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Farmer's Pride

Networking, partnerships and tools to enhance *in situ* conservation of European plant genetic resources

Policy roundtable on the establishment of a European network for *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources

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Executive summary

The overarching goal of the Farmer's Pride project was to establish a European network for *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources¹. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to establish a self-sustaining network structure with appropriate governance in place to underpin its long-term sustainability. Despite the huge efforts of the Farmer's Pride consortium, this goal was not fully achieved during the project lifetime². With the aim of taking network establishment forward beyond the lifetime of the Farmer's Pride project, a panel of experts representing key national, regional and global stakeholders were invited to a policy roundtable event at the Farmer's Pride Final Dissemination Conference to provide their views on four key issues:

1. The next steps needed to ensure the network is established and provided with a viable long-term governance structure.
2. How the network can be integrated into relevant biodiversity, agricultural, environmental and genetic resources policy and legislative frameworks (at European and global levels).
3. How the network can be best designed to support the European Green Deal, the Second Global Plan of Action on PGRFA, the International Treaty on PGRFA, and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
4. What new policies/legislative instruments are needed to support the network and broader PGR conservation and sustainable use in Europe.

Key messages arising from the roundtable were:

- The need to pool resources to implement actions for *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) are critically important aspects of the work of The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with its member organizations, and four out of 18 priority activities of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture pertain to the *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA. FAO, through its Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), has been seeking to establish either one or two global networks to address these priority activities and to foster the development of a community of practice for *in situ* conservation and on-farm management activities that could begin to evolve into a 'network of networks'. In this regard, the work of the Farmer's Pride project in establishing a network for *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA represents critical steps towards the eventual establishment of a global network for PGRFA. FAO is keenly interested in the establishment of a European *in situ* PGR network as the lessons learned will be critical assets in fostering the development of the envisaged global network.
- Conservation of genetic resources is important for plant breeders as genetic resources constitute the basis of any breeding work. Access to PGR germplasm *in situ* for use by the plant breeding sector is currently very cumbersome, and the main interest of the seed sector in the establishment of a European *in situ* PGR network is to find ways to improve access to the conserved genetic resources. The European network can also play an important role in providing access to PGR for farmers, as well as in promoting the role of farmers as custodians of PGR. The conservation and sustainable use of PGR is central in the implementation of policies under the European Green Deal, including the 'From Farm to Fork' strategy—however, there is currently no legal framework within the EU that would support such efforts. Currently, *in situ* PGR conservation and sustainable use efforts are undertaken at national level, are very scattered, and not undertaken consistently and to the same level across the region. The European *in situ* PGR network is needed to improve the current situation,

¹ See farmerspride/network/

² See farmerspride/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2021/11/D4.4_European_in_situ_PGR_conservation_network.pdf

and to achieve this, the EU needs to increase efforts in providing the necessary policy framework. Such a framework needs to have clear goals and to be coherent with other policies and legislation pertaining to the conservation and use of PGR. Structures and financial resources are needed to implement such a policy, and the European *in situ* PGR network initiated by the Farmer's Pride project can be one of those structures.

