



**EUFORGEN**

EUROPEAN FOREST GENETIC  
RESOURCES PROGRAMME

# **EUFORGEN STEERING COMMITTEE: REPORT OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING**

**23-25 NOVEMBER 2020, VIRTUAL MEETING**





# 15th Meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee 23-25 November 2020, virtual meeting

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## 1. Introduction and approval of the meeting

E. Hermanowicz opened the virtual meeting and welcomed the participants to the 15<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting. A total of **49 participants** joined the virtual space: **23 National Coordinators** from Phase VI member countries, **14 Focal Points** from non-member countries and **8 Observers** from relevant European initiatives, organisations or alternative representatives.

M. Bozzano introduced the agenda for the meeting for 23, 24 and 25 November, mentioning also the discussions that would take place during the GenRes Bridge workshop in the afternoon of 23 November. He briefly informed the meeting about the GenRes Bridge feedback workshop<sup>1</sup> on the European Genetic Resources Strategy taking place in the afternoons of 24, 25 and 26 November.

The agenda was approved without modification (annex 5).

The Secretariat, the National Coordinators, the Focal Points and the Observers introduced themselves.

## 2. Reporting

### 2.1 EUFORGEN 2019 Technical report

M. Bozzano presented the technical and financial report for 2019. He provided information about the activities of the working group during 2019 and the events that took place in 2019.

**During the year** a considerable amount of time was devoted to the preparation of Phase VI of the Programme and to contributions to the preparation of the FORGENIUS Project proposal.

In **April 2019**, the Steering Committee established a working group to formulate recommendations with policy relevance emerging from recent work and needs of the FGR community, aiming to influence future funding of research and development of tools.

The working group produced a brief synthesis of these needs that was approved by the Steering Committee. The three main messages contained in the brief are:

- Conserve forest genetic resources at all levels – key for adaptation to climate change
- Facilitate the appropriate choices of forest reproductive material
- Monitor adaptation and evolutionary potential of transferred forest reproductive material

The Secretariat developed a leaflet on the brief for wider dissemination (Annex 2).

In **October**, the EUFORGEN Programme, supported by the LIFE project LIFE GENMON, organised a side event during the Forest Europe Expert Level Meeting. The aim of the side event was to present to the delegates the process that led to the preparation of Phase VI of EUFORGEN, to introduce the main activities planned for the next five years and to **invite Signatory Countries of the Forest Europe Process to join Phase VI of the EUFORGEN Programme**.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.genresbridge.eu/about-us/events/event/feedback-workshop-on-the-european-genetic-resources-strategy>

In **December** 2019, the EUFORGEN Programme, in collaboration with the GenTree<sup>2</sup>, SUSTREE<sup>3</sup>, SPONFOREST<sup>4</sup> and LIFE GENMON<sup>5</sup> projects, organised a science-to-policy event in Brussels. The aim of the event was to present and discuss the relevance and implications of recent research findings on FGR for policy and practice. The event and the messages delivered were well perceived and they are expected to be addressed in future calls for proposals at national and European levels.

A total of **27 countries were members** during the final year of Phase V. Moldova was no longer considered a member country since it did not contribute financially for two years.

In 2019 the Secretariat continued to **maintain and improve the EUFGIS** Information System, Intranet and Portal. **The Information System needs urgent upgrades.**

## 2.2 Financial report for 2019 and closure on Phase V budget

M. Bozzano presented the financial report for 2019, explaining that since the Secretariat moved from Bioersity International to EFI in 2018, the financial report of the first three years of Phase V was closed in 2018 and approved last year by the Steering Committee. The closing of the Phase V budget resulted in a surplus, and the savings have been carried forward to Phase VI as an opening balance. (see annex 1 for more details)

The outstanding contribution from Romania for Phase IV will be written off; therefore, the country can re-join the programme at any time. Moldova, having outstanding contribution for Phase V, is welcome to join Phase VI, but will have to provide the outstanding contributions.

The Steering Committee asked the Secretariat to prepare an overview of the expenditures that will not take place due to the Covid-19 pandemic and that cannot be re-scheduled in the case that there will not be time to arrange those meetings once the travel limitations are lifted. Eventual savings will be re-allocated to complement existing planned activities or to plan new ones to achieve Phase VI objectives.

The 2019 technical and financial reports were approved by the Steering Committee.

## 2.3 Communications report

E. Hermanowicz presented the communications report for 2019 and highlights for 2020. The website is the main channel, with about 4000 visits per month, where the species pages are the most visited. Social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, are also continuing to gain the attention of the external community. The 25th anniversary of EUFORGEN was celebrated with key messages published in various social media. All channels showed an increase in number of visits: 52% for the web, 46% increase of twitter followers, 42% increase of Facebook followers and 88% increase in newsletter subscribers.

Moving EUFORGEN under EFI enabled new opportunities in the area of media engagement through collaboration with the EFI Lookout Station project. This was done through the Sound Reporting Co-Lab bootcamp of the Lookout Station, 8–13 July 2019, and resulted in greater awareness of the importance of genetic resources among journalists and general public (see Annex 3 'Sound Reporting Co-Lab Evaluation' of the Communication Report 2019 for more information).

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.gentree-h2020.eu>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/SUSTREE.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/1024>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.lifegenmon.si>

The new EUFORGEN logo and the revised digital image were presented. A brand book will be shared with all National Coordinators. The proposed tagline did not receive full consensus; therefore, the Secretariat will develop a process to define a new tagline for the EUFORGEN programme and will initiate a process soon after the meeting, providing instruction and guidelines on how to propose and select the most appropriate tagline. The images below show the revised version of the logo and a template cover for new publications.



The new 'refreshed' logo was adopted, while the new **tagline** may need to be revised; a process will be set up to receive suggestions from the National Coordinators. An online consultation will take place to select the best tagline.

## 2.4 Update on EUFORGEN 's activities during 2020

M. Bozzano gave an overview of the activities that took place in 2020.

A side event organised in January back-to-back with the GenTree final conference had been very important to involve a broad range of stakeholders in the **identification of the European FGR research needs**.

A major effort of 2020 was the coordination of the drafting of the European FGR strategy, which will be the main outcome of the first part of Phase VI of EUFORGEN.

M. Bozzano then illustrated the current membership of EUFORGEN: 23 countries have already joined Phase VI, 3 more are presently in the process of signing the LoA and the Secretariat is maintaining contacts with other countries to support their process of joining Phase VI. The Covid-19 related economic crisis affected the process during 2020.

Two new staff members joined the secretariat in 2020. Anna-Maria Farsakoglou joined the team providing scientific support and Lidwina Koop providing administrative support.

M. Bozzano reported on the recognition that the EUFORGEN Programme received from the **Forest Europe** process. A clear **reference to EUFORGEN** and its work will be included in the **Bratislava Declaration**, to be signed by Ministers responsible for forests in Europe in April 2021.

M. Bozzano also informed the meeting that the **European Forest Institute** established a new **Facility**<sup>6</sup> on forest genetic resources. R. Mavsar then elaborated that the unit will capitalise on EUFORGEN's experience and will serve as a hub for all other initiatives related to FGR: the unit aims to be a reference internally and externally to EFI.

## 2.5 GenRes Bridge project (updates and next steps)

The project “GenRes Bridge – Joining forces for genetic resources and biodiversity management”, started in January 2019 with an overall aim to create an integrated conservation strategy for genetic resources in Europe. The EUFORGEN Secretariat, represented by the European Forest Institute (EFI), is the coordinator of the consortium, which is composed of 17 partners.

GenRes Bridge capitalises on the knowledge, strategies, tools and infrastructures developed individually in crop, forest and animal domains over the past few decades by the three pan-European GenRes networks: EUFORGEN, ECPGR<sup>7</sup> (European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources), and ERFP<sup>8</sup> (The European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources).

The service provided by the project, in particular by its four FGR partners (Luke, Finland; INRAe, France; NIBIO, Norway and GIS, Slovenia) is an invaluable contribution to EUFORGEN and to the larger FGR European community. The Steering Committee acknowledged and recognised their inestimable contribution to the whole EUFORGEN community.

More information on GenRes Bridge is available at [www.genresbridge.eu](http://www.genresbridge.eu)

## 3. Issues stemming from webinars given in preparation to the meeting

### 3.1 GenRes Journal

As part of the activities of the GenRes Bridge project, a new open-access peer-reviewed journal ‘Genetic Resources’ ([www.genresj.org](http://www.genresj.org)) was launched in 2020. It publishes original research, reviews and short communications to share domain-specific and interdisciplinary knowledge with the global community of practitioners involved in monitoring, collecting, maintaining, conserving, characterising and using genetic resources for food, agriculture and forestry.

A webinar on the GenRes Journal was presented by S. Goritschnig the week before the meeting. The EUFORGEN Steering Committee was asked to indicate if there would be any interest in supporting the production of the journal and if there are members interested in becoming part of the editorial committee.

It was proposed to organise an online meeting in the next few weeks with a first session involving Sandra Goritschnig to allow questions to be answered, and a second session for SC discussions.

