

## **EURISCO farewell**

Over the years, from 2006 till today, this e-bulletin had two issues a year (with few exceptions) one in May/July and another in December. Initially the e-bulletin aimed to report on activities and results from the EURISCO catalogue itself, but soon we felt that was not enough—the catalogue was a means of dissemination for providers and users too, and we wanted to use this mean as a communication vehicle offered to all. Thus, the e-bulletin was expanded to disseminate also scientific contributions coming from the countries using data from EURISCO, becoming soon, besides a communication tool, a reporting and monitoring mechanism for the network.

The 'EURISCO e-bulletin' was a series of electronic bulletins that provided feedback to National Focal Points (NFPs) and served as a dissemination vehicle for NFPs and others to put forward their contributions regarding plant genetic resources issues. This was one of the many mechanism that enabled the EURISCO Catalogue to be sustainable and meeting the NFPs' and end users' needs. It has been an open channel for anyone to contribute with thematic papers, ideas, comments, suggestions and questions.

This is a special issue of the EURISCO e-bulletin, being the last issue prepared by Bioversity International; it will present you with some keystones and a historical overview of a decade of an active network and its achievements.

***You may be asking why is this bulletin the last one?***

***Here some details ...the last bulletin but not the end of EURISCO***

In the last ECPGR Steering Committee meeting, the hosting of EURISCO was awarded to IPK, Germany, through an open call (read more in the ECPGR report).

For almost a year, October 2013-September 2014, we have been busy handing over. Already in April 2014 IPK started its own journey with the EURISCO infrastructure and network. This e-bulletin will close the handover cycle by telling you a bit more on this first decade of the EURISCO story.

In the year 2000 a research proposal was submitted to the European Union (EU) Directorate for Research, Fifth Framework Programme, Thematic Program 'Quality Of Life And Management Of Living Resources', Action 14 'Support for research infrastructures', Field 14.2. 'Biological information resources' (call of 15 November 1999). Thus, the journey towards the EURISCO inception started, when the European Commission approved a project to establish a European Plant Genetic Resources Information Infra-Structure, EPGRIS.

This project was a three-year concerted effort, ending in December 2003, coordinated by the Centre for Genetic Resources, The Netherlands, and with the participation of the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Sweden. The aim of the project was to establish an infrastructure for information on plant genetic resources (PGR) maintained *ex situ* in Europe by: (a) supporting the creation and providing technical support to national PGR Inventories; and (b) creating a European PGR Search Catalogue with passport data on *ex situ* collections maintained in Europe.



EPGRIS half-way Coordination meeting, 14-15 June 2002, Oeiras, Portugal.  
From left to right: Iva Faberova (CZE), Sabine Rocher (DEU), Veronique Jamilloux (FRA), Theo Van Hintum (NDL), Martine Mitteau (FRA), Brigitte Laliberté (Bioversity International), Samy Gaiji (Bioversity International), Eliseu Bettencourt (PRT), Dag Tejer Endersen (NordGen) and Lorenzo Maggioni (ECPGR.)

The final output of this project was the European Search Catalogue - EURISCO which means "I find" in ancient Greek.

The Catalogue was developed to be frequently updated from the National Inventories (NIs) of PGR and to be easily accessible via the Internet.

The project supported European countries in the creation of the NIs through workshops, technical advice, staff exchanges, and by developing standards. The Catalogue automatically received data from the NIs, effectively providing access to all *ex situ* PGR information in Europe.

