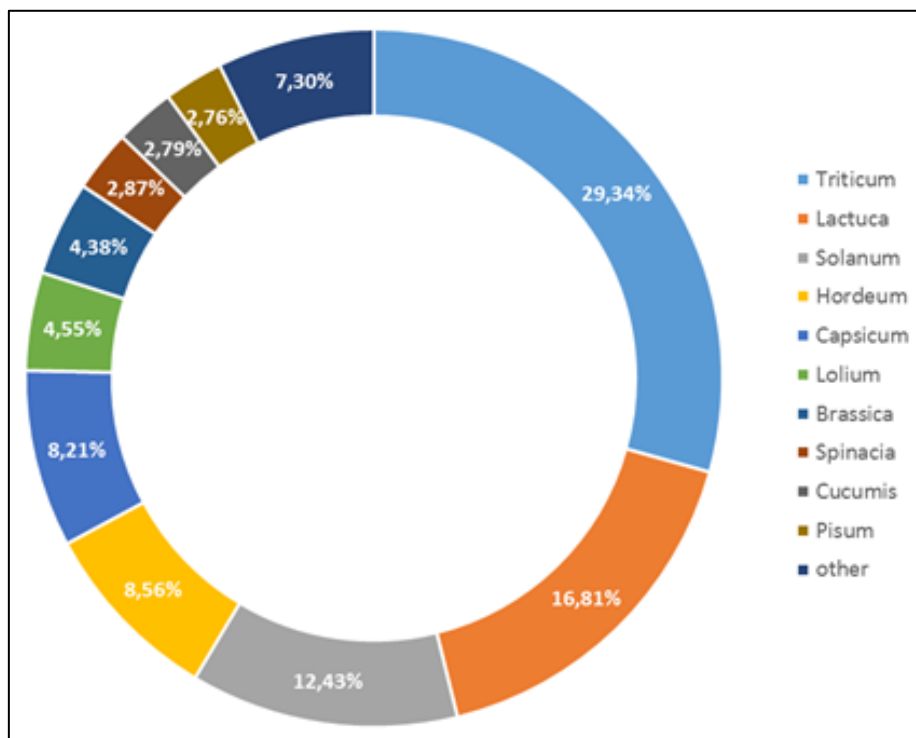


Fig. 1: Percentage of C&E data records by genus.

Usage

The use of the EURISCO web interface increased continuously. Between August and November, EURISCO was visited 17,090 times by 4,867 unique visitors, reaching a total of 647,007 hits in 2017 (January – November).

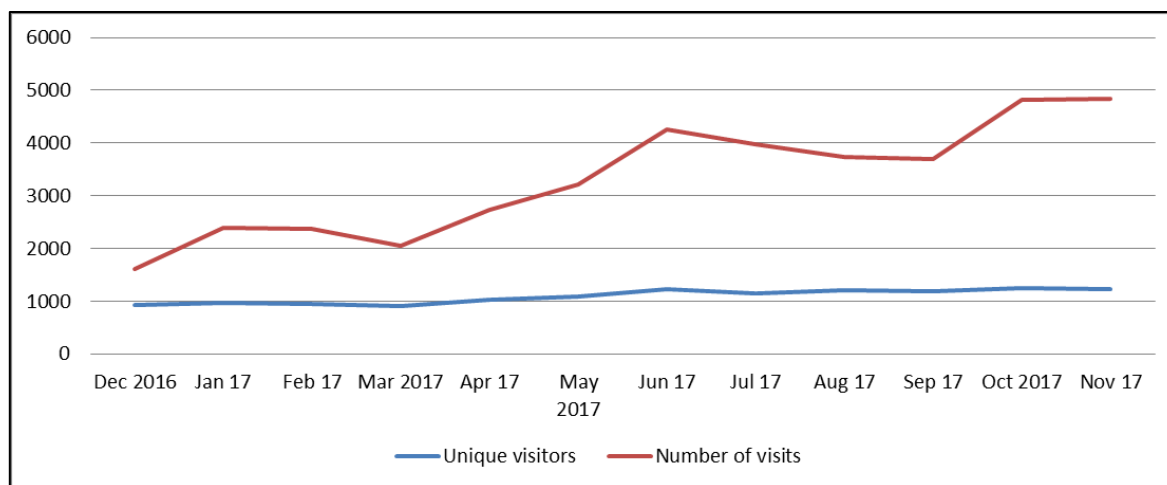


Fig. 2: Usage statistics of the EURISCO web application over the last twelve months.