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<sup>6</sup> EFI Facilities are units that build on research knowledge and address particular policies, topics and activities through capacity building, networking and the provision of demand-based expertise. <https://efi.int/facilities>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.rfp-europe.org/>



An online meeting will take place ideally in December 2020. The Secretariat will be sending out a poll to identify the most appropriate date. A virtual discussion of 1.5-hour will then be organised. For the first session S. Goritschnig, the managing editor of Genetic Resources, will be invited while the second part will be dedicated to internal discussions.

### 3.2 The FORGENIUS Project (Ivan Scotti (INRAe))

I. Scotti presented the FORGENIUS project, which will start on 1 January 2021 and will last for five years. He explained the content, the objectives and the planned activities of the different work packages, highlighted the benefits for the EUFORGEN community and illustrated the services that the project will develop for the EUFGIS information system.

The goal of FORGENIUS is to increase the quantity and quality of data in the EUFGIS information system using multiple descriptors from genomic, phenotypic, remote sensing and predictive models, and to make data and analytical tools available in operationally-useful and harmonised standards as a service for users in the fields of conservation, breeding and forest management.

FORGENIUS will characterise the entire network of genetic conservation units presently in the Information System (and any that are entered in future).

FORGENIUS will:

- i. assess genetic, phenotypic, and environmental diversity, as well as resilience of Genetic Conservation Units (GCUs) under climate change;
- ii. provide scientific evidence to support management decisions that promote the resilience and adaptability of GCUs;
- iii. characterise GCUs and their genetic resources to identify high quality germplasm for use in breeding and forest plantations;
- iv. create innovative data accessibility and modelling services for users within and outside the forest genetic resources conservation communities.

Marjana Westergren (leader of the FORGENIUS project's WP responsible for upgrading the EUFGIS information system) said that a lot of different types of data will be produced and made available across Europe and there will be a need to define a clear agreement under which these data are made available, when provided directly by the national focal points. The project will therefore define *terms of reference for data sharing and use in EUFGIS*. A Workshop will be organised in spring 2021 for the EUFGIS Focal points and EUFORGEN National Coordinators (as appropriate) and other countries that provide data or are interested in sharing data. A first draft of the *terms of reference for data sharing and use in EUFGIS* will be produced and will be open for consultation. Finalisation is foreseen in summer or autumn 2022, when it will be open for signature by data-providing countries.

The Steering Committee thanked I. Scotti and the project partners for a project that will serve the broader European Forest Genetic Resources community by providing very useful services and by developing a long-lasting product. Having a project that is closely linked to EUFORGEN's activities was only possible with the involvement of the EUFORGEN Secretariat from the very early stages of the project's design. If similar opportunities emerge in the future, the Secretariat will support the initial stages of the proposal preparation and will ensure that the interest of the wider community will be addressed. Should there be more than one consortium approaching the Secretariat, the one proposing activities in line with the objectives of the Programme and Phase VI work-program will be preferred.

### 3.3 Emerging needs and opportunities - EU Rural developments funds for cofounding FGR activities 2021-2027

F. Pérez Martín gave a presentation on the *National Strategic Plan* that Spain is planning to develop under a new *EU Regulation* in the framework of the EU Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF). The new *Regulation* is under development and he wanted to coordinate with the National Coordinators of EU Member State countries.

In the Proposal of the *Regulation*, interventions on FGR could fit under article 65 (Environmental, climate and other management commitments), which refers to the following: *For animal welfare commitments, for commitments for the conservation, sustainable use and development of genetic resources, for conversion to organic farming...* This is similar to article 34 of EAFRD Regulation 2014–2020, which was developed with respect to genetic resources by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014 (article 8). The European Commission is expected to address FGR issues for 2021–2027 in a way very similar way to the previous Regulation, but this is still not certain.

Spain will propose that the European Commission should include result indicator R23A (Number of operations contributing to environmental sustainability, climate mitigation and adaptation goals in rural areas) in article 65. F. Pérez Martín encouraged the National Coordinators of EU Member Countries to explore (at national level) the possibility of supporting Spain's proposal.

F. Pérez Martín will share the presentation through EUFORGEN temporary Steering Committee page and any interested National Coordinators are encouraged to approach him directly to coordinate follow-ups

## 4. European Genetic Resources Strategy presented to the EUFORGEN Steering Committee

One of the main outcomes of the GenRes Bridge project will be the **European Genetic Resources Strategy**: a policy framework for securing genetic resources for food, agriculture and forestry in the region. It will present a vision for improved genetic resources management in Europe and will include an action plan to pave the way towards its implementation. The strategy will increase awareness of the importance of genetic resources for sustainable and resilient agriculture and forestry in the region and the imperative for adequate and long-term financing for their management.

The University of Birmingham (GenRes Bridge project partner in charge of drafting the strategy) was invited to actively join the first part of the session to give an opportunity to answer any relevant questions. The second part of the session was used to brainstorm on the content and the wording for the **key commitments** that will be included in the strategy, in preparation for a session with the other GenRes domains.

The draft *European Genetic Resources Strategy*, which had already been presented during a webinar in preparation for this meeting, was introduced by N. Maxted.

S. Kell gave a presentation of the background information on the process for drafting the strategy, on the past meetings and on the finalisation roadmap. The draft V.3 is in preparation and all National Coordinators, project partners and *ad hoc* groups are currently invited to give feedback on the strategy.

She informed the meeting about the future steps to reach the final strategy, which will be published in June 2021. She also illustrated the various sections and gave explanations of the objectives and targets. The Annex of the *European Genetic Resources Strategy* will be an *action plan* to be developed based on the *key commitments*. She stressed also that the success of the strategy will depend on the engagement of all countries involved.

M. Bozzano thanked the University of Birmingham for all the efforts undertaken in drafting the Strategy. The Steering Committee then discussed the *key commitments* that could be included in the Strategy and defined specific recommendations to be shared during the feedback workshop organised by the GenRes Bridge project, first with the other two networking programmes on genetic resources (ECPGR and ERFP) and then with the broader group of genetic resources stakeholders.

The Steering Committee agreed to support the further development of the strategy and to provide contributions to the further definition of the Key Commitments

## 5. The European FOREST Genetic Resources Strategy

M. Bozzano introduced the discussion on the *European Forest Genetic Resources Strategy* that is being developed by the EUFORGEN community. He explained that the meeting was a formal opportunity for National Coordinators to provide feedback and direct inputs, which will be followed by several other iterations in the next semester. EUFORGEN Member countries have strongly supported the drafting of the strategy, which will be published as a EUFORGEN product. Observer countries and organisations are encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions, since the strategy aims to be a strategy for the whole of Europe.

Anna-Maria Farsakoglou gave a presentation on the development of the strategy. She provided information about the history of the European collaboration on a FGR strategy since its initial conceptualisation in 2001 and the progress made, including EUFGIS and the current Pan-European strategy. The current conservation strategy is mainly based on environmental information but there is a need to define an approach to take into account other types of information such as genetic data. She additionally explained that a new broader strategy will not only focus on conservation but also on the use and management of forest genetic resources and will present key actors and how countries cooperate through EUFORGEN. The strategy will also define priorities among species and populations according to their level of threat, to coordinate the individual national implementations. The content of the strategy and the roadmap (Annex 4) were also presented.

The content of the new strategy is structured in accordance with the structure of the *European Genetic Resources Strategy*, the FAO GPA on FGR<sup>9</sup> and the EU Biodiversity strategy for 2030<sup>10</sup>.

It was also mentioned that the *European Forest Genetic Resources Strategy* could serve as an example for other regions in the world. The Steering Committee indicated a willingness to present the strategy through the State of the World FGR report, which could include a reference to it. Additionally, the SC proposed to organise side events at relevant meetings (e.g. the FAO ITWG-FGR and FAO CGRFA) to present the strategy to non-European delegations.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3849e.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/eu-biodiversity-strategy-2030\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/eu-biodiversity-strategy-2030_en)

The first draft of the European Forest Genetic Resources Strategy was shared in October 2020 with the National Coordinators and their feedback collected during the meeting and later on through email correspondence, in order to prepare a new draft by the end of January 2021. There will be several other windows for interaction and for the further development of the Strategy along with the identification of the key commitments. The final draft of the strategy is planned to be ready by June 2021.

M. Bozzano highlighted that the strategy is for Europe as a whole, not only the EU. The EUFORGEN member countries will endorse the strategy and all Forest Europe countries will be called to adopt the strategy.

It was clarified that the *European Genetic Resources Strategy* is a GenRes Bridge project product that deals with plant, animal, and forest genetic resources (as well as preparing the ground for more domains to follow), while the *European **Forest** Genetic Resources Strategy* is a EUFORGEN product that covers specifically and in detail FGR needs. The *European Forest Genetic Resources Strategy* will be in compliance with the *European Genetic Resources Strategy* and a process similar to the EGRS will be followed for the finalisation of the EFGRS.

The Secretariat informed the SC that both the *European Genetic Resources Strategy* and the specific domain strategies will be released in an event that the GenRes Bridge project is organising at the end of 2021 in Brussels, Belgium, in order to have high visibility to EC and other organisations.