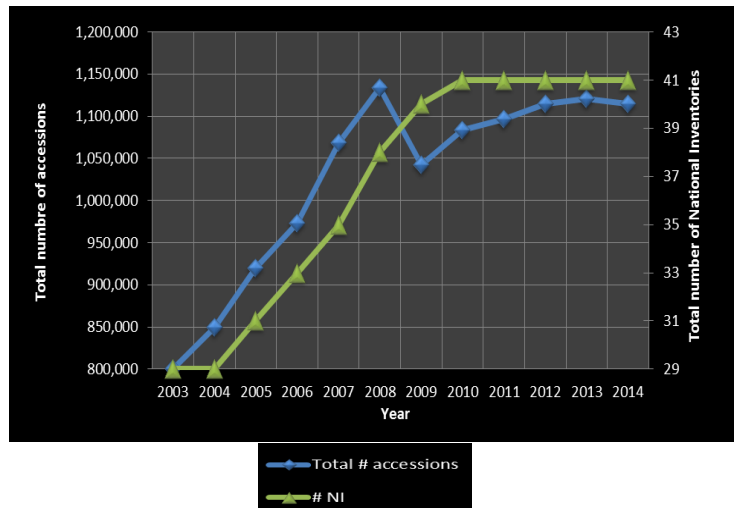
The central search catalogue, EURISCO, was created and has been managed and maintained by Bioversity International (formerly the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute [IPGRI]), which assumed the responsibility for maintaining and managing the system after completion of the project on behalf of the Secretariat of the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) (formerly the European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks (ECP/GR). The EURISCO catalogue was publicly launched in September 2003 and since then many things have come about.

As usual, after each project ends, the most difficult part is to create a mechanism that enables the continuation of a network and its core product. And the greatest effort for us was keep the network active, while still gathering inventory data and supporting countries to meet their national and international commitments.



A decade ago, while countries were still discussing the FAO International Undertaking (FAO IU, which later on became what is today the International TREATY on PGRFA) and its articles such as on access and benefit sharing, a mechanism for countries to develop their *ex situ* national inventories and a regional infrastructure was made available. For the first time, out of the CGIAR genebanks, it was possible for a region to gather and document its countries' inventories in a 'one stop shop'. At that time, very few countries had a web portal or other facility to publish their information, and for many years the EURISCO platform was the only channel that a third of the countries could use to make their information public and accessible to all.

In 2003 the catalogue started with data on approximately 800,000 accessions with information mostly available for the five mandatory fields. Looking a bit deeper the amount of information maintained in EURISCO was never static but changed according to countries decisions and respective updates of their information thus the fluctuation on information was evident such as the time it went as high as touching the 1.2 M samples and decreasing to 1.1 M. In 2014 out of the 45 countries in the European region, 44 publish their national inventory, the over 1.1M accessions spread across many of the 42 existing fields per accession therefore represent 8M fields of information.



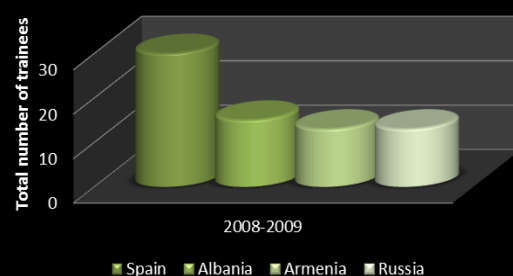
## 2007

- **EURISCO going on 1.1 million**
- **Going Global - Info4seeds, EURISCO in ALIS** - Global Accession Level Information System (ALIS) on Plant Genetic Resources
- **Public awareness materials**, the two fact sheets were updated and translated into nine languages

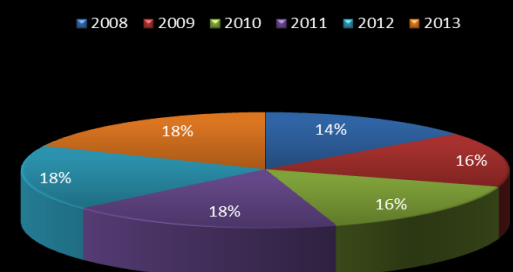
## 2008

- **External evaluation** – identified weakness and strengths, and set a series of future recommendations and road map for 2008–2013
- **EURISCO factsheets reaching more people** – 11 languages
- **EURISCO poster updated**
- **Website feedback implementation news**
- **Documentation and information training**, for EURISCO NFPs, 29–30 June, Czech Republic, Prague
- **EURISCO Seminar and Training, 3–4 November, Madrid, Spain**, organized by INIA-CRF, Spain and EURISCO/ECPGR/Bioversity International
- **EURISCO Seminar and Training, 9–11 December, Tirana, Albania**, 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
- **The new descriptors for EURISCO as a service to the International Treaty - MLS, SMTA and AEGIS**
- **Countries registering MLS through EURISCO reached 14%**
- **New website look**
- **73 people have been trained in 2008**

