



EUFORGEN

EUROPEAN FOREST GENETIC
RESOURCES PROGRAMME

EUFORGEN STEERING COMMITTEE: REPORT OF THE TWENTYFOURTH MEETING

21-23 APRIL 2026, AVIGNON, FRANCE



24th Meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee 21-23 April 2026, Avignon, France

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1. Approval of the agenda and rapporteurs' appointment

Sarah Adams opened the meeting, and Michele Bozzano welcomed the participants to the EUFORGEN 24th Steering Committee meeting, followed by a brief round of introductions.

The meeting was attended in person by 24 National Coordinators appointed for Phase VII, observers and the members of the EUFORGEN Secretariat (full list of participants is available in Annex I).

M. Bozzano introduced the updated agenda (Annex II), which was approved by the participants.

An Vanden Broeck (Belgium) and Andreas Rudow (Switzerland) were nominated as rapporteurs.

Marc Fournier on behalf of the French Ministry of Agriculture (DGPE) gave an opening speech, underlining the importance of pan-European cooperation in forest genetic resources (FGR) conservation in the context of climate change and increasing biotic pressures. It was stressed that decisions taken today will determine the resilience of forests up to 2050 and beyond, making collective, science-based action essential.

EUFORGEN was highlighted as a flagship programme for France since 1994, successfully translating research into coordinated action. Three key strengths were emphasised:

1. its adaptive and forward-looking strategy, including the Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe (2021) and integration of new research such as the FORGENIUS project;
2. concrete tools for Member States, notably EUFGIS as a unique system for monitoring genetic conservation units and identifying gaps;
3. its role as a bridge between research and public policy, influencing practices and European forest policy frameworks.

France reaffirmed its long-standing commitment as a founding member of EUFORGEN and called for joint efforts to enhance the programme's visibility and recognition at European level, particularly with the European Commission, with a view to securing long-term funding. National coordinators were invited to relay this proposal within their networks.

The speech concluded by stressing the diversity and shared responsibility of European countries, the need for reinforced coordination against cross-border risks, continued innovation, and a unified voice in discussions with European authorities to ensure resilient forests for future generations.

Decision: The agenda of the 24th EUFORGEN Steering Committee (SC) meeting was approved without further changes content-wise. An Vanden Broeck (Belgium) and Andreas Rudow (Switzerland) were appointed as rapporteurs.

2. National reporting

Each National Coordinator briefly informed the Steering Committee on the topic "*Is your country currently using EUFGIS as a national register*". If yes, National Coordinators were asked to indicate whether they face any limitations or challenges after the upgrade and if not, they explained why and indicated whether there are concrete plans to start using it. National Coordinators presented their respective country information. The reporting slides are available in the shared space accessible to the National Coordinators.

In summary, regardless of the interest of using EUFGIS as a national register, the following points were mentioned:

- In many countries information on forest genetic resources conservation and forest reproductive materials are contained in the same information system, so it is difficult to separate.
- Differentiation of *in situ* and *ex situ* is very broad and difficult to separate.
- There is a need to have additional information and documents in national languages, otherwise it is difficult to use EUFGIS as a national system. There is also a privacy factor of data involved.
- It is crucial to maintain and improve the way that data can be collected from national systems for upload to EUFGIS.
- There is a need for training to improve the upload.

- Some countries use EUFGIS as primary national register on FGR conservation

Comments received were that for the future it would be interesting for EUFGIS to provide information on the monitoring aspect of individual Genetic Conservation Units (GCUs). Furthermore, it was stressed that EUFGIS is not only used as a register, but also for dissemination and communication purposes.

3. Checklist of SC23 decisions

Anna-Maria Farsakoglou presented the list of decisions taken during the 23rd Steering Committee meeting and informed about their status. All decisions have been completed. Ongoing activities were discussed in separate sessions during the meeting.

4. Presentation of key elements of the draft technical and financial reports 2025

A.M. Farsakoglou presented the technical report for 2025 and highlighted some activities taking place in 2025, including EUFORGEN Membership in Phase VII, communication and dissemination activities, EUFGIS National Focal Point training, EUFGIS upgrade release, collaboration with Forest Europe, external projects (FORGENIUS and OptFORESTS) and international organisations (FAO, OECD, etc.).

A request was made to establish an internal system to inform National Coordinators when documents are published and released, for easier access. Also, two PowerPoint presentations will be available to National Coordinators: one on EUFGIS and a general one on EUFORGEN. For other issues the National Coordinators can contact the Secretariat.

The draft financial report was presented by M. Bozzano and is an annex to this report (Annex III). The summary for 2025 had a positive balance. Notably, the FORGENIUS project covered several expenses in 2025. An amendment requested to the financial report for 2025 was to include that Phase VI Working Groups were still operative during 2025 but without financial implications apart from Secretariat staff time.

Decision: The Steering Committee approved the drafts of the technical and financial reports 2025, with an amendment to reflect that two Phase VI Working Groups were working during 2025 but without an extra financial implication.

