

**Name of Issue:**

**A common European Gene Bank**

**Convenor:** Eva Thörn

**Participants:**

Eliseu Bettencourt, Harald Bajorat, Külli Annamaa, Sonja Maznevskaja, Murthi Anishetty, Mihaela Cerne, Jaap Hardon, Eva Thörn, Laszlo Holly Marc Lateur, Lorenzo Maggioni

**Highlights from the discussion:**

A physical common infrastructure in the form of an ex situ, gene bank holding a European base collection was proposed.

NGB and SADC gene banks were mentioned as successful examples of regional gene bank co-operation. The economic savings were stressed. Beta and potato-networks are other examples of regional conservation programs.

The idea was considered interesting and the potential economic savings recognised. It could be a part of the EU-commitment. The political commitment was however a question mark.

The danger of weakening the national programs and commitments was stressed, however it was emphasised that a common infrastructure was supposed to be a complement and a way to release more money for national initiatives. It was stressed that this was a long-term process, which should be developed in several steps.

1. To formulate a vision
2. Develop a proposal with different options, perhaps based on case studies (one collection, several crop based collection etc.)

Focus on the benefits for the partners was considered very important and also to involve the potential partners from the beginning.

The process could be started from networks and eventually developed into more centralised activities or structures.

Trust among partners was considered a prerequisite for success. EPGRIS (EURISCO)-project was mentioned as a good example and a possible platform to start from.

A clear relation was seen between ECP/GR and EU, and ECP/GR fits very well into the structure. It would also be worthwhile to investigate a potential role of the Global Conservation Trust in this context.

A suggestion was to write a project proposal for a conceptual program for a common European Gene Bank.

**Future/Next step:**

To approach the ECP/GR steering committee at its next meeting with the idea.

To prepare a project proposal for the new EU-regulation on genetic resources (and find out how it fits into the preliminary six steps programme.)