



EUROGARD IV (Pruhonice)

EuroGard IV, the 4th European Botanic Gardens Congress was held in Prague – Pruhonice, Czech Republic, from 18-22 September, 2006, hosted by Prague Botanic Garden and the Czech Botanic Garden Union, in cooperation with the Silva Tarouca Research Institute for Landscape and Ornamental Gardening, the BGCI/IABG European Botanic Gardens Consortium, Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) and the International Association of Botanic Gardens (IABG). The conference was attended by more than 100 delegates from botanic gardens throughout Europe.

The theme of the Congress was 'Botanic Gardens and the 2010 Challenge' which considered the present, future and potential roles and priorities of botanic gardens in Europe particularly in such areas as biodiversity conservation, science, education, culture and heritage conservation, public awareness, networking, information management and dissemination, efficient record keeping, seed banking, involvement in international conventions, the efficient and ethical exchange of germplasm and in other areas.

Key Speakers

- Suzanne Sharrock – BGCI, European botanic gardens and their contribution to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.
- Sara Oldfield – BGCI, Biodiversity - policies and strategies of the European Union.
- Peter W. Jackson – Global Partnership for Plant Conservation and its activities.
- Michael Kiehn – Botanic gardens and conservation, a look beyond 2010.
- Esteban Hernández Bermejo - Botanic gardens and historic and cultural aspects.
- Bert van den Wollenberg – IPEN (International Plant Exchange Network).
- Jerzy Puchalski - The role of seed banks in conservation of European threatened plants - ENSCONET and regional projects.
- Matthew Jebb – Developing a National Plant Strategy in Ireland

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EuroGard IV Congress Conclusions

RESOLUTION 1 International Measures and Policies in Plant Conservation

The participants:

Reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the objectives of important international instruments promoting the conservation of plant diversity, including

- The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity (GSPC)
- The International Agenda for Botanic Gardens in Conservation (IABGC)
- The Action Plan for Botanic Gardens in the European Union

Noted the important roles and contributions of botanic gardens to the achievement of the urgent goals and targets in plant conservation, environmental education and sustainable development set out in these documents and agreed to continue to work for their implementation;

Welcomed the considerable progress made by individual botanic gardens and their network organisations towards the achievement of the objectives of the European Botanic Gardens Action Plan since its launch in 2000;

Recognised the importance and relevance of European biodiversity conservation and environmental legislation, policies and strategies for botanic gardens programmes, including the Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Directive of the European Commission and the European Plant Conservation Strategy;

Acknowledged the recent 'Communication from the Commission' of the Commission of the European Communities, towards halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond (22nd May, 2006), which included an E.U. Action Plan for biodiversity conservation to 2010 and beyond;

Recognised that this E.U. Action Plan pointed out the important responsibilities of botanic gardens to 'Identify and fill critical gaps in EU ex-situ conservation programmes for wild species, in line with best practice, with appropriate co-financing from the European Community and Member States' and agreed the urgency of botanic gardens responding effectively to this challenge;

Urged governments, the European Union and other relevant bodies therefore to ensure that botanic gardens gain access to adequate resources to support their important work in biodiversity conservation;

Highlighted the importance of botanic gardens and their networks in promoting the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation in their own countries, particularly with their governments;

Welcomed the establishment of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation in 2004 and urged botanic gardens and their network organisations to consider becoming members;

EuroGard IV Congress Conclusions

RESOLUTION 2 Access and Benefit Sharing

The participants:

Highlighted the continuing and essential need for botanic gardens to operate within the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity, including its requirements in relation to Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)

Urged botanic gardens in Europe and elsewhere to adopt and implement policies that cover all of their conservation and research activities involving the movement or exchange of genetic resources in line with relevant national legislation and international policies;

In this regard, the Congress *reaffirmed* the endorsement of the International Plant Exchange Network (IPEN) by participants at the Eurogard III Congress as an appropriate model to cover the non-commercial exchange of living material and encouraged botanic gardens to become member of IPEN without delay;

Pointed out the continuing need to support measures that help increase confidence and trust between providing and recipient countries of plant material.

EuroGard IV Congress Conclusions

RESOLUTION 3 Communication and Data Exchange

The participants:

Recommended that BGCI, IABG and the European Botanic Gardens Consortium should continue to communicate information on their activities and on those of botanic gardens in Europe and elsewhere, particularly by electronic means;

Agreed that the on-line 'Garden Search' and 'Plant Search' databases developed by BGCI provide important means for data exchange and communication and urgently requested botanic gardens to make available data on their collections, activities and facilities to strengthen the utility and value of these databases;

Noted that the 'Plant Search' has been acknowledged as providing an important international mechanism to monitor progress towards Target 8 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation on ex situ conservation in Europe;

Welcomed BGCI's offer to support the development of a European list of threatened plants; Encouraged botanic gardens to make information widely available through electronic and other means on their priorities, activities and achievements with the aim of raising public awareness of the importance of botanic gardens and of plant diversity;

Called upon the European Botanic Gardens Consortium to seek ways and means to facilitate electronic exchanges in relation to research activities, in order to increase collaborative efforts at a European level contributing to GSPC target 3.

EuroGard IV Congress Conclusions

RESOLUTION 4 Climate Change

The participants:

Noted with growing concern the likely impacts of climate change on plant diversity;

Urged botanic gardens and their network organisations to work urgently to raise public

understanding of these threats and to influence government policies to tackle the causes of such detrimental climate change.

EuroGard IV Congress Conclusions

RESOLUTION 5 Invasive alien species

The participants:

Noted the growing threat from invasive alien species to plants and their habitats and to other natural communities, as well as to genetic resources that sustain human livelihoods;
Called on botanic gardens in Europe to develop and implement appropriate institutional policies and codes of practices which ensure that their actions do not contribute to the introduction or spread of invasive alien plants, animals or pathogens;
Pointed out the importance of European botanic gardens raising public awareness of the threats from alien invasive species through their educational programmes.

EuroGard IV Congress Conclusions

RESOLUTION 6 Support from Network Organisations

The participants:

Acknowledged with thanks the important and continued support provided to botanic gardens in Europe by their national and international network organisations, including the BGCI/IABG European Botanic Gardens Consortium and Botanic Gardens Conservation International;
Requested the BGCI/IABG European Botanic Gardens Consortium to ensure the inclusion of representatives of botanic gardens from all new accession countries of the European Union;
Encouraged the BGCI/IABG European Botanic Gardens Consortium and BGCI to continue their efforts to source new resources and support within Europe and elsewhere to implement priority goals and associated projects included in the European Botanic Gardens Action Plan.

EuroGard IV Congress Conclusions

RESOLUTION 7 Congratulations and Thanks to the Congress Hosts

The participants:

Congratulated and thanked the Czech Botanic Garden Union and the Prague Botanic Garden for their outstanding and generous support of the European botanic gardens in hosting and organising the EuroGard IV Congress.