5. Financial mitigations to cope with the reduced budget availability (reduced membership)

M. Bozzano presented the mitigation measures in response to the reduced level of contributions from Member Countries during Phase VII. The total income for Phase VII will be considerably lower than budgeted, due to fewer countries joining the Phase than anticipated.

The costs for the evaluation of EUFORGEN are higher than expected and this increased cost was approved by the Steering Committee upon the selection of the evaluation's proposal. The Steering Committee proposed to alternate meetings in person and online, hold meetings in easily accessible venues, and encourage low emission transport means, wherever possible.

M. Bozzano gave an overview of the activities and related costs for the EUFGIS portal and the EUFORGEN website. The costs for maintaining EUFGIS were covered until 2025 by the FORGENIUS project, while for the coming years, the cost to EUFORGEN for EUFGIS will be reduced since part of the expenditures will be covered by the MEDFORGEN¹ project that started at the end of 2025 (indicated by an "*" below). This will allow a saving of about EUR 100K on the anticipated budget.

Related costs include:

¹ <https://efi.int/projects/medforgen-mediterranean-forest-genetic-resources-network>

- EUFGIS maintenance (intranet, portal for end-users)*
- system hosting (servers)*
- updating GCUs characterisation in EUFGIS*
- trainings for the national focal points
- EUFORGEN website maintenance
- upgrade of the content management system

Two trainings were planned for Phase VII. One training took already place in 2025 and was co-funded by the FORGENIUS project. Another training is planned for 2027 and will be co-funded by the OptFORESTS project². For the annual report 2026 it was requested that external contributions to EUFGIS should be quantified.

Updated budget for EUFGIS portal and EUFORGEN website for Phase VII:

EUFGIS Portal and Websites	Total budget estimate for Phase VII	Budget 2025	Budget 2026	Budget 2027	Budget 2028	Budget 2029
Originally planned	184,400	23,620	34,620	49,620	41,920	34,620
Revised budget	51,580	2,800	6,620	21,620	13,920	6,620

The Steering Committee requested a revised version of the mitigation document, ensuring that there is no overspending in the staff costs. Other direct costs covered by external projects should be made visible.

Decision: The Steering Committee approved the report prepared by the Secretariat and agreed that the mitigation measures will be finalised after the meeting through an iterative email process led by the Secretariat with clear indications for time to comment.

6. Ongoing activities – Update on the implementation plan

A.M. Farsakoglou updated the Steering Committee on the EUFORGEN Phase VII ongoing activities:

Ongoing Working Groups and Task Forces:

- The report of the Working Groups on “Dynamic and static *ex situ* conservation” and “Evacuation of threatened material and tracking of movements” is in typesetting and will be released soon.
- The progress of the Task Force to develop a concept on how to collect existing methodologies/documents and how to develop a methodology to improve the identification of conservation gaps in the pan-European core network of GCUs based on additional data (genetic, phenotypic, environmental zones, etc.) was discussed in a separate session of the meeting.
- The joint OECD-EUFORGEN Working Group to prepare policy briefs to “Raise awareness and inform stakeholders and decision-makers about the important role of Forest Reproductive Material (FRM) in achieving afforestation and reforestation targets” is expected to have a first draft of each policy brief ready by the end of June 2026.
- Establishing three new Task Forces was discussed in separate sessions of the meeting.

Forest Europe

² <https://www.optforests.eu/>

The statements related to EUFORGEN and EUFGIS mentioned in the Stockholm Declaration 2026 which will be countersigned at the Tenth Ministerial Conference of FOREST EUROPE³, Stockholm, on 2-3 June 2026 were presented.

Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU

A concept note to include an item to the agenda of the EU Forest Directors meeting scheduled for 21-22 October 2026 on the dissemination campaign of the forest reproductive material report and “FRM-Focus on Forest Genetic Diversity” is in preparation.

FGR Conservation in Central Asia

A concept note is in preparation regarding a Regional Workshop on Forest Genetic Resources and Climate-Responsive Forest Management, under the collaboration between EUFORGEN and FAO-Türkiye Forestry Partnership Programme⁴. The title of the project is “Improving Biodiversity and Sustainable Forestry (GCP/SEC/025/TUR)”. The workshop will take place mid-October 2026 and will have a duration of 2-3 days. No costs will be involved for EUFORGEN in this workshop except for the travel and staff time for the Secretariat.

7. Update on Task Force – concept note to develop methodology on conservation gaps

A.M. Farsakoglou presented the concept on how to develop a methodology to improve the identification of conservation gaps in the pan-European core network of GCUs based on additional data (genetic, phenotypic, environmental zones, etc.). The activity is part of the Strategic Objective 2: “Coordinate the implementation of FGR in Europe”.

The concept note outlines the expected outcomes, including a methodological framework for gap analysis, illustrative case studies (common and rare/marginal species), recommendations on the use of existing and additional data, guidance on integration with EUFGIS (including identification of suspected and validated gaps and clarification of responsibilities), and an indication of longer-term technical objectives and associated resource needs.