## Trainings funded by countries in 2008-2009



## Total no. accessions registered in the ITPGRFA MLS per year



## 2009



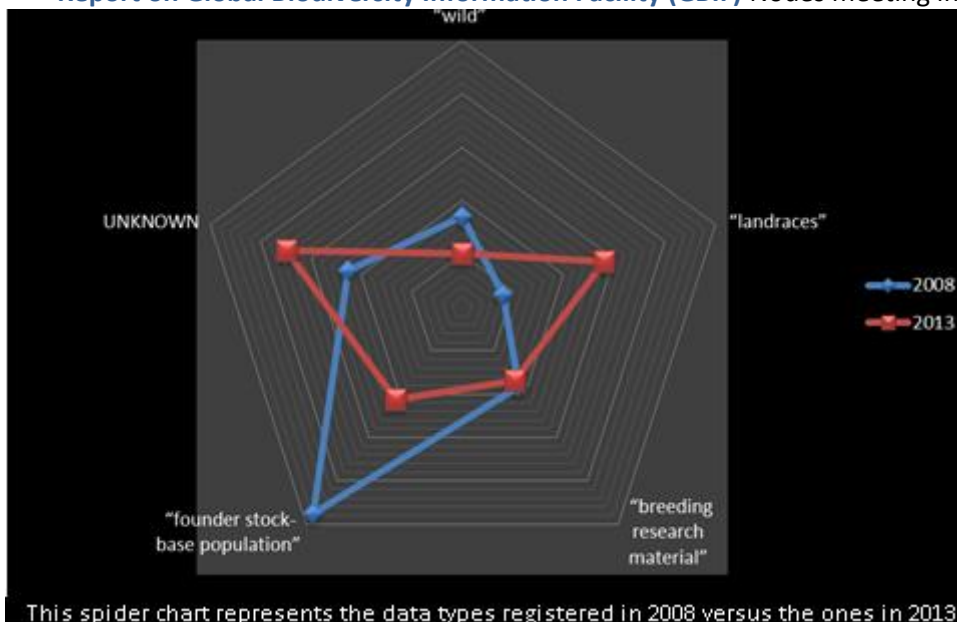
- **EURISCO factsheets are reaching more people** – 15 languages
- **New NFPs appointed in 2009** – 16 new NFPs
- **EURISCO Training and Seminar, 20-22 October, Kharkov, Ukraine**, organized by the Institute of Plant Production n.a. V.Y. Yuriev of UAAS - National Centre for Plant Genetic Resources of Ukraine (NCPGRU) and the EURISCO Coordinator from Bioversity International
- **EURISCO Training and Seminar, 30 November-1 December, Banjaluka, Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Genetic Resources Institute - University of Banjaluka and ECPGR/Bioversity International.
- **113 people trained in 2009**
- **MLS registered through EURISCO**

reached almost 20% of the total material

- **EURISCO Taxonomic reports** — 333 reports were sent to the NFP
- **Going on 40** - Three more countries joined EURISCO network in 2009
- **Renewal of the EURISCO** data sharing agreement
- **EURISCO at GBIF Nodes Meeting** in Copenhagen, Denmark
- **EURISCO at the 2009 TDWG conference**, E-Knowledge about Biodiversity and Agriculture

## 2010

- **EURISCO Data Sharing Agreement** until 2020
- **EURISCO updated** Terms of Use
- **EURISCO search** engine updates
- **Monitoring impact** — assessing use
- **EURISCO Taxonomic and GIS reports are now automatically available and downloadable** – intranet individual country pages
- **GRIN-Global in** and beyond EUROPE
- **EURISCO Data Sharing Agreement**
- **Set EURISCO** activities for 2012
- **Summary status** on continuing EURISCO developments
- **Report on Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)** Nodes meeting in Berlin