A summary for policy makers will be developed to accompany the release of the strategies and relevant dissemination material prepared in order to reach out to the relevant stakeholders.

The Word document of the current draft version of the strategy will be shared and National Coordinators and Focal Points from non-member countries will be asked to provide feedback on the coverage of the strategy as well as the level of detail. According to the Strategy's roadmap, the aim is to have a consolidated version prepared by next semester so that by June 2021 it can be finalised. The edited final version will then be presented at the policy event in Brussels.

The timeframe of the *European Forest Genetic Resources Strategy* is foreseen to be 2021–2030 and it was agreed that this is a reasonable timeframe. Updates will take place at the end of that period or earlier if needed.

The Steering Committee agreed that the quality of information, the focus and level of detail of the draft *European Forest Genetic Resources Strategy* are appropriate. The Steering Committee will continue to support the development of the strategy by providing feedback on progressive drafts. The Steering Committee will also provide feedback on the *key commitments* once these have been drafted by the working group. The Secretariat will share the “draft 0” of the strategy with all National Coordinators and Focal Points from non-member countries immediately after the meeting, so that they can enter their comments directly in the file. At least one month will be allowed for feedback. If the file is shared at national level, the National Coordinator will coordinate internally and ensure that only one contribution per country is returned.

The next draft will include suggested *key commitments* and will be open in due time to allow at least one round of feedback. The Steering Committee will provide feedback on the key commitments once these have been drafted by the working group, and will agree on their final formulation.

An online consultation on the *key commitments* can be organised, if needed.

## 5.1 Defining a roadmap for the finalisation of the *European Forest Genetic Resources Strategy* and to address complementary issues

The annexes of the strategy were discussed. These included:

1. Implementation plan
2. State of the art
3. Minimum requirements for dynamic GCU
4. Minimum requirements for static *ex situ* conservation
5. Environment classification

### 5.1.1 Implementation plan

The “**implementation plan**” will be developed once the *key commitments* have been defined.

### 5.1.2 State of the art

The “**State of the art**” is under development and will present achievements of the past 25 years of FGR cooperation in Europe and map key actors and their roles.

### 5.1.3 Minimum requirements of dynamic GCUs

Regarding the “**minimum requirements of dynamic GCUs**”, it was confirmed that these had already been developed through a participatory process a decade ago, and those are still considered a suitable reference.

### 5.1.4 Minimum requirements for static *ex situ* conservation

The meeting heard that these will be a crucial element and there is a need to develop them. The SC agreed on the need to establish a new working group that will address this topic.

A survey will be open in early 2021 and there will be one-month to complete the survey and another month for a preliminary analysis. The first analysis will be ready by April or May 2021 and the working group will define a draft.

It was agreed that all the nominated experts for Phase VI who have *ex situ* expertise will be asked to give feedback on a survey that the Secretariat is preparing and that will be open in January 2021. The most proactive experts (keeping into consideration geographical and perspective balance) after the initial interaction will then be asked to contribute to the drafting of the **static *ex situ* minimum requirements**.

### 5.1.5 Environmental classification

The final annex, on “**environmental classification**”, was also discussed. Currently the classification used for assessment is based on a simplified Metzger 2013<sup>11</sup> which is based on unreliable climatic data and is not a widely used classification. The EUFORGEN community could consider adopting the FAO

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<sup>11</sup> Metzger, M.J., Bunce, R.G.H., Jongman, R.H.G., Sayre, R., Trabucco, A. & Zomer, R. 2013. A high-resolution bioclimate map of the world: a unifying framework for global biodiversity research and monitoring. *Global Ecology and Biogeography*, 22(5): 630–638

classification, which is widely used. This classification would allow a more direct and reliable assessment of what has been conserved.

B. Degen noted that, if a new environmental classification is adopted, the selection should be based on scientific evidence, possibly driven by provenance trials results, which could help to identify the environmental classification that is more informative in highlighting the diversity of ecosystems. F. Lefevre stressed the importance of deciding whether there will be just one environmental classification for all species or multiple species-specific classifications.

Regarding **environmental classification**, the Steering Committee decided that a scientific approach should be followed but this would require an analytic process to be undertaken. For this reason, the FGR strategy will be released using the current environmental classification as a reference, but indicating that it may be changed if a more suitable classification is identified.

## 6. Addressing the open issues

All pending and open issues were presented by the Secretariat. The Steering Committee deliberated as summarised after each point.

### 6.1 EUFORGEN *modus operandi* and establishing the Advisory Committee

M. Bozzano reminded the National Coordinators of the *modus operandi* of EUFORGEN during Phase VI, which will include.

- Advisory Committee
- Secretariat (no action needed)
- Discussion platforms
- Working groups
- EUFGIS focal point (no action needed)
- National experts

#### 6.1.1 Advisory Committee

The Secretariat recalled that the Advisory Committee would consist of four members of the Steering Committee, elected by the Steering Committee for a four-year term of office and representing the European sub-regions (North, West, East and South, in a broad sense), and *ex officio* a designated representative of the hosting organisation. To ensure continuity, one member of the Advisory Committee is replaced by a new member each year. A re-election is possible. Decisions of the Advisory Committee are made by consensus; voting can take place when necessary. The role of the Advisory Committee is to:

- plan or execute the activities of EUFORGEN as decided by the Steering Committee
- support the Secretariat in the preparation of the Steering Committee meetings
- identify issues of strategic importance to EUFORGEN and bring proposals to the attention of the Steering Committee
- represent EUFORGEN at meetings and events, when and where relevant.

The division of countries by regions will follow the Forest Europe sub-division (figure 1), with the exception of South-East and South-West that will be merged into South Europe.

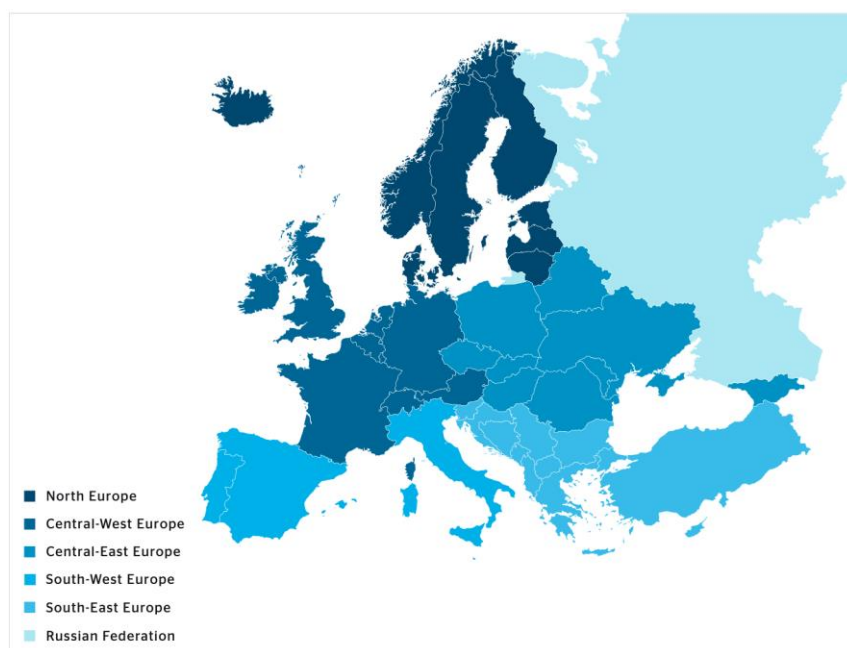


Figure 1: Europe's sub-regions - FOREST EUROPE, 2015: State of Europe's Forests 2015.

The Secretariat will send four separate emails to the member countries in each sub-region asking to nominate possible members. Voting will follow by region. The results of the nomination process will be shared and published on the website.

It was reminded that the Advisory Committee will not have any major decision-making power and will not over-rule the Steering Committee.

## Conclusion

The Advisory Committee consists of **four members** of the Steering Committee, **elected** by the Steering Committee for a **four-year term** of office and representing the European **sub-regions** (North, West, East and South, in a broad sense), and *ex officio* a designated representative of the hosting organisation. To ensure continuity, **one** member of the Advisory Committee is **replaced** by a new member **each year**. A re-election is possible.

### 6.1.2 Discussion platforms

The discussion platforms will address issues that need a pan-European perspective. Each member country will be invited to nominate a representative for each platform. These platforms are the instrument to analyse and discuss relevant issues, to maintain the overall knowledge and understanding of issues relevant to FGR in Europe, and to build capacity among the members of the forum. The Steering Committee indicates a defined timeframe within which each discussion platform will operate.

The discussion platforms are intended to be an effective way to collaborate, but it was pointed out that trying to organise virtual brainstorming sessions can be demanding. For this reason, the planned discussions platforms (i.e. 'ash dieback' and 'adaptation to climate change') were postponed to 2021.

The proposal made by the Secretariat was to plan the 'ash dieback' meeting in April 2021. If a real meeting cannot take place due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a virtual meeting will be organised. Regarding the

'adaptation to climate change' discussion platform, this will take place only if travelling will be possible, tentatively in third quarter of 2021.