A.M. Farsakoglou reminded National Coordinators that the next stage would need external funding, as indicated in the implementation plan. The activities are not foreseen within a working group but would be carried out with external funding, e.g. as a task of a project. Once the concept note is ready it should be published on the EUFORGEN website.

The Steering Committee expressed the need to have a definition and indication of gaps for the expected outcomes and their availability to be consulted during the process of a possible project implementation.

Decision: The Steering Committee requested a few adjustments on the concept note before its final approval which will be achieved through an iterative email process led by the Secretariat with clear indications for time to comment.

8. EUFORGEN Communication strategy

S. Adams presented the updated communication strategy. The communication and dissemination objectives are listed below.

³ <https://foresteurope.org/>

⁴ <https://www.fao.org/europe/work-in-the-region/programmes-and-projects/fao-turkiye-partnership-programme/en>

1. Share knowledge and offer opportunities for dialogue and learning about FGR and about the use of EUFGIS with key stakeholders via two-way communication.
2. Promote the sustainable use of FGR in forest management and planting operations.
3. Disseminate EUFORGEN research and messages on the importance of forest genetic diversity via tailored products for target audiences.
4. Work with SC members to develop targeted national approaches to promote the sustainable conservation and use of FGR in line with the FGR Strategy for Europe.
5. Keep stakeholders informed and engaged with programme activities and expand the EUFORGEN network.
6. Explore opportunities to integrate AI effectively into the development of EUFORGEN communication products.

A workshop was part of the meeting to prepare key messages addressed to three different target audiences: the scientific community focussing on forests and forestry, forest-related professionals, and society and journalists. The key messages developed can be found in Annex IV, and will be added to the EUFORGEN phase VII communication strategy.

Ongoing communication activities and EUFORGEN network engagement:

- A proposed EUFGIS community of practice for communication, knowledge sharing, Q&A, peer support.
- EUFORGEN tree species collection: 110 species already on EUFORGEN website, over 50 more pages to be finalised. A social media campaign is planned to draw traffic to the pages and a strategy for new or updated Wikipedia entries with links to species on the EUFORGEN website.
- Suggestion to try a new format for online meetings where relevant: town hall meetings. These encourage participation and engagement, facilitating open dialogue and exchange of ideas. They use an online platform with Q&A sessions, polls, etc.
- Conferences and events: attended by EUFORGEN Secretariat and by National Coordinators on behalf of EUFORGEN. National Coordinators/Contact Persons please share relevant events. Major events already planned this year include an event in Autumn 2026 (Irish Presidency of the EU Council) where we will feature the launch of the FRM series (Guidelines booklets and posters to be finished by September 2026).
- Training and capacity building: for EUFGIS NFPs already planned. Workshops for FGR conservation actors and breeders are in Phase VII objectives but will need external funding. If no funding is available, EUFORGEN should reconsider how to reach this target group.
- Partnerships and networking: collaboration and communication planned with FOREST EUROPE, OECD, FAO, JRC, EEA, etc.

Dissemination products:

- Infographics and audiovisual materials: FRM material handbooks and posters. Series to be launched at the Forest Directors meeting (Irish Presidency event, October 2026).
- 30th anniversary video.
- Policy briefs (some depend on task forces to develop policy briefs mentioned later, translation should depend on country needs and time available)
 - Potential impact(s) of FRM normatives on the use of FGR
 - Joint with FORGENIUS (completed), OptFORESTS, OECD
- Working Groups reports.

The Secretariat will contact the National Coordinators to update the respective country webpages⁵. Information in national languages may also be included as a link.

Decision: The Steering Committee meeting approved the updated Communications Strategy

9. EUFORGEN Programme evaluation

The Steering Committee was informed of the steps taken to select the company that will carry out the evaluation of the EUFORGEN Programme. From four proposals received, the Task Force selected the proposal submitted by the Institute for Development Strategy (IfDS). Information on the selection process was included in the background document and is available for National Coordinators.

The evaluators gave an online presentation for the evaluation of the EUFORGEN Programme. They introduced themselves and presented the approach, scope, and process of the evaluation.

The evaluators presented the method for eliciting, structuring, and aggregating informed judgments from knowledgeable experts. Selected knowledgeable experts will be asked to assess the programme against agreed criteria, to provide a written rationale, and engage in two structured rounds of reflection.

The evaluation will cover the full lifetime of the EUFORGEN programme (1994–2026), with particular emphasis on Phases V (2015–2020) and VI (2021–2026). It will focus on assessing programme performance, including its effectiveness and efficiency, knowledge generation, and science-policy-practice dialogue, and on examining its contribution to European and global policy frameworks. The evaluation will not include a broad stakeholder perception survey or a country-level review of national implementation, but will instead be based on structured expert judgment to capture informed assessments of programme achievements and to generate actionable recommendations for Phase VII and beyond.

The timeline for the evaluation was presented:

- SC24 – April 2026: Inception launch
- SC25 – November / December 2026: Validate inception report
- SC26 – Spring 2027: Presentation of evaluation findings

The list of experts will be presented and is to be approved by the Steering Committee at their next meeting (Autumn 2026). The estimated time commitment for each expert is a maximum of one day. There will be some flexibility in the process between the two rounds.