- The presentations made at the Farmer's Pride Final Dissemination Conference provide convincing arguments for the establishment of an *in situ* PGR network in Europe—both on-farm and in the wild. One of the benefits and added values of the European network would be the creation of 'actionable knowledge', which is particularly relevant to understand what is happening *in situ* in the context of the unprecedented ongoing loss of biodiversity. There are currently knowledge gaps in recording the status and trends of biodiversity across Europe in a comprehensive, structured and evidenced-based way, one of which is related to genetic diversity, including the *in situ* diversity of crop gene pools (landraces and CWR). The Farmer's Pride project has showcased various examples of the power of networking which indicate an important value of a permanent European network—the pooling of knowledge and provision of information on the status of PGR at regional level. Further, the project has demonstrated the fundamental value of a European *in situ* PGR network in bringing together actors across the region to support PGR conservation and sustainable use, and in raising awareness among the different stakeholders on the interdependency and shared responsibility of countries for conservation and use of PGR and the increasing value of genetic diversity *in situ* (on-farm and in the wild) to safeguard our food security, adapt to climate change, and help to restore wider biodiversity. The structured and harmonized approach which the network proposal strongly advocates, along with the extensive progress made in pooling knowledge and developing methodologies and tools, provide strong foundations on which to build the European Network. Notably, the potential value of the Natura 2000 network for the conservation of both CWR and landrace diversity that has been highlighted is also something to build on, especially since Natura 2000 covers 18% of the land area of the EU.
- In terms of policy development, the time for making the case for genetic resources is right. There is a wide societal interest, the policy context is favourable, and we need to capitalize on this. In terms of the practicalities of establishing a European *in situ* PGR network, as proposed by the Farmer's Pride project, there is a need to overcome the divide between the management of natural biodiversity and agrobiodiversity that has existed for a very long time and rather see these two as a continuum. In this respect, the idea of using the Natura 2000 network for the conservation of both CWR and landraces is very interesting and should be followed up. Further, the need to integrate *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, including implementing a novel protocol for access to PGR conserved *in situ* is very welcome, along with the concept of creating a network of networks. The European Cooperative on Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR), with its strong governance structure, membership and funding could be considered as a starting point under which a new *in situ* PGR network is established. Another route could be through existing NGO networks that work in the area of genetic resources. Whichever route is taken to establish the European Network, it will be important to maintain the momentum created under the auspices of the Farmer's Pride project and to stay together as a community to continue this important work.

The round table panel recognize that PGR *in situ* (on-farm and in the wild) are invaluable, finite resources which are threatened with extinction and insufficiently conserved. Concerted *in situ* conservation efforts are therefore required. There is also a paramount requirement that the Network caters for both the seed sector and farmers by providing access to the conserved resources for crop improvement. The

panellists praised the Farmer's Pride consortium for the significant progress made in establishing the foundations of the Network, including in data gathering and analysis, in methodological and tool development, in defining a potential governance structure and operational approach, and in developing a coalition of support involving all PGR stakeholder groups. The importance of the efforts of the consortium in bringing together the biodiversity and agrobiodiversity conservation communities and highlighting the potential value of the Natura 2000 network for the conservation of both CWR and landrace diversity was also highlighted. The parallel need for national and regional networking was acknowledged, and the value of the European Network as a contribution to a future global network under the auspices of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was underlined. Critically, the European Commission (DG Agri) representative stressed the importance of maintaining the momentum created under the auspices of the Farmer's Pride project and to stay together as a community to continue this important work

Introduction

A policy roundtable on the establishment of a European network for *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources was held as part of Session 4 of the Farmer's Pride final dissemination conference³. The purpose of the roundtable was to discuss how the proposal for establishing a European network can be promoted and embedded permanently within an evolving policy framework for genetic resources conservation and sustainable use in Europe. It also aimed to provide the conference participants with a clear view of prospects for the network in terms of its long-term recognition in policy and legislation, from local to global levels.

To achieve this, a panel of experts representing key national, regional and global stakeholders (Box 1) were invited to provide their views by addressing the following four questions:

- What next steps are needed to ensure the network is established and provided with a viable long-term governance structure?
- How do you see the network being integrated into relevant biodiversity, agricultural, environmental and genetic resources policy and legislative frameworks (at European and global levels)?
- How best could the network be designed to support the European Green Deal, the Second Global Plan of Action on PGRFA, the International Treaty on PGRFA, and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?
- What new policies/legislative instruments are needed to support the network and broader PGR conservation and sustainable use in Europe?

The policy roundtable was chaired by Geoffrey Hawtin OBE, Former Director General of Bioversity International and CIAT.

Box 1: Panellists of the policy roundtable on the establishment of a European network for *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources (listed in order of speaking)

1. Chikelu Mba, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
2. Szonja Csörgő, Euroseeds
3. Tilmann Disselhoff, Eurosite – the European Land Conservation Network
4. Katarzyna Biala, European Environment Agency
5. Vlastimil Zedek, ECPGR National Coordinator, Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic
6. Mario Marino, FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
7. Annette Schneegans, European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

Proceedings

In his introduction, Geoffrey Hawtin stressed the importance of this policy roundtable and described it as being the apex of the conference. He commended the partners of the Farmer's Pride project for the tremendous progress they have made in assessing and documenting plant genetic resources diversity in Europe, emphasizing the vital need to conserve them, to identify constraints and obstacles for facilitating their use, and to propose solutions and recommendations for the way forward through the establishment of the proposed European network for *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources. He introduced the panellists and invited them to address one or more of the four

³ farmersprideconference.org/

questions listed above. Since the session was held virtually, the Chair also asked participants to write their questions in slido⁴, indicating to which panellist they were addressed.