The **ash dieback** discussion platform **will take place in April 2021**, and if a real meeting cannot take place due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a virtual meeting will be organised. The **adaptation to climate change** discussion platform will take place only if travel is allowed.

### 6.1.3 Working groups

Working groups consist of approximately ten experts and are established by the Steering Committee, which also defines the tasks, deadlines and expected outputs for each working group. The geographical distribution of the member countries is considered when selecting the experts as well as countries' participation in previous EUFORGEN working groups.

One working group had already been established in 2019 for Phase VI, on the Forest Genetic Resources Strategy. New working groups will be established depending on needs. It was clarified that the team members of each new working group will be chosen from among the nominated representatives of the countries that have already joined the Phase of the programme at the moment of each working group's establishment.

### 6.2 State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources report

The Secretariat was asked by FAO to remind National Coordinators to submit their respective country reports for the preparations of the SoW-FGR-2<sup>12</sup>. As of 20 November 2020, only eight European countries had submitted their complete country reports (i.e. inserted and updated their data in OpenForis and sent a written report). Several other countries had inserted their data but were still finalising their written report.

The deadline of the end of 2020 will be postponed to the second quarter of 2021. The list of FAO National Focal Points that have been asked to prepare the Country reports is available at: <http://www.fao.org/forest-genetic-resources/background/national-focal-points/en>.

In the coming months, FAO will organise online meetings for National Focal Points of all Regions and very likely also in Europe to update them on the process. FAO has a project approved for the development of the new global information system and will provide relevant information on its plans during the European briefing.

The Steering Committee asked about the overlapping and possible linkages between this new information system and EUFGIS. The Secretariat will follow up with FAO to seek clarifications.

### 6.3 State of Europe's Forest Genetic Resources report

The Secretariat asked Member and Observer Countries if they agreed to share their national reports so that the **first ever State of Europe's Forest Genetic Resources report** could be compiled. In addition to the country-reports, the EUFGIS information system could be used to make an assessment against the implementation of the European Forest Genetic Resources Strategy, also using the revised indicator

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.fao.org/forest-genetic-resources/assessments/second-report/en/>



4.6<sup>13</sup>. The timeframe would be similar to that of the overall SoW FGR 2 report, which is foreseen to be finalised in 2023.

The Secretariat will prepare a proposal and a roadmap to be discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting. The Secretariat also reported an ongoing discussion with France, which is willing to support the preparation of such report.

It was made clear that the State of European FGR report will include also non-EUFORGEN member countries. The Steering Committee hoped that having this additional assessment on the Country Reports would encourage more countries to prepare and submit their report to FAO in due time.

At the next Steering Committee meeting the Secretariat will present the roadmap for the development of the **State of Europe's FGR report**. This will include the possibility to run an additional survey to assess the peculiarity of Europe. The Steering Committee will deliberate on the opportunity of developing the report based on the number of national reports available.

## 6.4 EU Forest Strategy

The EC is preparing the new EU Forest Strategy which will be launched at the beginning of 2021. An online consultation regarding the roadmap is ongoing and a link to the survey was shared with participants prior to this meeting. The deadline for the online consultation on the roadmap is 4 December 2020 and the public consultation on the draft strategy will then be opened to all Member States, who will be asked to provide feedback on the text. It is expected that the draft EU Forest Strategy will be shared before the end of the year (2020).

EUFORGEN as a Programme can provide a direct consolidated contribution in the form of a policy brief or precise suggestions on the text. The Secretariat proposed to establish a temporary working group open to EU countries, to provide input to the European Forest Strategy during the next months.

Once the draft EU Forest Strategy is open for consultation, the draft will be shared by the Secretariat with the EUFORGEN member countries and the Secretariat will organise brainstorming either through email or online. Only EU Member Countries that have signed EUFORGEN membership for Phase VI will be part of this consultation. The Secretariat will propose the creation of a working group, if needed, and the results will be shared with the whole Steering Committee before they are submitted to the EC.

## 6.5 EUFORGEN Membership during Phase VI

Due to clearance procedures, some countries face long processes for the signature of the EUFORGEN membership agreement. In order to fill the time gap between the end of Phase V and before signing the new agreement for Phase VI, the Secretariat suggested a temporary measure so that a country can still be considered a member of EUFORGEN while formalising the process to become member of phase VI, provided that the country pays its annual fees.

The Steering Committee remarked that it should however be made clear that these are only temporary transitional arrangement and that membership of EUFORGEN needs to be subject to the signature of the LoA for the Phase.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/dynamic-conservation-and-utilization-of-forest-tree-genetic-resources-indicators-for-in-situ/>

Additionally, in the case that more than one national administration is providing the annual membership, a country will be considered a member only once the full membership has been received by EFI.

In case the process in a country for the signature of the LoA for a new Phase of EUFORGEN is particularly slow, temporary measures can be taken so that the country can still be considered a member country on the condition that it has fulfilled the payment of the annual contributions. This will not be an annual engagement but only a temporary measure while the country is in the process of signing the full membership agreement.

Countries can transfer the annual membership to EFI from different administrative entities but will be considered a member only once the full country contribution is received.

## 6.6 Funding EUFORGEN through the European Commission

The Secretariat briefed the Steering Committee on an ongoing effort to evaluate the possibility of obtaining a direct financial support from the European Commission.

The conservation of forest genetic resources is dependent on material remaining at its natural location. Thus, all countries within the distribution areas of European tree species must take part in conservation efforts. If only some countries support such international efforts, the outcomes are limited. Without the backing and full participation of all relevant countries, the responsibility and associated costs to develop conservation strategies are unfairly spread among a few countries, hindering the likelihood of the proper conservation of valuable genetic resources.

Currently, only 23 countries (19 European Union member countries) fund EUFORGEN. The annual fees range from 2,500–35,000 Euro per year, depending on a country's Gross Domestic Product. These funds cover only the direct costs of meetings and coordination, while countries further contribute an equivalent amount through staff time of experts who participate in working groups and develop strategies.

Having recognised the benefits of EUFORGEN thus far and acknowledging the need for widespread cooperation across species' distribution areas, a long-term programme such as EUFORGEN represents the best strategy for the European Union to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of its forest genetic resources.

The European Union has the potential to play a crucial role in supporting the overall, long-term coordination of EUFORGEN by facilitating a broader engagement and contribution from all members and neighbouring countries where valuable forest genetic resources exist.

To reach its potential and achieve the full range of possible outcomes, a direct funding mechanism could support a networking programme such as EUFORGEN. The allocation of a direct regular contribution from the European Union would guarantee the continued coordination of EUFORGEN and ongoing interactions among stakeholders, with the expectation that current EUFORGEN members maintain their existing levels of contribution for development and implementation of strategies.

The Secretariat encouraged the National Coordinators to consider the pros and cons of such arrangements and proposed to devote a session at the next Steering Committee, in order to define a common position.

The Secretariat was asked to prepare the background documents well in advance and give enough time to the countries to prepare for the meeting.

It was mentioned that the need for a direct contribution to the networking programme is emerging as a possible recommendation both from the European Genetic Resources Strategy and the European Forest Genetic Resources Strategy. The second semester of 2021 and the first semester of 2022 could therefore be a very favourable moment to raise the issue where appropriate.

The Secretariat will prepare a background document on the possibility obtaining direct financial support from the European Commission. This document will be made available two months prior the next SC meeting. The document will be shared with all EUFORGEN member countries, not only EU countries.

National Coordinators will be asked to undertake a consultation at national level to present the national position and the willingness to support such a process during the 16<sup>th</sup> SC meeting (second semester 2021).

## 6.7 Glossary

The Secretariat proposed to establish a small working group to support the finalisation of the glossary. The Secretariat will circulate a list of terms with suggested definitions (based on EUFORGEN's technical publications). A survey could also be run, if needed. For the moment there is no timeframe.

## 6.8 Species pages and nomination of species curators

Once a country has joined Phase VI, the EUFORGEN Secretariat contacts the National Coordinator and asks them to nominate a list of national experts in the country who have relevant experience and knowledge related to the defined discussion platforms and to characterise the expertise of the person in relation to the objectives of Phase VI.

The Secretariat will then ask each nominated expert to indicate a list of species of which they have an extensive knowledge or ongoing research or interest.

These experts' names will be listed on the website as resource persons for the designated thematic areas and species. After the initial nomination, the National Coordinators can make changes to the expert nominations, as needed. The Secretariat explained that these experts will also be able to contribute to the improvement of the species web pages. These pages will include a list of experts for each species and these experts are asked to collaborate on the content of those pages by including more information on the genetic diversity of the species and by indicating relevant projects and literature.

## 7. AoB, Closure and date and place for the next meeting

M. Rusanen asked for the minutes of the SC meetings to be prepared in a narrative form in order to help the participants to recall the outcomes of the discussions during subsequent meetings. The key decisions and recommendations should be highlighted in a separate box.

The 16<sup>th</sup> SC meeting will take place at the end of 2021 in Brussels, Belgium, back-to-back with the presentation event for the European Genetic Resources Strategy. The plan is to also present the European FGR Strategy. The European Commission and various organisations will be invited to the event and it will also be an opportunity to interact with other domains. The expenses for the organisation of the meeting will be mostly covered by the Genres Bridge project.