Training

The preparations of the 2017 training workshop mentioned in the last newsletter were finished. The training took place in Gatersleben, Germany, 12–14 September 2017, and focussed on participants from the Central European region. It was organised in collaboration with the Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK) and brought together 14 participants. Besides basic training, the focus of the workshop was on increasing the volume of characterisation and evaluation (C&E) data records in EURISCO.

The presentations given during the workshop can be found at the workshop website. [\[link\]](#)

New features

As already described in the previous newsletter, in 2017 the EURISCO infrastructure was updated to fully support **the MCPD version 2.1**. After finishing the last consultations with FAO with regard to the harmonisation of the MCPD and EURISCO format, and after extensive tests, the final changeover took place in December. Henceforward, EURISCO only accepts data in the MCPD v2.1 format plus four EURISCO-specific descriptors.

The **additional procedure for uploading C&E data to EURISCO**, which was approved by the ECPGR Steering Committee in August, was fully implemented and tested during the last months.

The **AEGIS support for the National Inventory Focal Points** was improved. Additional procedures were implemented in the EURISCO intranet to check the flagging/de-flagging of accessions automatically.

In addition, **a survey was conducted** among the National Inventory Focal Points/National Coordinators in order to gather structured feedback and to collect new requirements for the public EURISCO web application. Feedback was received from 17 persons, whereby the overall response was quite positive. The main feature requests are (1) improvements of the search and filter possibilities; (2) adding accession images; (3) standardise crop names; (4) adding additional reports; (5) some more statistics for C&E data. First improvements of the filter possibilities were already implemented; more

improvements of the search interface will follow in the frame of the “EURISCO taxonomy” project (see below). Further feature requests are being evaluated for feasibility and will be included into the work plan for 2018.

Project activities

The works on the EURISCO side-project “EURISCO taxonomy” were continued. The necessary database structures as well as procedures for **mapping taxonomic terms from EURISCO onto taxonomic repositories**, such as GRIN and Mansfeld, were developed. Presently, a prototype of an improved web search functionality is being developed. Once completed, it will enable users to search material on taxa via synonyms, including similarity search. Moreover, the visualisation of the search results will be redesigned.

In the frame of two ECPGR Grant Scheme (second call) Activities, the European Central Crop Databases (ECCDBs) managed by the ECPGR Forages and Barley Working Groups, respectively, were used to **identify potential gaps in EURISCO**. The concerned National Inventory Focal Points (NFPs) were informed about the results and asked for checking as well as for providing the missing information. So far, 19 NFPs responded. There are different reasons why those accessions were missing from EURISCO, e.g. accessions already contained in EURISCO but with changed identifiers; accessions not available anymore; really missing accessions. Emerging from these activities, several new datasets were provided and will be provided to EURISCO.

The EURISCO coordination participates in the two Horizon 2020 projects “EUCLEG” and “Farmer’s Pride”, which started in September and November 2017, respectively. Our tasks, however, will only start in 2018. In addition, we participate in the proposal “GenRes Bridge – Joining forces for agro-forest systems and biodiversity management”, which is a joint proposal of the three European networks for plant, animal and forest genetic resources (ECPGR, ERF and EUFORGEN).

The EURISCO coordination will continue to actively participate in the preparation of further project proposals aiming at acquiring additional funding for developing certain aspects of EURISCO.

Dissemination

The applicability of EURISCO in the context of phenotypic data of *Lolium perenne* was presented at the conference “Breeding Grasses and Protein Crops in the Era of Genomics”, Vilnius, Lithuania, 11–14 September 2017.

An activity report for 2017 as well as a work plan for 2018 are under preparation and will be published at the beginning of 2018.

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