### National contributions

- **Contribution from Bosnia and Herzegovina** – “Genetic Resources Institute, University of Banjaluka: A NEW PGR HOLDER. Briefing Note”
- **Contribution from Armenia** - “New data available in EURISCO- Output of a Global Crop Diversity Trust funded project in Armenia” by Marina Hovhannissyan, Armenian EURISCO

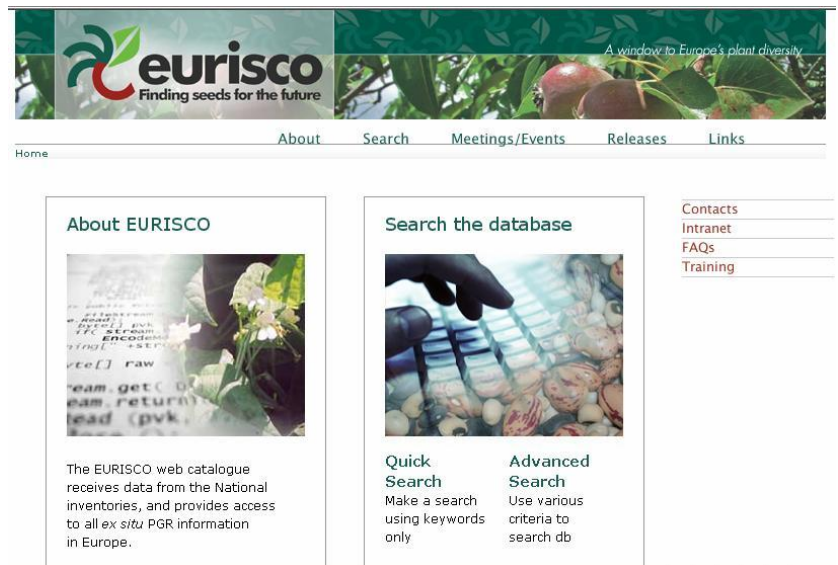
National Focal Point.

- **Contributions from Portugal** – Banco Português de Germoplasma Vegetal. BPGV shares valuable data sets:
  - “Portuguese Allium collection maintained at the BPGV is available in the EURISCO Catalogue”
  - “Portuguese Brassica collection maintained at the BPGV is available in the EURISCO Catalogue”
- **Contribution from Bulgaria** – “The state of PGR documentation in Bulgaria” by *Nikolya Velcheva, Bulgarian*

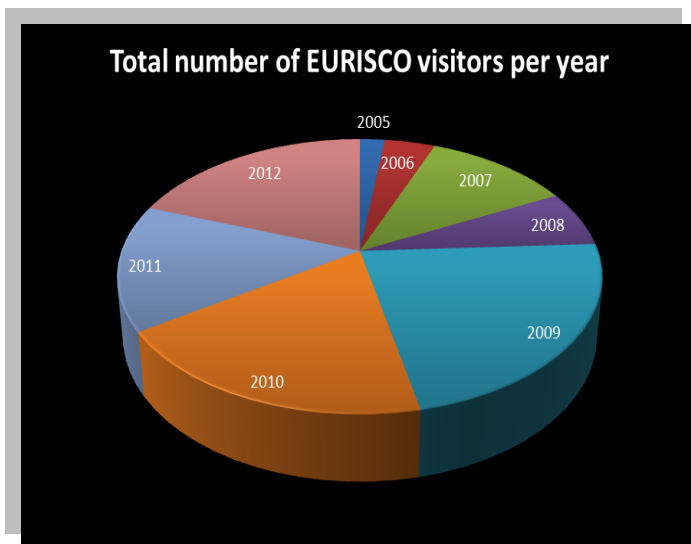
- **Contribution from Montenegro** – “Current state of Montenegro’s genebank – some considerations from the Conference on the “Role of Research in Sustainable development of agriculture and rural areas” by Miroslav Čizmović, Montenegrin EURISCO National Focal Point.