## **Annexes**

Annex 1 – Financial report 2019

Annex 2 - Leaflet

Annex 3 - Communication Report 2019

Annex 4 – Roadmap of European FGR strategy

Annex 5 - Agenda

Annex 6 - List of Participants

**Summary of Expenditure - up to 31/12/2019**

Details	Budget - Opening Balance (EUR) <sup>(1)</sup>	Total Expenditure (EUR)	2018 Expenditure (EUR)	2019 Expenditure (EUR)	Budget - Balance (EUR)
Secretarial Staff	418,650	376,284	206,490	169,794	42,366
Staff Travel	21,392	53,674	27,786	25,888	(32,282)
Steering Committee (meetings)	24,066	47,314	23,662	23,652	(23,248)
Working groups (meetings)	35,654	12,704	12,704	0	22,950
Workshops & other events	22,284	13,280	7,529	5,751	9,004
EUFGIS Portal	8,914	7,800	0	7,800	1,114
Publications & dissemination	8,914	23,268	2,167	21,100	(14,354)
Other Costs	35,654	0	0	0	35,654
Overheads 18.5%	106,473	98,850	51,863	46,987	7,623
<b>Total</b>	<b>682,001</b>	<b>633,173</b>	<b>332,201</b>	<b>300,972</b>	<b>48,827</b>
Funds Received via Bioversity International <sup>(2)</sup>		187,767			
2018 Contributions - Paid		339,662			
2019 Contributions - Paid		339,401			
Closing Balance		233,657			

(1) As per amendment to the EUFORGEN programme of work and budget for Phase V (1 January 2015–31 December 2019), agreed by EUFORGEN Steering Committee at its 12th meeting on 1 June 2017

(2) Balance in final report from Bioversity International was 239,734 USD\$. Balance received by EFI was 203,099 EUR€. This included the 2018 contributions from Hungary & Slovakia - both 7,666 EUR€. Remaining amount is therefore 187,767 EUR€

**Outstanding contributions not yet received by EFI - as at 07/04/2020**

Country	2017 (EUR)	2018 (EUR)	2019 (EUR)
Moldova	2,228		2,228
<b>Total Outstanding</b>	<b>2,228</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,228</b>

**Contributions received by EFI in relation to EUFORGEN Phase V**

Country	2017 (EUR)	2018 (EUR)	2019 (EUR)	2020 (EUR)
Austria		11,320	11,320	
Belgium		11,231	11,231	
Croatia		7,666	7,666	
Czech		7,666	7,666	
Denmark		11,320	11,320	
Estonia		5,615	5,615	
Finland		11,320	11,320	
France		33,871	33,871	
Germany		33,871	33,871	
Greece		11,320	11,320	
Hungary <sup>(2)</sup>		7,666	7,666	
Iceland		5,615	5,615	
Ireland		7,666	7,666	
Italy		14,083	14,083	
Lithuania		5,615	5,615	
Luxembourg		5,615	5,615	
Moldova		2,228	0	
Netherlands		14,083	14,083	
Norway		11,320	11,320	
Poland		11,320	11,320	
Serbia		5,615	5,615	
Slovakia <sup>(2)</sup>		7,666	7,666	7,500
Slovenia		7,666	7,666	
Spain		14,005	14,005	
Sweden		11,320	11,320	
Switzerland		14,083	14,083	
Turkey		14,083	14,083	
UK / Welsh government		33,871	33,871	
Other		942	2,909	
<b>Total Received</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>339,662</b>	<b>339,401</b>	<b>7,500</b>

# EUFORGEN

## EUROPEAN FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES PROGRAMME



### RECOMMENDATIONS WITH POLICY RELEVANCE

DECEMBER 2019

These recommendations were identified through a consultative process within EUFORGEN Member countries.

#### → **Conserve forest genetic resources at all levels - key for the adaptation to climate change**

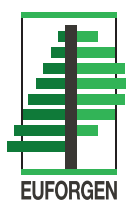
Climate change is a severe threat to forests. Genetic diversity ensures that forest trees can survive, adapt and evolve under changing environmental conditions. Future management options to adapt forests to climate change heavily rely on the availability of appropriate forest genetic resources. All European countries should collaborate to implement the pan-European strategy for genetic conservation of forest trees which aims to conserve the evolutionary potential of European forest tree species in a network of dynamic genetic conservation units. Moreover, the conservation of forest genetic resources needs to be improved at all levels of sustainable forest management in order to secure future adaptation of forest to climate change and the continued delivery of its services.

#### → **Facilitate the appropriate choices of forest reproductive material**

The use of forest reproductive material that is genetically fitted for a specific site requires a sound knowledge about its identity, adaptive traits and adaptation potential. The identification and characterization of forest reproductive material should be improved, and science based tools should be developed and made available to support end-users and the regulating framework in the decision making. Key information should include inter alia provenance recommendations, indicators for genetic diversity and, when available, results of genetic tests.

#### → **Monitor adaptation and evolutionary potential of transferred forest reproductive material**

Since forest reproductive material has been moved across Europe for a long time and in the future assisted migration is likely to become one of the adaptive measures for climate change, it is crucial to monitor adaptation and evolutionary potential of the moved material under different environmental conditions. An online information system for geo-referenced records of the origin, movement and use of forest reproductive material should be created to record the production, marketing and end use of the forest reproductive material and, where available, performance data too.



**EUFORGEN** (European Forest Genetic Resources Programme) is an international cooperation programme promoting the conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources in Europe as an integral part of sustainable forest management. The Programme was established in 1994, following the adoption of the 1990 resolution by the 1st Forest Europe Ministerial Conference. More than 30 European countries have contributed to EUFORGEN and its work, to date. Currently, 28 countries provide direct financial support to the Programme. The EUFORGEN Secretariat is hosted by European Forest Institute.

[www.euforgen.org](http://www.euforgen.org)

# European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN)

## Phase V (2015–2019)

### COMMUNICATIONS REPORT 2019

Ewa Hermanowicz, EUFORGEN Secretariat, European Forest Institute

In this report, the results of communication activities are presented against the objectives and indicators of achievement of the communication strategy and action plan for 2019 and evaluated based on the actual outcome.

#### Objectives for 2019

- Increase focus on reaching policy-makers
- Collaborate with EFI communications team for synergies
- Integrate EUFORGEN communication activities in the EFI communications strategy
- Strengthen media presence
- Continue feeding the established channels (website, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, Facebook, Wikipedia) with new contents seeking innovative formats

## 1. Website

### 1.1 Website traffic

In 2019, the website had approximately 90 visitors per day and an average of 4,134 visitors per month (figure 1). This represents an increase of 519 % compared to 2018. This is a significant increase that provides evidence of a growing visibility beyond the core EUFORGEN community. The peak of daily page views was reached in the beginning of December 2019 with the highest number of views recorded on 9 December.

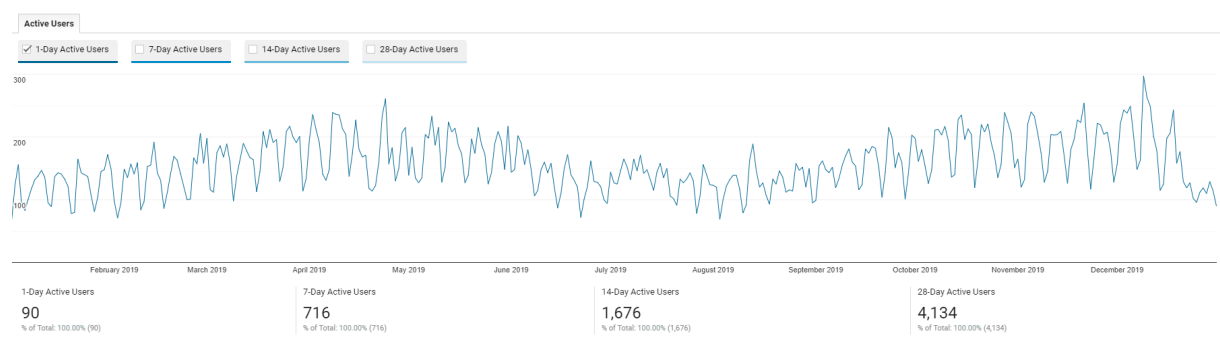


Fig.1 Average monthly visitors to the EUFORGEN website.



Examining the most visited pages of the website, the ‘Species’ page remains clearly, similarly to previous years, the most popular of all with almost 19,000 pageviews for the Species List. The second most popular page was the section “About Us” which contains general information about EUFORGEN (Almost 10 % of all pageviews). The high number of pageviews indicates an increasing interest in EUFORGEN.

The number of non-bounced sessions for the ‘Species’ page was very high in comparison to the pageviews. This is an indicator that people found the relevant information on the website they were looking for.

Most traffic in 2019 came from organic search – 69,8 %. (fig.2), meaning that viewers arrive at the website by searching for keywords related to the EUFORGEN website and subsequently clicking on the link to the page in the search results.