Next step: selection of experts

- The Task Force in collaboration with the Secretariat will prepare a long list of candidates from which selected contacts will be approached.
- The experts will also be encouraged to submit friendly criticism; feedback will be anonymous in the beginning.

Decision: The Secretariat will put together with the members of the TF, a list of experts to be approached. This will be a long list to identify from this list those to be contacted.

10. Task Force to prepare the mandate for a Working Group to develop strategies and guiding principles for replicating threatened GCU

M. Bozzano explained the process for establishing a Task Force to prepare the mandate for a Working Group to “develop strategies and guiding principles for replicating threatened GCUs from *in situ* to *ex situ* and define data recording needs on their complementarity and develop the requirements for a platform to store static *ex situ* conservation data”.

⁵ <https://www.euforgen.org/about-us/member-countries>

Information was provided on the risks of *ex situ* conservation of GCUs and the difference between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation was illustrated.

The Steering Committee conducted an initial brainstorming to support the development of the Working Group mandate and proceeded with the nomination of Task Force members to elaborate the draft mandate underlining the importance of and drawing on existing EUFORGEN work and reports (e.g. the minimum requirements for GCUs, report on dynamic and static *ex situ* conservation, report on FRM etc.).

The titles of activities were revised and the third activity will be a separate item and not included for the moment.

1. Develop strategies, guiding principles, and implementation tools for replicating threatened GCUs from *in situ* to *ex situ*.
2. Define data recording needs on their complementarity (*in situ* vs *ex situ*)
3. Develop the requirements for a platform to store static *ex situ* conservation data – considered as an independent activity.

Expressions of interest to become member of the task force were received from: Andreas Rudow (Switzerland), Maria Isabel Carrasquinho (Portugal), and László Nagy (Hungary).

Decision: The Steering Committee decided that the part on developing the requirements for a platform to store static *ex situ* conservation data will not be covered. The nominated Task Force members to prepare the mandate of the Working Group are: Andreas Rudow (Switzerland), Maria Isabel Carrasquinho (Portugal), and László Nagy (Hungary).

11. FRM regulation

Diana Charels and Greta Borg (European Commission, DG SANTE) gave an update on the EU Forest Reproductive Material (FRM) Regulation. D. Charles explained the current stage of the process and indicated that the Regulation is publicly available⁶ on the Council website. On 21 April 2026, the EU Council adopted the Regulation at first reading.

The European Parliament will formally vote (date to be decided) and then the Council will officially adopt the Regulation. It is expected that the Regulation will be published in the Official Journal of the EU by summer 2026.

The main novelties of the proposed FRM Regulation relevant for the conservation of FGR compared to the Council Directive 1999/105/EC include the introduction of a derogation for FRM intended for the conservation of forest genetic resources, the possibility for professional operators to approve basic material under certain conditions, and the encouragement for national contingency plans. The Regulation also provides for improved availability of information on the suitability of FRM for climatic and ecological conditions, introduces a harmonised framework for official controls and reporting obligations, and enables the use of electronic master certificates and labels through delegated acts. In addition, greater emphasis is placed on sustainability characteristics, including provisions to ensure that harvesting does not compromise the regeneration of basic material used for conservation purposes, registration of FRM purposes and high specific requirements of FRM for FGR conservation.

Member States must adopt the Regulation within five years, after its release in summer 2026.

The EUFORGEN Steering Committee agreed to release a news item on the website once the Regulation has been approved, to show appreciation and recognise that the EU took into consideration the recommendations provided.

⁶ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-17102-2025-INIT/en/pdf>

12. Task Force to prepare a policy brief on FRM normative

The Steering Committee conducted an initial brainstorming on the preparation of a Task Force to “prepare a policy brief describing the potential impact(s) of FRM normative on conservation and use of FGR (what are the forestry purposes and different interpretation across countries)”.

A concern was raised by some National Coordinators regarding the new Regulation about the derogation that professional operators can approve basic material while before this was allowed only by national authorities. Also, it was mentioned that the marketing of FRM can have positive and negative effects that should be neutrally analysed.

Expressions of Interest to become a member of the Task Force were received from: Hojka Kraigher (Slovenia), Felipe Pérez Martín (Spain) and Joukje Buiteveld (the Netherlands).

Decision: The nominated Task Force members to prepare the mandate of the Working Group are: Hojka Kraigher (Slovenia), Felipe Pérez Martín (Spain) and Joukje Buiteveld (the Netherlands).

13. MEDFORGEN update



Magda Bou Dagher Kharrat, Team Leader for EFI Mediterranean (EFIMED), European Forest Institute, updated the Steering Committee on the MEDFORGEN project⁷, funded by the European Commission's DG MENA, which focuses on Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries.

The project, inspired by EUFORGEN, has the overall objective to improve the capacity of target countries to conserve and enhance the diversity and adaptive capacity of forests in the region.