## 2011

- EURISCO Data Sharing Agreement
- EURISCO transferring to Typo3 content management system
- EURISCO Taxonomy and GIS reports are automatically available and downloadable
- EURISCO Taxonomy curated
- GRIN-Global in EUROPE
- Welcome Moldova - New NI available in EURISCO
- ECPGR Progress Report 2010



- EURISCO website further improved
- GRIN-Global “pre-release” version

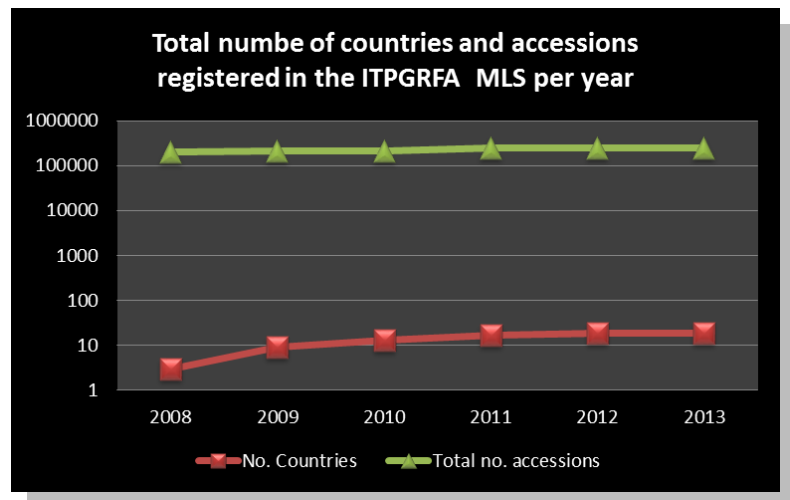


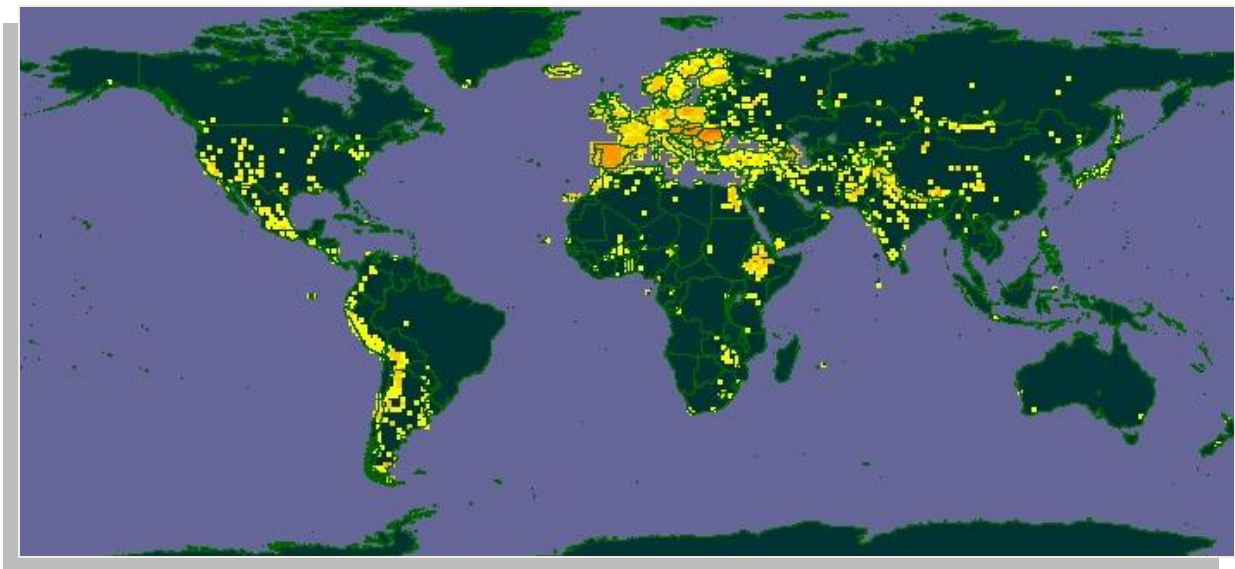
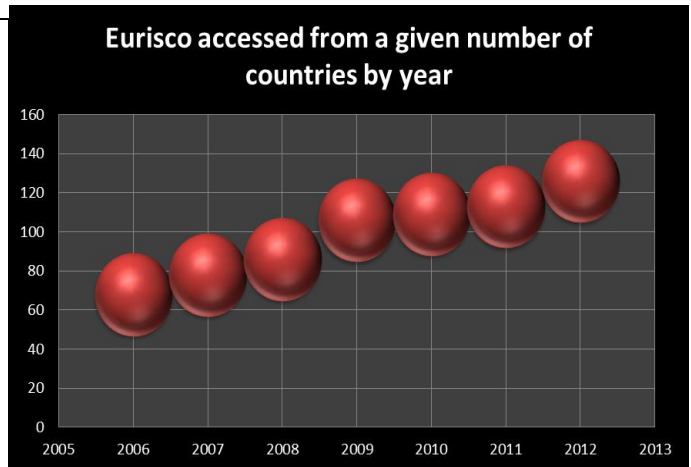
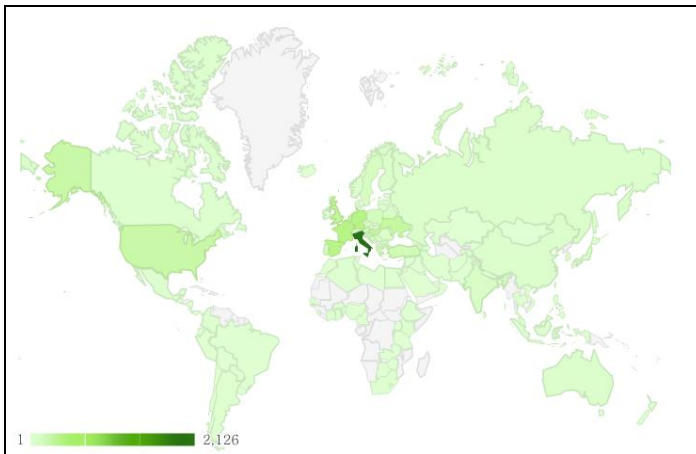
- **New National Inventory (NI) available in EURISCO**
- **GRIN-GLOBAL** Version 1.0 released
- **Monitoring impact** — assessing use
- **EURISCO is close to reaching 1.1 million accessions**
- **Submission of “Plant Gene Access” project proposal**