Top Channels

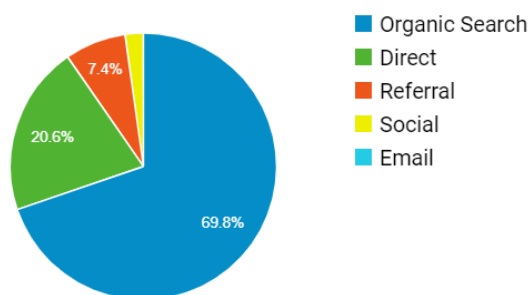


Fig. 2 Acquisition to the EUFORGEN website

The species page of *Pinus sylvestris* was searched for the most out of all species and hit 1,809 pageviews. Out of all the visitors of the website, 82,14% were new ones, showing a continued interest in the EUFORGEN website. This species was further promoted through the EUFORGEN Twitter channel at the end of March in the context of the weekly #ForestFacts, in which different tree species are highlighted usually every Friday of the week.

## 2. News

### 2.1 Newsletter

According to the communication action plan for 2019, the target was to increase the number of subscribers to the EUFORGEN newsletter by 20 %, which was achieved. In January 2019, the newsletter had 398 subscribers, which increased to 650 subscribers one year later, representing an 88 % increase. Newsletters were sent out in March, July, October and December.





## *2.2 News stories on forest genetic resources issues in Europe*

The following articles related to forest genetic resources (FGR) issues in Europe were written and published in 2019 in the 'News' section of the website and further highlighted in the Newsletter. The variety of different articles focused on FGR issues in Europe illustrates the multitude of different topics addressed within the EUFORGEN network

- First genetic conservation unit in the UK to protect Scots pine
- Native black poplars now available from commercial nurseries in France
- On the move – forest tree seeds and seedlings in trade
- Adapting to climate change in Iceland
- Safeguarding seeds in the deep freeze
- Bioacoustics recording and systems thinking to help journalists report on complex science
- Happy 25th Anniversary, EUFORGEN!
- Prioritizing a nation's tree species for genetic conservation

At least two of the news items were posted back to back on the EFI Resilience Blog.

According to the analytics, the article with the most views in 2019 was "Greening Iceland", an article that was originally published in 2017, but still remains the most viewed article on the website with 1,400 total views. The content of the article is still a current topic, which explains the continued interest by new website visitors.

Another article 'Why active forest management is necessary', published in 2016, was also very frequently viewed. Many readers referred to this article in order to engage with the topic of forest management and understand why it causes controversies in a public discourse.

EUFORGEN published on several digital platforms such as the EFI website to promote the a campaign for its 25th Anniversary, and advertise upcoming events, such as the joint event in Brussels, on December 13th.

## **3. Social media**

Social media channels were actively maintained and used to promote relevant materials and attract the attention of new stakeholders.

### *3.1 Twitter*

In the start of 2019, the EUFORGEN Twitter channel had around 980 followers. Towards the end of 2019, the profile grew to 1,336 followers (36 % increase). The number of new followers totaled 356, an average of 29.6 new followers per month. This channel is a stable and important mechanism to reach and maintain a wide network.

#### *25th Year anniversary*

The topic that gained the most attention on the EUFORGEN Twitter channel in 2019 was the celebration of EUFORGEN's 25th anniversary. Blogposts on the EUFORGEN website, the EFI



Resilience Blog, and the Twitter campaign “EUFORGEN turns 25!” promoted the work of EUFORGEN in general and attracted more followers (38 in one month) of the account during this time. The account also reached its highest amount of “impressions” within one month. Impressions indicates the number of times a Tweet has been seen. This includes not only the number of times it appears in one of the followers’ account timeline, but also the number the times it appeared in a search or as a result of someone liking the Tweet. In December 2019, EUFORGEN tweets were viewed 41.9K times.

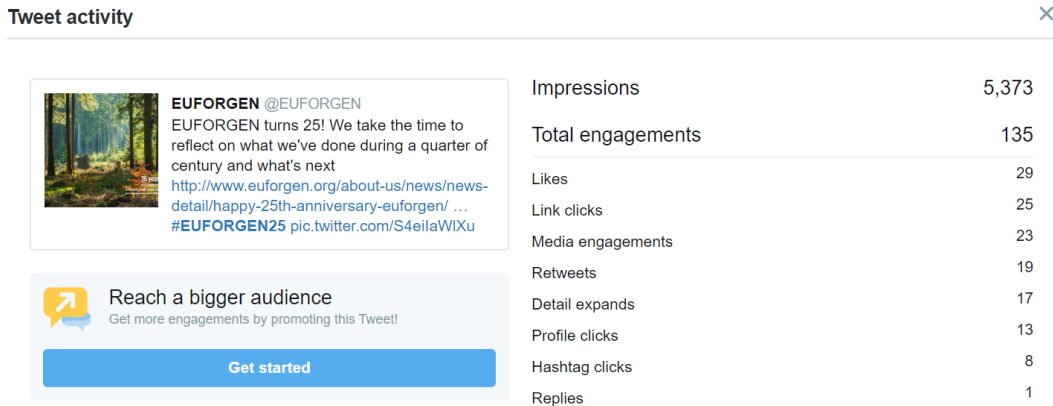


Fig 3. Example of a tweet of the “EUFORGEN turns 25” campaign

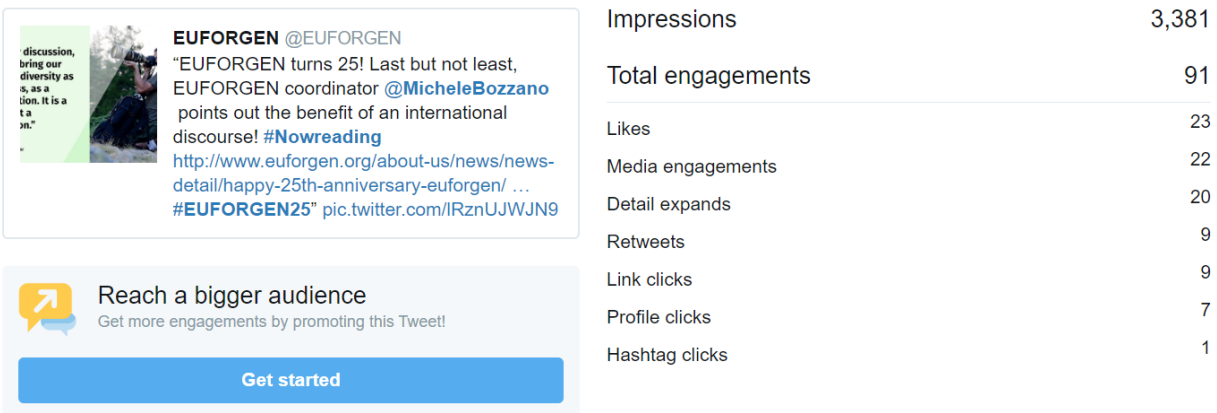


Fig 4. Example of a tweet of the “EUFORGEN turns 25” campaign

### #ForestFacts

Throughout the year, a ‘Friday Species’ campaign was continued on Twitter and Facebook to promote a species of interest by EUFORGEN usually every Friday of the week. The examples below show the engagement on Twitter related to a ‘Friday Species’. The engagement varied greatly from



week to week, and depended on the tags used and the relevance of the species. These Tweets are often linking to the technical guidelines of the species on EUFORGEN website.

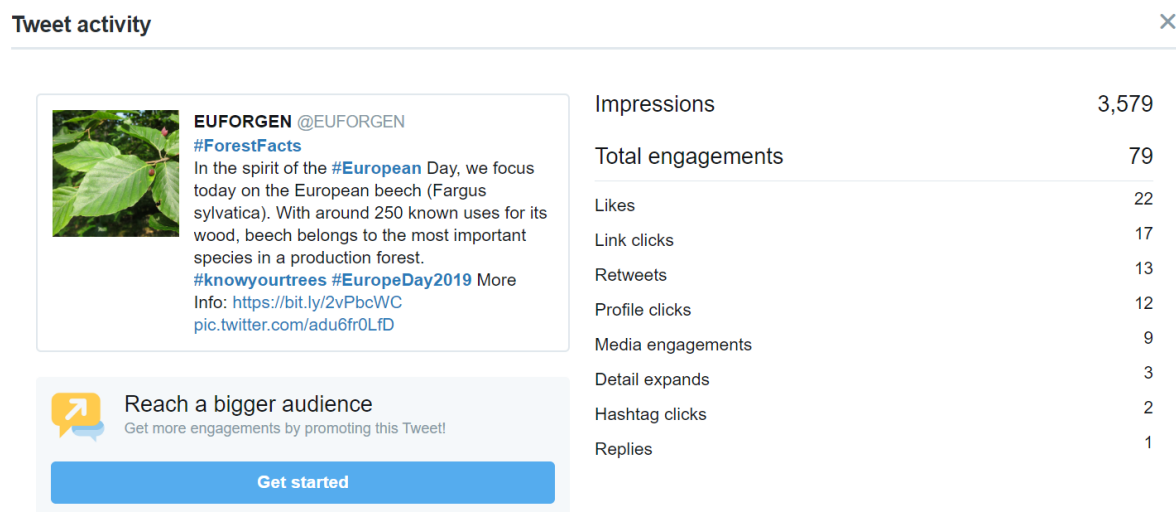


Figure 5 and 6: Examples of 'Friday Species' Tweets and the related engagement rates.