Specific objectives of the project are:

- Strengthen the resilience of forest landscapes to climate change by increasing knowledge of local genetic resources and their significance, as well as by developing roadmaps for future conservation efforts.
- Improve the capacity of Mediterranean countries to sustainably conserve their forest genetic resources (FGR), supporting local communities and governments to conserve and manage their natural heritage effectively.

The Network is composed of ten countries, each with representatives from Ministries and from National Higher Education.

MEDFORGEN partners are keen to join scientific EUFORGEN meetings, shared workshops or conferences. A future EUFGIS training could be a joint event.

Relevant questions on the integration into national legislations, on priority species (economic and ecological aspects) and on potential future joint activities with EUFORGEN were discussed.

14. FORGENIUS project update

Ivan Scotti, INRAE, gave an overview of the achievements of the FORGENIUS⁸ project, a H2020-funded project dedicated to the conservation of European forest genetic resources. The project, which concluded in December 2025, delivered improved data, tools and methodologies for assessing and managing genetic diversity, including the further development of the EUFGIS information system. Key outputs included scientific publications, policy briefs and user-oriented tools such as GCU sampling protocols. It was noted that the project also contributed to a more harmonised approach to data

⁷ <https://efi.int/projects/medforgen-mediterranean-forest-genetic-resources-network>

⁸ <https://www.forgenius.eu/>

collection and characterisation across countries. It was emphasised that EUFORGEN member countries should continue efforts to build on these results, including maintaining and expanding the data and tools developed.

I. Scotti gave an overview of the financial contribution made by the FORGENIUS project towards EUFGIS, and ongoing / legacy costs. The costs covered by the FORGENIUS project to renew the EUFGIS Information System and the end-user interface, amounted to approximately EUR 1.78 million.

The cost for characterisation of a Genetic Conservation Unit is approximately EUR 9-10 K (not including field work). Probably each GCU will need to be characterised once every two to three decades. This estimate does not include the current cost of the current cost for cropping the Copernicus data, threatening them and uploading the data. The estimated cost for remote sensing for 4000 GCUs is about EUR 20K.

It was suggested that EUFORGEN member countries should continue the project's work to increase the amount of data and keep characterising GCUs in a homogenous way.

15. OptFORESTS project update

Santiago González-Martínez, INRAE, gave an update on the OptFORESTS⁹ project at Month 40.

He presented the progress of the project towards the five main objectives and the associated activities (e.g. common garden experiments, integration of genetic aspects into marteloscope modelling, policy brief on nursery capacity). He informed that the final conference¹⁰ of the project will take place in Metz, France, 5-7 October 2027.

16. Task Force for mandate for a Working Group to prepare science-based recommendations

M. Bozzano opened the session on the establishment of a Task Force to prepare the mandate for a Working Group to “prepare science-based recommendations for better incorporating genetic aspects into SFM practices and to monitor their impact”.

The Steering Committee conducted an initial brainstorming to support the development of the Working Group mandate and nominated the Task Force members to elaborate the draft mandate.

The “Atlas of European silvicultural practices”, a document prepared in the framework of the GenTree project¹¹, which is under finalisation, will be shared with the Task Force and the Working Group to serve as a baseline. To assist the brainstorming session, a list of silvicultural operations and aspects from the Atlas was presented and some further relevant aspects were discussed.

Expressions of interest to become a member of the Task Force were received from: Hojka Kraigher (Slovenia), Maurizio Sabatti (Italy), Thierry Diedenhofen (Luxemburg), Jonathan Burton (United Kingdom) and Mladen Ivanković (Croatia).

Decision: The nominated Task Force members to prepare the mandate of the Working Group are: Hojka Kraigher (Slovenia), Maurizio Sabatti (Italy), Thierry Diedenhofen (Luxemburg), Jonathan Burton (United Kingdom) and Mladen Ivanković (Croatia).

⁹ <https://www.optforests.eu/>

¹⁰ <https://forestt-international-conference.colloque.inrae.fr/>

¹¹ www.euforgen.org/resources/project-heritage/gentree

17. Forestry seeds at Svalbard Global Seed Vault

Tor Myking, of the Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO) and National Coordinator of Norway, was requested by the Norwegian Ministry to discuss the principles for conservation of forest genetic resources at Svalbard Global Seed Vault¹² as a backup deposit during the 24th meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee considered that the assessments should be performed at national level and priority should be given to threatened and social-economically important species.

A relevant document will be prepared by T. Myking and shared with the Steering Committee for feedback before submitting the document to the Norwegian Ministry of Food and Agriculture. This will not be a published report, so there is no aim for a consensus document, but rather recommendations that the Norwegian Ministry can take into account when elaborating their guidelines.

18. INTERREG Baltic Sea Region project on forest genetic monitoring

Darius Danusevičius, of the Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy, Lithuania, presented the Diverse_Gene_Watch Project¹³, co-funded by the European Union. The implementation period of the project is March 2025 – February 2028. The aim of the project is to team up scientists and stakeholders to create, pilot and implement a durable, transnational genetic diversity monitoring system in the Baltic Sea region that enhances ecosystem resilience and supports the forest economy.