Key messages from the panellists' statements

Chikelu Mba, FAO

- The need to pool resources to implement actions for *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA are critically important aspects of the work of FAO with its member organizations.
- The Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Second GPA), developed under the auspices of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), provides an internationally agreed strategic framework for the conservation and sustainable use of the plant genetic diversity on which food and agriculture depends. It comprises 18 interrelated priority activities to which countries commit, **four of which pertain to the *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA. FAO, through the CGRFA, has been seeking to establish either one or two global networks to address these priority activities**, and this was discussed at the recent 10th Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on PGRFA, in which the lessons learned from the First International Multi-Stakeholder Symposium on PGRFA, co-organized by FAO, the ITPGRFA and Crop Trust were presented.
- The Working Group recommended that the CGRFA requests FAO to continue organizing such symposia as a means to **foster the development of a community of practice for *in situ* conservation and on-farm management activities that could begin to evolve into a 'network of networks'**. In this regard, **the work of Farmer's Pride in establishing a network for *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA** (as presented by Nigel Maxted), and the establishment of a network for *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of crop wild relatives (CWR) (as presented by Ehsan Dulloo), represent **critical steps towards the eventual establishment of a global network for PGRFA that are best maintained outside of genebanks. FAO is keenly interested in the establishment of a European *in situ* PGR network as the lessons learned will be critical assets in fostering the development of the envisaged global network (or 'network of networks')** to meet the commitments of the UN Member States under the Second GPA, as well as under the ITPGRFA.

Szonja Csörgő, Euroseeds

- **Conservation of genetic resources is important for plant breeders as genetic resources constitute the basis of any breeding work.** It is therefore important to conserve them in all forms—in genebanks, on-farm and in the wild.
- **Access to PGR germplasm *in situ* for use by the plant breeding sector is currently very cumbersome** as it falls under the type of national ABS laws that are established under the Nagoya Protocol. Therefore, **the main interest of the seed sector in the establishment of a European *in situ* PGR network is to find ways to improve access to the conserved genetic resources**, which are less known and thus less utilized by commercial plant breeders.
- **The conservation and sustainable use of PGR is central in the implementation of policies under the European Green Deal**, including the 'From Farm to Fork' strategy—however, there is currently no legal framework within the EU that would support such efforts.
- Currently, *in situ* PGR conservation and sustainable use efforts are undertaken at national level, are very scattered, and not undertaken consistently and to the same level across countries. **The**

⁴ sli.do/

European *in situ* PGR network is needed to improve the current situation, and to achieve this, the EU needs to increase efforts in providing the necessary policy framework. Such a framework needs to have clear goals and to be coherent with other policies and legislation pertaining to the conservation and use of PGR. Structures and financial resources are needed to implement such a policy, and the European *in situ* PGR network initiated by the Farmer's Pride project can be one of those structures.

Tilman Disselhoff, Eurosite – the European Land Conservation Network

- In the developing the European *in situ* PGR network further, it will be vital to focus on the interests of its stakeholders who can be advocates for its cause and contribute to its functions—for example, by providing *in situ* PGR population management, training, peer to peer learning, monitoring, reporting, verification of activities, and promotion of products.
- **The network must provide services of value for its members**, such as increasing the visibility of their operations and roles in PGR conservation and sustainable use.
- **A fundamental value of a network is in providing a home for a community of practitioners and providing a sense of belonging and contributing to a larger cause.**
- The buy-in of all the relevant stakeholders is essential during the establishment of the network. It is important to know who the stakeholders are, what they expect, and what their priorities are.
- Limited resources for the operation of the network may be an issue—therefore, **the network needs to be mindful of what it can deliver and not raise too much expectation from its stakeholders.**
- **Seed funding should be available for the first few years** of network establishment, and **ideally a home found within an existing organization which is willing to host the secretariat during the initial phase of establishment and development.**
- A clear financial plan is required, which considers the requirement for members' fees and external sources of funding.
- **Begin the establishment of the network, even if all the details regarding its governance, funding and operations are not yet finalized**, because networks tend to grow organically and dynamically. They may begin as informal organizations and then become formalized over time.
- The political relevance of the network is important to obtain public funding. **Until the European Genetic Resources Strategy under development is adopted, the network objectives and work plan should be relevant to ongoing policy processes**, including the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the 'From Farm to Fork' strategy, both of which make reference to CWR and genetic diversity, although they are not explicit.
- **Position the network in the context of existing networks and initiatives at national and subregional levels to leverage resources, connect to a larger audience, and help reduce duplication of activities.**

