THE LAUNCH OF THE LINKED GENETIC RESOURCES STRATEGIES FOR EUROPE AIMS TO:

→ Present the overarching Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe

→ Present the three domain-specific Plant, Animal and Forest Genetic Resources Strategies for Europe

→ Provide an opportunity to interact with panellists discussing the uptake of the Strategies at European and national levels

Several international policy frameworks call for a step change in the conservation of plant, forest and animal genetic resources, including the FAO Global Plans of Action for Plant, Forest and Animal Genetic Resources, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and the Forest Europe process.

Despite past efforts to enhance genetic resources conservation and use, such initiatives remain under-represented at European policy level. This is has become of greater concern in the light of current changing conditions that affect both agriculture and forestry, and considering genetic resources’ capacity to provide multiple ecosystem and other services now and in future. Key challenges requiring attention are i) adapting to the impacts of climate change; ii) transitioning to more sustainable and resilient agriculture and forestry, and iii) sustainably meeting consumer demands for quality, diverse, and ethically-produced food, and non-food products.

The overarching Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe and the three strategies for plant, animal and forest aim to provide a policy framework for securing genetic resources for food, agriculture and forestry in the region. Together, these Strategies present a vision for improved genetic resources management in Europe and include action plans that pave the way towards their implementation. Crucially, the Strategies will increase awareness about the importance of genetic resources for sustainable and resilient agriculture and forestry in the region and highlight the urgent need for adequate and long-term financing for their management.
The Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe is a product of the GenRes Bridge Project, a Coordination and Support Action funded under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, involving 17 partner organizations representing a wide range of actors in plant, animal and forest genetic resources conservation and sustainable use in Europe and neighbouring countries. Central to the project has been a collaboration between the three European genetic resources networks, ECPGR (the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources), ERFP (the European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources) and EUFORGEN (the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme). The collaboration aimed to identify synergies and joint actions to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of genetic resources conservation and sustainable use activities in the region. The Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe is a key outcome of this collaboration and responds to the European Commission’s call to “provide a framework in which the existing mosaic of European, national/regional structures can join forces to develop and implement ambitious approaches and strategies for the management of crop, forest and animal genetic resources.”

In parallel with and linked to the development of the overarching strategy, the three European networks for plant, animal and forest genetic resources, ECPGR, ERFP and EUFORGEN have been developing the Plant, Animal and Forest Genetic Resources Strategies for Europe respectively.

The Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe is an overarching, integrated strategy with a focus on plant, animal and forest genetic resources. Complementary to this, ‘domain-specific’ strategies address more concrete aspects of genetic resources conservation and sustainable use that are particular to each domain. The Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe and the domain-specific strategies should be seen as a suite of policy documents and approaches that together provide the framework for enabling the transition to effective genetic resources conservation and sustainable use within the region, and possibly beyond.

The Strategies will be a new landmark for European agriculture and forestry: they will be guiding documents for Europe and individual countries and other relevant stakeholders as well as a unique global example of best practice in conservation and management of genetic resources to help meet future demands in farming, forestry and food security for the European society and beyond.

EVENT OVERVIEW

The process of developing the Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe will culminate in a high-level event in Brussels when the Strategy will be officially launched. The event targets European policy makers, national representatives and representatives of the broader stakeholder community.

The high-level, half-day event will be held in the Thon Hotel EU (Rue de la Loi 75, Brussels) and will be attended by representatives of the European Commission, National policy makers, Members of the European Parliament, representatives of the Steering Committees of the three networking programmes (ECPGR, ERFP and EUFORGEN), and representatives of the broader stakeholder community and international organisations.

The event will start with the presentation of the Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe and the three domain-specific strategies. It will be followed by a panel of representatives of the three European genetic resources Networks and of the European Commission. The panel will reply to questions from the participants.

The event will be streamed live online and will end with a networking lunch (complying with COVID-19 requirements). It is expected that about 150 people will attend the event in person and that about 150 will attend virtually.

register at: www.genresbridge.eu/30-nov-2021
Launching of the Genetic Resources Strategies for Europe
30 November 2021 / Thon Hotel EU (Rue de la Loi 75, Brussels)

8:30 – 9:00 Registration

9:00– 9:30 Opening addresses
Master of Ceremonies: Christian Huyghe (French National Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE), France)

EU Presidency
Robert Režonja (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia)
Minister Jože Podgoršek (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia)

European Commission
(tbc)

Member of the European Parliament
(tbc)

9:30– 10:00 SESSION 1: Introduction

Global commitments in Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
Irene Hoffmann (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations - FAO)

European Commission's activities on genetic resources with a focus on Research and Innovation
Annette Schneegans (European Commission, Directorate General Agriculture and Rural Development)

GenRes Bridge project & the three European genetic resources networks
Michele Bozzano (GenRes Bridge Project – European Forest Institute)

10:00– 11:00 SESSION 2: GENETIC RESOURCES STRATEGIES FOR EUROPE

Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe
Shelagh Kell (University of Birmingham, UK), on behalf of GenRes Bridge Project

PLANT Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe
Theo van Hintum (Centre for Genetic Resources of Wageningen University of Research, the Netherlands) on behalf of ECPGR

ANIMAL Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe
Danijela Bojkovski (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia) on behalf of ERFP

FOREST Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe
Anna-Maria Farsakoglou (European Forest Institute) on behalf of EUFORGEN

Questions and Answers with the audience for clarifications after each presentation
DRAFT AGENDA

11:00–11:30  COFFEE BREAK

11:30–12:45  SESSION 3: Uptake of the Strategies at European and national levels

Introduction
Robert Mavsar (European Forest Institute)

Panel discussion
Representatives of the European Commission
DG AGRI: Annette Schneegans
DG ENV: Anne Teller
DG CLIMA: Peter Loffler
DG SANTE: Bernard van Goethem (tbc)

Representatives of the three European genetic resources networks
PLANT: Frank Begemann
(Federal Office for Agriculture and Food, Germany) on behalf of ECPGR

ANIMAL: Sipke-Joost Hiemstra
(Centre for Genetic Resources of Wageningen University of Research, the Netherlands) on behalf of ERFP

FOREST: Frank Wolter
(Nature and Forest Agency, Luxembourg) on behalf of EUFORGEN

Questions and answers with the audience and online participants

Summary of the Panel discussion and concluding remarks
Niglel Maxed (University of Birmingham, UK), on behalf of GenRes Bridge Project

12:55  Closure of the event
Michele Bozzano (EFI) GenRes Bridge Project coordinator

13:00-15:00  NETWORKING LUNCH

register at: www.genresbridge.eu/30-nov-2021
for more information please contact: genresbridge@efi.int
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