19. Any Other Business

Summaries of the brainstorming sessions for the upcoming Task Forces were presented and the volunteers for the Task Forces agreed on their nomination. The aim is to send the mandate for all Working Groups at approximately the same time. Resources are allocated for in-person Working Group meetings. Each Working Group will consist of 5-8 persons.

F. Lefèvre, after 20 years of service as National Coordinator, announced his decision to step down from the role following this meeting. His successor is Ivan Scotti who attended the meeting as observer. I. Scotti is Research Director at the Institute and has recently coordinated the EU-funded FORGENIUS project, which produced a wide range of outputs for improved access to forest genetic resources information and services for end-users.

20. Date and place for next meeting

The 25th meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee is scheduled for autumn 2026, and will be online.

The 26th meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee will take place in person, during spring 2027.

Romania and Switzerland volunteered to host the 2027 meeting, while Portugal volunteered to host the meeting in 2028.

Decision: The Steering Committee decided that the next online Steering Committee Meeting will take place in autumn 2026 and the next in-person meeting will take place during spring 2027. Romania, Switzerland and (Portugal – 2028) volunteered to host the next Steering Committee Meeting.

21. Decisions of the SC24 meeting

All decisions of the Steering Committee meeting were approved.

Decision: The Steering Committee approved the decisions of the 24th EUFORGEN Steering Committee Meeting.

¹² <https://www.seedvault.no/>

¹³ https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/diverse_gene_watch/

22. Wrap up and closure of meeting

Participants in the meeting were asked to provide feedback on the meeting through an online survey.

M. Bozzano closed the meeting and thanked the local organisers for their collaboration in the local arrangements.

Annex I – List of participants



24th meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee 21-23 April 2026, Avignon, France

List of participants

EUFORGEN National Coordinators

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Croatia

Tiit Maaten
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Mari Rusanen
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Administration de la nature et des forêts

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Darius Danusevičius
Lithuanian Forest Research Institute
Lithuania

Marc Fournier
Forest–wood sub-directorate of the
French Ministry of Agriculture (DGPE)
France

Margaux Goulard
Forest–wood sub-directorate of the
French Ministry of Agriculture (DGPE)
France

Ivan Scotti
Mediterranean Forests Ecology Research
Unit
INRAE
France

EUFORGEN Secretariat

European Forest Institute

Sarah Adams
Michele Bozzano
Lidwina Koop
Anna-Maria Farsakoglou

Unable to attend

Heino Konrad
Federal Research and Training Centre for
Forests, Natural Hazards and Landscape

Austria

Josef Frýdl
Forestry and Game Management Research
Institute (FGMRI)

Czech Republic

Aðalsteinn Sigurgeirsson
(*represented by Brynjar Skulason*)
Land and Forest Iceland

Iceland

Martine Neuberg
(*represented by Thierry Diedenhofen*)
Administration de la nature et des forêts

Luxembourg

Svitlana Los
Ukrainian Research Institute of Forestry &
Forest Melioration

Ukraine

Annex II – Agenda

24th EUFORGEN Steering Committee (SC) Meeting
European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN)
21-23 April 2026 – Avignon, France
DRAFT AGENDA



Moderator: Sarah Adams

Day 1 - Tuesday 21 April

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
8:30 – 9:00	Registration		
9:00 - 9:35	Opening of the meeting Round table – introduction and approval of the agenda. Nomination of rapporteurs	<i>For discussion and decision</i> Approval of the agenda	List of participants Agenda of the meeting
9:35 - 10:20	National reporting Each NC will have one minute to inform the SC on the following topic: “Is your country currently using EUFGIS as a national register? If yes , do you face any limitations or challenges after the upgrade? If not , why and do you have concrete plans to start using it?” (All)	<i>For information and discussion</i> Each NC reports their country’s status on the selected topic	PowerPoint Presentation
10:20 – 11:00	Coffee break		
11:00 – 11:15	SC23 Decisions – Checklist (Anna-Maria Farsakoglou)	<i>For information</i> The SC is informed about the progress on the decisions taken during the SC23 Meeting	SC23 Decisions – Checklist

11:15 – 11:45	Brief presentation of technical and financial reports 2025 (A.-M. Farsakoglou and Michele Bozzano)	<i>For discussion and decision</i> The SC approves the drafts of the technical and financial reports 2025	Technical and Financial Report 2025
11:45 – 12:30	Financial mitigations to cope with the reduced budget availability (reduced membership) (M. Bozzano)	<i>For discussion and decision</i> The SC approves the mitigated measures proposed by the Secretariat	Financial mitigations document
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break		
14:00 – 14:25	Ongoing activities Update on the implementation plan (A.-M. Farsakoglou)	<i>For information and discussion</i> The SC is informed on updates of the EUFORGEN Phase VI ongoing activities	
14:25 – 14:45	Task Force update: concept on how to develop a methodology to improve the identification of conservation gaps in the pan-European core network of GCUs based on additional data (genetic, phenotypic, environmental zones etc.) (A.-M. Farsakoglou)	<i>For discussion and decision</i> The SC approves the concept note to develop a methodology on conservation gaps	TF on conservation gaps draft
14:45 – 15:15	EUFORGEN Communication strategy (S. Adams)	<i>For discussion and decision</i> The SC approves the updated Communications Strategy	EUFORGEN Communication Strategy
15:15 – 16:00	Coffee break		
16:00 – 17:30	Communication activity: group work on developing key messages for target audiences (S. Adams)	<i>For participation!</i>	
17:30 – 18:00	Buffer time		
19:30 – 21:30	Dinner at Restaurant CLOÎTRE SAINT LOUIS, 20 rue du portail boquier - 84 000 Avignon		