Katarzyna Biala, European Environment Agency

- The presentations during Sessions 1–4 of the Farmer's Pride conference provide **convincing arguments for the establishment of an *in situ* PGR network in Europe—both on-farm and in the wild**—with conservation and use of genetic resources at its heart.
- The EEA aims to provide sound and reliable information to policymakers and the public. **One of the benefits and added values of the European network would be the creation of 'actionable knowledge'**, which is particularly relevant to understand what is happening *in situ* in the context of the unprecedented ongoing loss of biodiversity. However, there are **currently knowledge gaps** in

recording of the status and trends of biodiversity across Europe in a comprehensive, structured and evidenced-based way, one of which is related to genetic diversity, including the *in situ* diversity of crop gene pools (landraces and CWR).

- **The Farmer's Pride project has showcased various examples of the power of networking and a structured and harmonized approach which the network proposal strongly advocates**—for example, through the establishment of the first inventory of landraces in Europe and a regional analysis of CWR diversity, both of which provide evidence of the wealth of information available when stakeholders in different countries come together to pool their knowledge. These examples indicate **an important value of a permanent European network, which is the pooling of knowledge and provision of information on the status of PGR at regional level**, and they provide strong foundations on which to build.
- **The potential value of the Natura 2000 network for the conservation of both CWR and landrace diversity that has been highlighted is also something to build on**, especially since Natura 2000 covers 18% of the land area of the EU.
- Apart from the actionable knowledge that can be generated by a European *in situ* PGR network, its fundamental value is in bringing together actors across the region to support PGR conservation and sustainable use, and in raising awareness among the different stakeholders on the interdependency and shared responsibility of countries for conservation and use of PGR and the increasing value of genetic diversity *in situ* (on-farm and in the wild) to safeguard our food security, adapt to climate change, and help to restore wider biodiversity. **The establishment of the European *in situ* network could help to achieve these goals through knowledge and action.**

Vlastimil Zedek, Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic

- **The Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic strongly supports the outcome of the Farmer's Pride project regarding the establishment of a European network for *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of PGR in cultivation and in the wild.** Conservation of PGR *in situ* is essential for the continued evolution of diversity, especially for the adaptation of populations to climate change, and these resources are important for providing traits needed for future crop improvement. **Policymakers should therefore consider the importance of *in situ* PGR for the future of sustainable agriculture.**
- In the context of the preparations for the next iteration of the Czech Republic's National Programme on Conservation and Utilization of Plant, Animal and Microbial Genetic Resources Important for Food and Agriculture published by the Ministry of Agriculture, *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGR are listed as priority activities in the 'plan of special activities'. **Importantly, this enables the Ministry of Agriculture to transfer some extra financial resources to support these activities.**
- Another relevant national law is the Act on Conservation and Utilization of Plant and Microbial Genetic Resources Important for Food and Agriculture, which is strongly interconnected with the above-mentioned National Programme. **This law obliges participants in the National Programme to protect PGR *in situ* and this provides a basis on which to work**, depending on how the European *in situ* PGR network develops.
- **The Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic would like to see the establishment of the European network as integral to the European Genetic Resources Strategy currently under development.**
- **The Ministry of Agriculture also recommends that the *in situ* PGR network is established as a new pillar of ECPGR, so that the network is embedded within the existing ECPGR governance structure.**

This is important to streamline work and the use of financial resources at national level related to the conservation and sustainable use of PGR.