## 2012

- EURISCO activities for 2012
- Summary status on continuing EURISCO developments
- Report on Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) Nodes meeting in Berlin

- **GRIN-Global in and beyond EUROPE**
- **Contribution from Armenia** - “New data available in EURISCO- Output of a Global Crop Diversity Trust funded project in Armenia” by *Marina Hovhannisyanyan, Armenian EURISCO National Focal Point.*
- **Contribution from Bulgaria** – “The state of PGR documentation in Bulgaria” by *Nikolaya Velcheva, Bulgarian EURISCO National Focal Point.* And “Genetic Diversity in the *Solanaceae* family in Bulgaria” by *Nikolaya Velcheva, Bulgarian EURISCO National Focal Point and Liliya Krasteva, PGR National Coordinator.*
- **Contribution from Montenegro** – “Current state of Montenegro’s genebank – some considerations from the Conference on the “Role of Research in Sustainable development of agriculture and rural areas” by *Miroslav Čizmović, Montenegrin EURISCO National Focal Point.*
- **Contribution from Albania** – “The current state and documentation of plant genetic resources in Albania” by *Belul Gixhari, Albanian EURISCO National Focal Point and Ndoc Faslia, PGR National Coordinator.*
- **Contribution from Portugal** – Going GRIN-Global, “The implementation of GRIN— Global as the documentation system in the ISOPlexis Genebank, Madeira, Portugal” by *Miguel A.A. Pinheiro de Carvalho and Humberto Nóbrega, ISOPlexis Genebank.*
- **Echoes from an AEGIS project** – “*Brassica* selection criteria for the identification of the Most Appropriate Accessions: relate to the *Brassica oleracea* of Iberian collection, an AEGIS Project” by *Violeta R. Lopes, Ana M. Barata, Eugénia Nunes, Elena Cartea, Pilar Soengas, Noortje Bas and Charlotte Allender, project partners*
- **RSS-feed is now available** in the EURISCO website
- **New National Inventory (NI)** available in EURISCO in 2012 — Belgium
- **FAO/Bioversity release** of MULTI-CROP PASSPORT DESCRIPTORS List – MCPD V.2.
- **EURISCO working on the best option** for adoption of MCPD V.2
- **13<sup>th</sup> ECPGR Steering Committee** — EURISCO hosting, decision postponed to March 2013
- **Update on accessions in EURISCO as part of AEGIS** - garlic accessions
- **EURISCO 2012 progress report for the 13th ECPGR Steering Committee**
- **Monitoring impact** — assessing use