Day 2 - Wednesday 22 April

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
9:00 – 9:30	EUFORGEN Evaluation – Online presentation by the Evaluator(s) of the Programme (TBC) (M. Bozzano)	For information and discussion The SC is informed on the process of the EUFORGEN evaluation approved proposal	EUFORGEN's evaluation approved proposal
9:30 – 10:30	Initial brainstorming: preparation and establishment of a TF to prepare the mandate for a WG to “develop strategies and guiding principles for moving threatened GCU from <i>in situ</i> to <i>ex situ</i> and define data recording needs on their complementarity and develop the requirements for a platform to store static <i>ex situ</i> conservation data” (M. Bozzano)	For discussion and decision The SC conducts an initial brainstorming to support the development of the WG mandate and proceeds with the nomination of Task Force members to elaborate the draft mandate.	
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break		
11:00 – 11:30	FRM Regulation: an update on the implementation of the new regulation (Diana Charels, EC DG SANTE)	For information and discussion The SC is informed on the newly released EU FRM Regulation	EU FRM Regulation (once released)
11:30 – 12:00	Initial brainstorming: preparation and establishment of a TF to prepare the mandate for a WG to “prepare a policy brief describing the potential impact(s) of FRM normatives on use of FGR (what are the forestry purposes and different interpretation in countries)” (M. Bozzano)	For discussion and decision The SC conducts an initial brainstorming to support the development of the WG mandate and proceeds with the nomination of Task Force members to elaborate the draft mandate.	
12:00 – 12:30	Buffer time		
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break		
14:00 – 14:10	MEDFORGEN update (Magda Bou Dagher Kharrat)	For information	

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
14:10 – 15:10	FORGENIUS final update (Ivan Scotti)	<i>For information and discussion</i> The SC discusses on the final results of the FORGENIUS project	
15:10 – 15:30	OptFORESTS project update (Santiago González-Martínez)	<i>For information and discussion</i> The SC discusses on the recent updates of the OptFORESTS project	
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break		
16:00 – 17:30	OptFORESTS project: Scoping event		Separate agenda (TBD)
17:30 – 18:00	Buffer time		
19:30 – 21:30	Dinner at the hotel		

Annex III - Financial report 2025

Summary of Expenditure - up to 31/12/2025

Details	Budget (EUR) ⁽¹⁾	Total Expenditure (EUR)	2025 Expenditure (EUR)	2026 Expenditure (EUR)	2027 Expenditure (EUR)	2028 Expenditure (EUR)	2029 Expenditure (EUR)	Budget - Balance (EUR)
Secretarial Staff	1,082,440	166,812	166,812					915,628
Staff travel	90,000	11,372	11,372					78,628
Steering Committee (meetings)	175,000	14,208	14,208					160,792
Working Groups and Task Forces	70,000	0	0					70,000
EUFIS Portal and Websites	184,400	2,800	2,800					181,600
Public Awareness, Communication, Publications and dissemination	42,500	23,997	23,997					18,503
Dissemination events	10,000	0	0					
Evaluation of the Programme	20,000	0	0					
Total direct costs	1,674,340	219,189	219,189	0	0	0	0	1,455,151
Overheads 18.5%	309,753	40,550	40,550	0	0	0	0	269,203
Total Expenditures	1,984,093	259,739	259,739	0	0	0	0	1,724,354
Carry-over Phase VI ⁽²⁾		348,060						
Other Income VI ⁽³⁾		4,690						
2025 Contributions paid		386,780						
2026 Contributions paid		0						
2027 Contributions paid		0						
2028 Contributions paid		0						
2029 Contributions paid		0						
Other income VII		7,011						
Closing Balance		486,803		486,803				

(1) As per decisions agreed by EUFORGEN Steering Committee at its 20th meeting, 9-11 April 2024, Bergen, Norway.