Twitter is an excellent tool to report live from events to raise visibility, connect, and showcase the types of events that the EUFORGEN community is participating in. It further allows for highlighting - in rather non-scientific ways - the different news and publications regarding EUFORGEN. Therefore, it attracts people outside EUFORGEN network.

### 3.2 Facebook

At the end of December 2019, the profile was followed by 821 people and liked by 771 people. The Facebook profile allows EUFORGEN to promote its overall activities and share among others, the



'Friday tSpecies' campaign. Through these posts, the number of followers constantly increased, resulting in a total of 32% from the beginning of the year.

### 3.3 YouTube

In 2019, the YouTube channel was mainly used for sharing the recordings of the webinars in preparation to the Steering Committee meeting (unlisted). The channel gained 300 new followers thanks to the continuous interest in the film 'Afforesting Iceland' published in Sep 2017.

### 3.4 Flickr

The Flickr account was updated with several images throughout the year, including the ones taken at EUFORGEN meetings. The account serves as an image bank which displays tree species and botanical tree illustrations used for the technical guidelines. The image bank also serves as source of pictures to choose from for the 'Friday Species' and other pictures used in the context of EUFORGEN. All images shared on Flickr account is also under the licence of Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-Share Alike, which allows for the free distribution and use of the pictures.

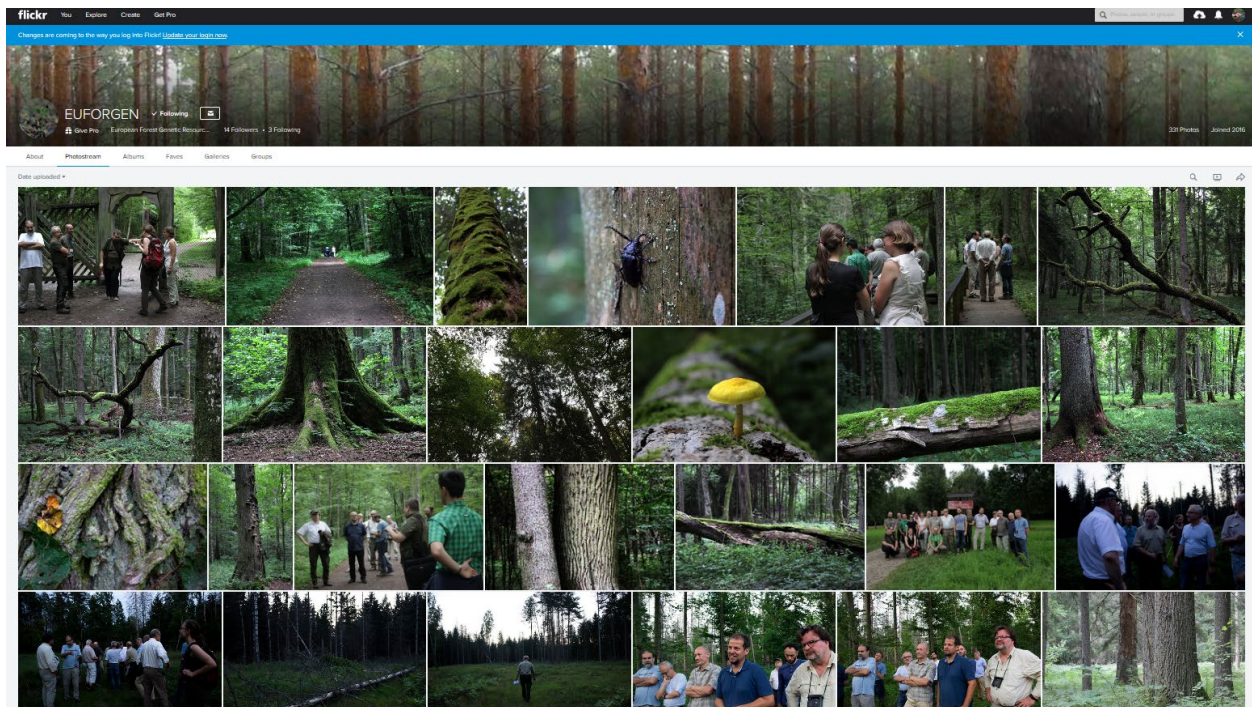


Figure 7: Photostream on the EUFORGEN Flickr account.



## **4. Publications**

### *4.1 Scientific publications*

Five technical guidelines were published and added to the publications catalogue in 2019. and available online and to download.

## **5. Media and other websites**

Moving EUFORGEN under EFI enabled new opportunities in the area of media engagement through collaboration with EFI Lookout Station project. EUFORGEN started to build alliances with media houses that invest in science and environment journalism. This was done through Sound Reporting Co-Lab bootcamp of the Lookout Station, 8-13 July 2019 and resulted in greater awareness of the importance of genetic resources among journalists and general public (*see Annex 'Sound Reporting Co-Lab Evaluation' for more information*).

## **6. Engagement in policy processes**

During 2019, the Coordinator, Michele Bozzano, attended 17 events that created awareness about recent outputs of the Programme and introduced EUFORGEN's work to new audiences. Nine of these forums and international conferences were attended by policy-makers. The Coordinator actively contributed with presentations and/or interventions in all of them. The Communications Officer, Ewa Hermanowicz, attended three events during which EUFORGEN was presented in relation to the programme's science communication activities (*for details, see section 6.3 of the technical report*).

## **7. New communication partnerships**

In 2019, a few new partnerships were initiated, mainly with journalists from major international media houses participating in the activities organized in the context of the Lookout Station project and Bialowieża Science Initiative led by EFI.

## **8. Collaboration with EFI communications team for synergies**

Favoured by the spatial proximity and the trustworthy and positive cooperation between EFI and EUFORGEN Secretariat, several EUFORGEN outputs were presented and distributed during international events on a local level. For instance, at the Bonn UN Day, where EFI distributed Technical guidelines of local tree species to the visitors. Further examples are: the federal "Forest conference" (Waldkonferenz) in Düsseldorf as well as several international lectures held at EFI Bonn office. Especially the technical guidelines were very well received and strengthen the visibility of EUFORGEN on a local scale.



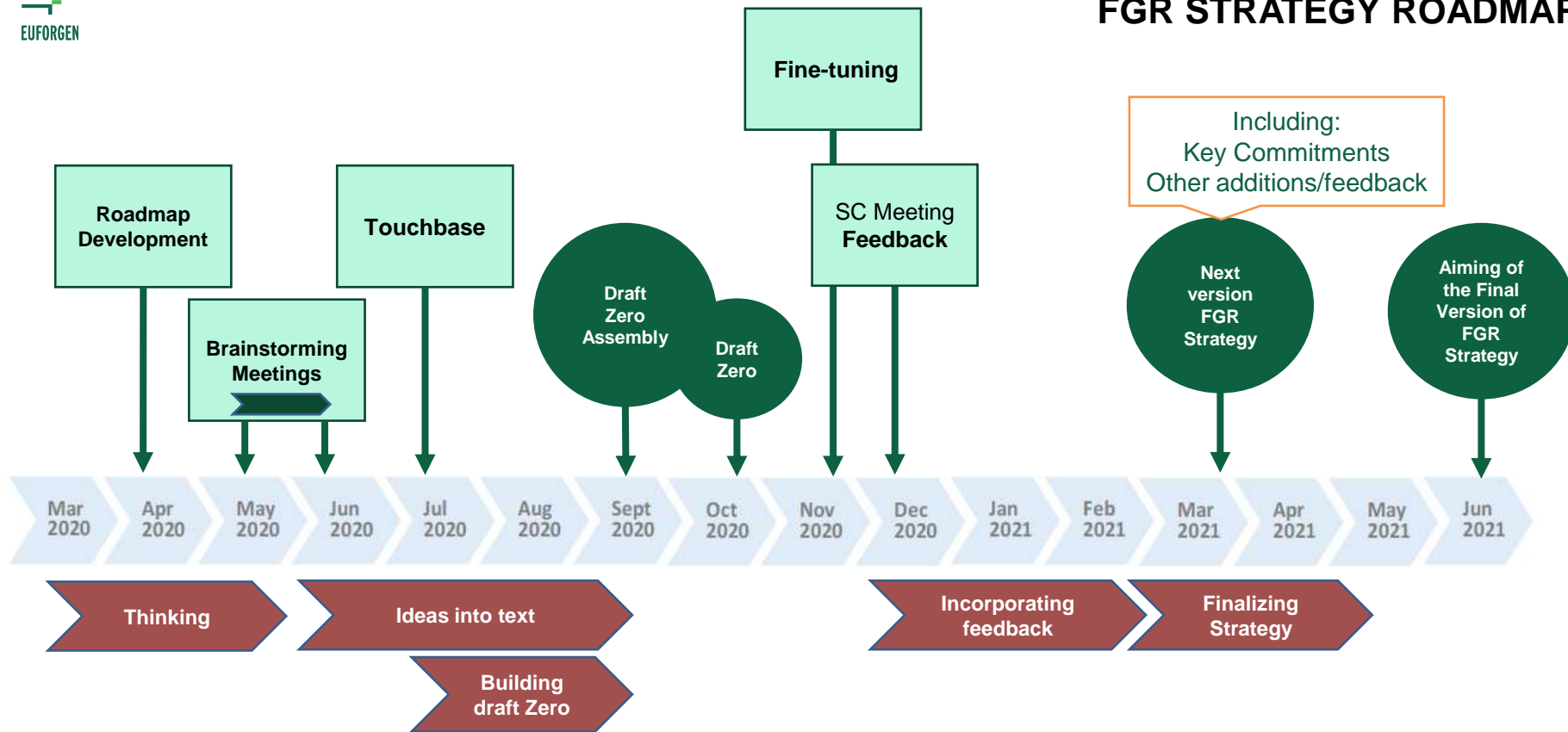
## 9. Conclusion

All communication activities rolled out as part of the Action Plan 2019 to implement the Communications Strategy led to increased interest and engagement in EUFORGEN's work by researchers, international organizations, forest-related associations policy-makers and journalists, which can be demonstrated by the fulfilment and surpass of targets outlined in the Communication Activity Plan for 2019:

- increase in website traffic by 52%,
- increase in newsletter readership by 88%,
- increase in twitter followers by 36%,
- increase in facebook followers by 32%

The move to EFI and engagement in the Lookout Station project and strong presence on social media resulted in very high media interest reaching the highest levels in EUFORGEN's history. The website statistics demonstrate a growing interest in EUFORGEN's work and continuous efforts to share knowledge through Wikipedia make it a top referral page – something to bear in mind for future planning of communication activities.

# FGR STRATEGY ROADMAP





**15<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting**  
**European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN)**

Annex 5

*23-25 (26) November 2020*

*Virtual Meeting*

**DRAFT AGENDA**

**Webinars in preparation for the meeting**

**Genetic Resources** – a new journal serving all GR sectors - *Sandra Goritschnig*, (Alliance Bioversity-CIAT) - [link to the webinar](#)

**GeneNet Project** – Improving the genetic conservation network for Ireland. *Colin Kelleher* (National Botanic Gardens, Ireland) [link to the webinar](#)

**FORGENIUS project** – a new H2020-funded project to expand, improve, organise knowledge of forest diversity and resilience. *Ivan Scotti* (INRAE, France) - [link to the webinar](#)

**European Genetic Resources Strategy** - Securing genetic resources in Europe – Development of the European Genetic Resources Strategy *Nigel Maxted* (University of Birmingham, UK) - [link to the webinar](#)

Meeting participants are warmly invited to watch the recording of the webinars, since those will be the basis for the discussion during the meeting



**Monday 23 November**

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
9.30	<b>Virtual gathering - informal</b>	The virtual space is open to allow the meeting participants to informally gather and to get ready for the meeting	
10.00	<b>Opening of the meeting</b> Logistics and instructions for the online event ( <i>Ewa Hermanowicz, Secretariat</i> ) <b>Introduction</b> and approval of the agenda ( <i>Michele Bozzano, Secretariat</i> )	<b>For discussion and approval</b> The agenda is approved	Draft Agenda of the meeting
	Introduction of participants and nomination of meeting rapporteurs ( <i>E. Hermanowicz</i> )		<a href="#">List of participants</a>
10.20	<b>Session 1: Reporting</b> EUFORGEN's 2019 Technical and Financial report ( <i>M. Bozzano</i> ) EUFORGEN's Communication 2019 and 2020 ( <i>Ewa Hermanowicz Secretariat</i> ) Update on EUFORGEN's activities during 2020 ( <i>M. Bozzano</i> )	<b>For discussion and approval</b> Technical and financial report for 2019 are approved by the SC	<a href="#">Technical</a> and <a href="#">financial</a> report for 2019 <a href="#">Communications report</a>
	GenRes Bridge project (updates and next steps) <i>M. Bozzano</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b> 2020 EUFORGEN's activities are presented	
		<b>For information and discussion</b> 2019-20 project's activities are presented	<a href="http://www.genresbridge.eu">www.genresbridge.eu</a>
11.15	Coffee Break		
11.30	<b>Session 2: Issues stemming from webinars</b> <i>E. Hermanowicz</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GenRes Journal (<a href="http://www.genresj.org">www.genresj.org</a>)</li> </ul>	<b>For discussion and deliberation</b> SC to indicate if the journal is relevant for the FGR community if supporting it	<a href="#">Webinars</a>
	The FORGENIUS Project ( <i>Ivan Scotti (INRAe)</i> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MoU - data sharing agreement (<i>Marjana Westergren (GIS)</i>)</li> </ul>	<b>For information and discussion</b>	

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
		Pending actions from the webinars are addressed	
	<b>Emerging needs and opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU Rural developments funds for cofounding FGR activities 2021-2027 (<i>Felipe Pérez Martín (Spain)</i>)</li> <li>Glossary (<i>Anna-Maria Farsakoglou, Secretariat</i>)</li> <li>Species' pages on the EUFORGEN's website (<i>M. Bozzano</i>)</li> </ul>		
	Introducing Session 3 (M. Bozzano)		
12.30	Lunch break		
14.00	<b>Session 3: European Genetic Resources Strategy (EGRS) presented to the EUFORGEN Steering Committee</b> European Genetic Resources Strategy ( <i>Nigel Maxed (UoB)</i> ) Q/A	<b>For information and discussion</b> The SC has a comprehensive overview of the overall European Genetic Resources Strategy	<a href="#">Recording of the webinar</a>  <a href="#">European Genetic Resources Strategy draft version 3.1</a>
14.45	Coffee Break		
15.00	European Genetic Resources Strategy – key commitments	<b>For discussion</b> The SC discusses the possible key commitments and agrees on a consolidated EUFORGEN <b>perspective</b> for the following day	EGRS 15.2
16.50	<b>Assessment of day 1 (and getting ready for the following day)</b>  <i>E. Hermanowicz</i>	Strengths and possible improvements for the next days	
17.00	Close of the day		

## Tuesday 24 November

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
10.00	<b>Brief recap – M. Bozzano and participants</b>		
10.15	<b>Session 4: The European FOREST Genetic Resources Strategy</b> (AM Farsakoglou)	<b>For information and discussion</b> The SC has a comprehensive overview of the draft European Forest Genetic Resources Strategy	<a href="#">Draft Zero European Forest Genetic Resources Strategy</a>
11.00	Coffee Break		
11.15	<b>Defining a roadmap for the finalisation of the FGR Strategy and to address complementary issues</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental classification for the strategy</li> <li>• <i>Ex situ</i> minimum requirements</li> <li>• Key commitments</li> </ul>	<b>For discussion and approval</b>	<a href="#">FAO Ecological zones – JRC s</a>
11.45	<b>Getting ready for the afternoon session (M. Bozzano)</b>	<b>For discussion</b>	
12.00	Lunch Break		
13.30	<b>Cross-domain feedback workshop</b> Opening of the online space		
14.00	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>		
14.30	<b>Sharing feedback from the networks</b>  Domains coordinators/Secretary will introduce the outcomes of the domain-specific discussions of the previous day	<b>For discussion</b>	
15.20	Coffee Break		
15.35	<b>Processing feedback from the networks</b>	<b>For discussion</b>	
16.25	<b>Closing</b>		
16.30	<b>Close of the day</b>		

**Wednesday 25 November**

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
10.00	<b>Brief recap</b> <i>M. Bozzano and participants</i>		
10.15	<b>Session 5: addressing open issues (M. Bozzano)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring the possibility of EUFORGEN receiving funding by the European Commission</li> <li>• State of Europe's FGR report</li> <li>• Inputs into the development of the EU Forest Strategy</li> <li>• Transition measures for countries joining the new Phase</li> <li>• Countries sharing fees and responsibilities internally</li> </ul>	<b>For discussion and deliberation</b> Open issues are discussed and actions to address them have been defined	<a href="#">EU Forest Strategy - roadmap</a>
11.00	<b>Coffee Break</b>		
11.15	<b>Session 6: workplan for 2021</b>  Definition of workplan for 2021 and modalities to nominate representatives for the collaborative platforms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discussion platforms</li> <li>○ Working Groups</li> <li>○ Advisory committee</li> </ul>		
	Closure - Date and place for the next meeting		
12.00	<b>Lunch Break</b>		
13.15	<b>Feedback Workshop on the European Genetic Resources Strategy</b>		<i>Separate programme</i>
15.15	<b>Coffee break</b>		
15.35	<b>Feedback Workshop on the European Genetic Resources Strategy</b>		<i>Separate programme</i>
17.00	<b>Close of the meeting</b>		

**Thursday 26 November**

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
13.15	<b>Feedback Workshop on the European Genetic Resources Strategy</b>		<i>Separate programme</i>
15.00	Coffee break		
15.20	<b>Feedback Workshop on the European Genetic Resources Strategy</b>		<i>Separate programme</i>
16.30	Close of the meeting		



**15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee 23-25 November 2020  
(virtual meeting)**

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