- **The Ministry of Agriculture also supports the close involvement of the environmental sector in implementing the work of the future European *in situ* PGR network.**

Mario Marino, Secretariat of the ITPGRFA

- The interdependency of countries on PGR is at the heart of the ITPGRFA.
- It will be essential for the European *in situ* PGR network to have a clear mandate and clearly defined roles of the different actors involved, as well as the benefits of network membership.
- **The establishment of a European coordination and information centre, as recommended in the context of the European Genetic Resources Strategy under development, will be important to support the European *in situ* PGR network, and this make a significant contribution to the foreseen global *in situ*/on-farm network(s).**
- **The European network can play an important role in providing access to PGR for farmers, as well as in promoting the role of farmers as custodians of PGR.**
- Close collaboration between *in situ* and *ex situ* PGR conservation structures and custodians will be an important aspect of the European network, and **a protocol for national genebanks and NGOs/CSOs in the region to work together would make an important contribution to its objectives.**

Annette Schneegans, European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

- **In terms of policy development, the time for making the case for genetic resources is right. There is a wide societal interest, the policy context is favourable, and we need to capitalize on this.**
- The European Green Deal has very strong climate and environment ambitions. In particular, **the ‘From Farm to Fork’ and EU Biodiversity strategies have very concrete targets to promote genetic resources.** For example, through the commitment in the EU Biodiversity Strategy to expand the Natura 2000 network to protect 30% of the EU land area, and the target to have at least 10% of agricultural land area under high diverse landscape features.
- **The Farm to Fork strategy highlights the concept of ‘seed security’, along with food and nutrition security, and under this concept promotes the enhanced access to a range of quality seed by farmers, including of local adapted varieties (landraces).** This is an important development and we now need to see how the implementation of the strategy translates into the various funding and support instruments.
- **Under the new CAP, farmers will continue to receive direct payments when diversifying crops and applying ecological practices.** The newly introduced ‘eco-schemes’ provide additional opportunities to promote (agro)-biodiversity and genetic resources (e.g. through the development of traditional varieties or the preservation of habitats for biodiversity conservation).
- In terms of the practicalities of establishing a European *in situ* PGR network, as proposed by the Farmer’s Pride project, **we should try to overcome the divide between the management of natural biodiversity and agrobiodiversity that has existed for a very long time differently, and rather see these two as a continuum.** In this respect, **the idea of using the Natura 2000 network for the conservation of both CWR and landraces is very interesting and we should follow up on this.**
- The need to integrate *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, including implementing a novel protocol for access to PGR conserved *in situ* is very welcome, along with the concept of creating a network of networks.

- The idea of building a European network requires some further reflections (e.g. in its concrete focus). For example, which communities could be addressed first, and will the network be a community of practice or also have a coordination role?
- Existing networks should be used to best effect in this regard. As already mentioned, **ECPGR, with its strong governance structure, membership and funding could be considered as a starting point under which a new *in situ* PGR network is established.**
- Another route could be through existing NGO networks that work in the area of genetic resources.
- **The European Network of Rural Development** has a number of working groups, including on genetic resources, and a governance structure that brings together farmers and communities working in rural areas. This is **another partnership option that could be explored.**
- **It will be important to maintain the momentum created under the auspices of the Farmer's Pride project** and to stay together as a community to continue this important work. In the short term, project partners should continue looking for opportunities for funding through the Horizon Europe or other funding programmes.

Questions and answers session

Following their statements, the Chair invited the panellists to respond to a selection of audience questions.

Question 1: *How can protected area (PA) managers help given that we have evidence that Natura 2000 contains important populations of CWR and landraces? What is the role of PA managers in this endeavour?*

Q1 answer: PA managers can play a role as guardians of CWR populations *in situ* through their function of managing PAs, if these occur within the PAs. Depending on the context, PAs have the governance and management structure from regional administration to specific site-level administration. It will also depend on the capacity of the organization responsible for PA management to include CWR in management decisions. The starting point is that PA managers should learn more about CWR – Eurosite can help to promote the information gained about the occurrence of CWR populations in PAs in the course of the Farmer's Pride project, as well as the population management guidelines and other relevant project tools and outputs. The PA community has a lot of interest, but the first step is to make the information on CWR known to PA managers, stressing that they are one of the important natural assets that merits protection so that they can be included in their management schemes for the specific sites.