(2) Closing balance of Phase VI (2020-2025)

(3) Bank Interest and travel reimbursements

Contributions received by EPI in relation to EUFORGEN Phase VI (as of 31.12.2025)

Country	Annual contribution Phase VII	Total Contribution (EUR)	Contributions received in 2025 (EUR)	Contributions received in 2026 (EUR)	Contributions received in 2027 (EUR)	Contributions received in 2028 (EUR)	Contributions received in 2029 (EUR)	Contribution Status
Austria	13,700	13,700	13,700					
Belgium	13,700	13,700	13,700					
Croatia	5,500	5,500	5,500					
Czech Republic	8,300	8,300	8,300					
Denmark	13,700	13,700	13,700					
Estonia	5,500	5,500	5,500					
Finland	8,300	8,300	8,300					
France	32,900	32,900	32,900					
Germany ⁽¹⁾	38,300	0	-					
Hungary	8,300	8,300	8,300					
Iceland	5,500	5,500	5,500					
Ireland	8,300	8,300	8,300					
Italy	19,440	19,440	19,440					
Lithuania	5,500	5,500	5,500					
Luxembourg	5,500	5,500	5,500					
Malta	5,500	5,500	5,500					
Netherlands	16,500	16,500	16,500					
Norway	13,700	13,700	13,700					
Poland ⁽²⁾	13,700	12,500	12,500					
Portugal	8,300	8,300	8,300					
Romania	8,300	8,300	8,300					
Serbia	5,500	5,500	5,500					
Slovakia ^(3,4)	8,300	8,300	8,300					
Slovenia	5,500	5,500	5,500					
Spain	19,440	19,440	19,440					
Sweden	13,700	13,700	13,700					
Switzerland ⁽⁵⁾	16,500	82,500	82,500					
United Kingdom / Welsh Government	32,900	32,900	32,900					
Total Received	360,280	386,780	386,780	0	0	0	0	0

(1) Germany did not join Phase VII

1801400

(2) Poland will pay the difference in contribution in the following years

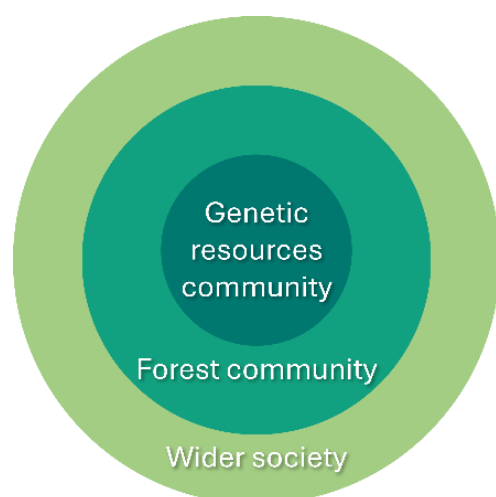
(3) The contribution from Slovakia for the year 2025 was received in 2024

(4) The contribution from Slovakia for the year 2026 was received in 2025.

(5) Switzerland paid in 2025 the total contribution for the entire Phase VII

Annex IV – Key messages workshop outcomes

Key messages were developed for three important EUFORGEN target audiences. These will subsequently be refined and included in the EUFORGEN communications strategy, and consideration given to how these messages can reach their target audiences.



Forest community

Scientific community: Academics and researchers focusing on forests and forestry, including lecturers and students in forest universities and technical college.

Forest-related professionals: International and national associations and organisations connected with individuals involved in forest management or forest conservation, including NGOs.

Wider society

Society and journalists: European citizens sensitive about environmental issues and science and environmental journalists / media houses.

Key messages for the scientific community

- **Key message 1**

Join forces! Whatever your background, you can contribute to solving the problem of the century: climate change will impact forest genetic diversity, yet forest genetic diversity is key to adapting forests to climate change

- **Key message 2**

Genetics can help you! Maybe you don't know it, but your scientific goals involve a lot of genetic questions: accounting for genetic diversity can change your predictions about your ecological questions.

- **Key message 3**

We also need your help! Innovation in FGR conservation will benefit from your models and ecological knowledge: come work with us and let us learn from you.

Key messages for forest-related professionals

- **Key message 1**

Genetic diversity is the key to survival, adaptation and evolution.

- **Key message 2**

Size and shape matters! Also by trees.

- **Key message 3**

Climate change is already happening. Facing climate change don't rely on traditional methods, knowledge, procedures only. There is a need to incorporate science-based tools.

- **Key message 4**

Conservation of GD is a win-win for everyone. We have a responsibility for future generations.

- **Key message 5**

Ex situ GC is needed for genetic improvement and to avoid losing genotypes useful in the future.

Key messages for forest-related professionals

- **Key message 1 – General importance of forests to humans**

Forests are vital to our lives, but they face a combination of increasing threat to their ability to provide benefits to us.

- **Key message 2 – Importance of tree genetic diversity**

The diversity you cannot see in the forest is genetic and it is crucial for conservation of the environment and the future of the earth.

Tree genetic diversity is the fuel of our forests and of your daily life.

- **Key message 3 – EUFORGEN as an internationally important collaboration**

Did you know that EUFORGEN is a collaborative programme in Europe and has successfully worked to bring together different nations to save our forests.

It also provides resources which allow you stay informed, proactive and responsive to future forest threats.

- **Key message 4 – Enable adaptive change in the environment**

Forests (and habitats) are not static ecosystems, we need to enable and manage them to allow them to adjust to rapid change.

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