Overview of all EURISCO data distribution

#### 2013— 2014

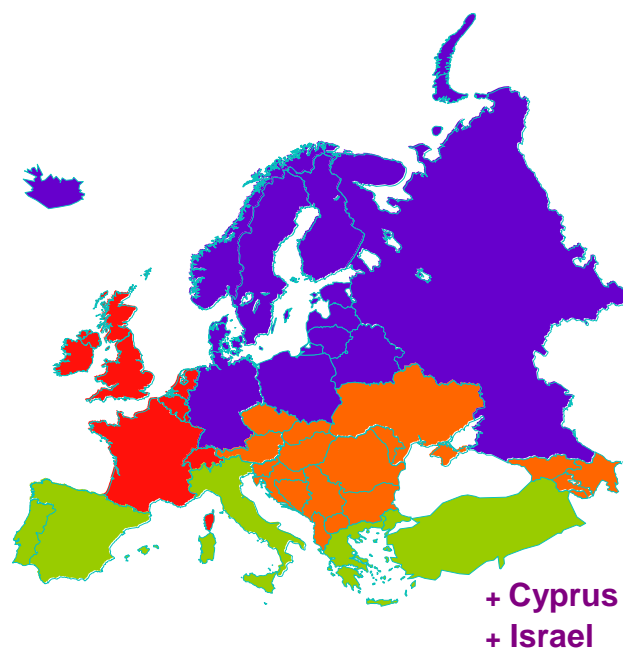
- Preparation, meetings, planning and handing over EURISCO to IPK
- Continuing support by Bioversity International to EURISCO network
- Legal agreement for hosting of EURISCO by IPK on behalf of Bioversity International as the legal entity for ECPGR
- Information on interpretation of Data Sharing Agreements (DSA)
- Follow up signatures of DSAs still to be signed

**Planned meetings/conferences /symposium/workshops and many other things happened.**

Throughout the years the EURISCO network functioned due to its National Focal Points engagement and contributions. Over the years the NFPs turn-over was always considerable, and therefore many contributed to this network.



Hereby I express my gratitude to all of the past and present NFPs who have been part of it.



The map shows the current coverage of the European region by this network

EURISCO is already under the management of IPK and activities are moving forward, we wish all the best to the network and a fruitful work and collaboration with the IPK team.

We invite you to visit and collaborate with us on the Plant Genetic Resources Diversity Gateway (<http://pgrdiversity.bioversityinternational.org>).

For further details and information on how to collaborate get in touch with [us](#).

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**This last e-bulletin is dedicated to networking but is specially dedicated to the memory of Dr Sergey Alexanian, a fully dedicated and supporter of PGRFA at VIR.**

*'... Dr Alexanian pushed for recognition of the historical role that Nikolai Vavilov and the Vavilov Institute played in establishing the global significance of plant genetic resources. With Bioversity International, he promoted the English translation of Vavilov's Five Continents, a book which contains descriptions of the plant explorer's expeditions from 1916 and 1940; and provided important guidance and materials for 'Vavilov and his Institute', a publication by Igor Loskutov, a past holder of our Vavilov-Frankel Fellowship.*

For many of us, Dr Alexanian will be remembered as the warm welcome and friendly face that greeted those who went to visit and learn from the Vavilov Institute in St. Petersburg, Russia. We will miss him dearly and continue his mission ....' [\[read more...\]](#)



Training seminar to strengthen national capacity on PGR data exchange and sustainability, organized by N.I. Vavilov Research Institute of Plant Industry (VIR) and Bioversity.



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