Question 2: *For the European *in situ* PGR network, what is the most promising perspective, on-farm conservation of landraces under the CAP/Farm to Fork Strategy or *in situ* conservation of CWR under the EU Biodiversity Strategy?*

Q2 answer: As previously noted, in terms of the practicalities of establishing the European *in situ* PGR network, we need to view the divide between the management of natural biodiversity and agrobiodiversity that has existed for a very long time differently, and rather see it as a continuum. Farmers are of course the main managers of landraces and with CAP funding, dynamic conservation management on-farm is key. There are many experiences that have shown that farmers play an active role in *in situ* conservation of wild plant diversity, including CWR. We should also acknowledge that many PAs encompass agricultural land, including small-scale farms and diverse products.

Question 3: *Both the SADC CWR and Farmer's Pride projects are initiatives established by PGR experts in the regions. Are there other initiatives developing in other regions?*

Q3 answer: Farmer's Pride and the SADC CWR initiative are the global 'trail blazers' to address PGR conservation *in situ* in a constructive way. For the SADC CWR network, there is a natural base in the existing SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre (SPGRC), which is facilitating the engagement with national authorities. In Europe, the funding provided through the EC mechanism is facilitating the engagement. At global level, these initiatives can be considered as important exemplars. With the required political will, the success of Farmer's Pride and the SADC CWR project could provide the confidence-building momentum needed to develop a global network for *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of PGR.

Question 4: *Do you see stewardship schemes, as provided under the CAP, as long-term funding mechanisms for the European network?*

Q4 answer: Generally speaking, the CAP is an important source of funding for conservation activities in the rural environment. The second pillar payment under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) has been used to maintain nature reserves, including technical assistance for governance structures that are needed to implement longer-term conservation schemes. There may be some schemes that may be applicable – however, they would not be suitable to fund the operational costs of the European as the resources are spent at national and sub-regional levels.

Under the RDP cooperation and innovation measures, there is the possibility to set up operational groups of farmers, advisers, NGOs and researchers. Under the new CAP, there will be increased possibilities to network. Currently, there are 5–10% of operational groups working on genetic resources. The European Innovation Partnership (EIP) carries out networking between these operational groups. It is not a stable network, but it is a good way of sharing good experiences and knowledge.

Question 5: *How could the proposed European network help Europe implement the provisions of the International Treaty on PGRFA?*

Q5 answer: It is part of the conservation and sustainable use activity that contracting parties are committed to undertaking. If the European network can facilitate partnerships between the public and private sectors, it will be a lesson learnt to share with other regional groups. After carrying out regional training courses in conservation, sustainable use, and Farmers' Rights, many other regional groups in the Americas, Caribbean and Asia are giving serious thought to implementing networks with the involvement of the public and private sectors.

Closing remarks

The roundtable Chair summarized the discussions and highlighted the following key points:

- There has been some strong support for the establishment of a European *in situ* PGR network, and the interdependence of countries on PGRFA underpins why such a network is needed.
- The importance of the network in implementing commitments to the Second GPA and ITPGRA was acknowledged.
- The concept of a ‘networks of networks’ was revisited, meaning for example that that networks within Europe would be nested within a European network, and in turn, the European network would be nested within a global network.
- In Europe, there is some way to go in terms of the policy framework, legislation, and strategies needed to fully address the conservation and sustainable use of PGR – particularly *in situ* (including on-farm). The European Green Deal and its policies (such as the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the From Farm to Fork Strategy and the new CAP) have been mentioned. Opportunities for using these instruments as opportunities to support the European network need to be explored.
- There have been useful suggestions for setting up the network and the need for clear multiple objectives.
- The decision will have to be made if we should have a single *in situ* network or two networks – one for *in situ* conservation of CWR and another for on-farm conservation of landraces. There is a tendency from the speakers that it should come together as one. Links to *ex situ* conservation also need to be further explored and developed.
- There is a clear need to identify the members of network and who it is for, including clarification of the role of protected areas managers. It is important to create buy-in from the stakeholders. It requires a lot of people to create that buy-in and there is the realization that the network is an important undertaking.
- Funding was mentioned, and managing expectation is always an issue in setting up a network of this sort. That needs attention.
- A strong message has been that there is a need to get the network going, that it should not get bogged down with design and concern about governance at the start, that it will develop organically, and will largely develop at the response of individuals devoting the time and leadership. However, this way of proceeding is very unpredictable.

The Chair brought the session to a close and thanked all speakers for their useful inputs and comments. He thanked the organizers for putting together an interesting conference that has laid the foundations for a permanent and sustainable *in situ* PGR network for Europe, and beyond that to the rest of the world.