

## **The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation in Europe: Celebrating the successes and a pathway forward**

### **Planta Europa**

The governments of Europe have made a commitment to deliver the sixteen targets of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) by 2010. The European Plant Conservation Strategy (EPCS), the regional contribution to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) developed by the Planta Europa Network and Council of Europe in 2002, is a targeted response to prevent loss of plant diversity in Europe.

The loss of wild plants and wild places is a complex issue which touches many parts of our lives from the production of our food and materials, our access to water, to the way we travel, and to the places we chose to build our houses and businesses. However, there are many practical solutions to the problems of losing our wild plants and the EPCS has provided a framework for botanists and specialists in Europe to carry out targeted conservation work, to involve a range of stakeholders and to highlight the results of their work to the public and decision makers.

The EPCS has provided a regional bridge between the CBD Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) and national implementation in Europe. It translates the global targets in the GSPC into a European framework of existing biodiversity policies and plant conservation capacity and has assisted national parties in developing adequate mechanisms for implementing the GSPC on a national scale. The participative approach in developing the EPCS has led to strong ownership in all sectors, including governmental, non-governmental and scientific research.

In essence the strategy is a pragmatic document for nature conservation practitioners, both within the Planta Europa Network and the wider family of conservation bodies and governments in Europe. Its ultimate aim is to facilitate better targeting of resources to deliver more effective plant conservation in Europe.

Planta Europa has reviewed the implementation of the European Plant Conservation Strategy (EPCS), which concludes in 2007. The review provides an assessment of what has been achieved and an analysis of the enabling environment for implementing the strategy in Europe. The report also provides examples of good practice and details of the support needed to ensure European countries are able to meet their obligations. The review document will be used to inform the development of a new European strategy for plant conservation up to and beyond 2010 at the Fifth Planta Europa Conference in Romania in September 2007.

The Planta Europa side event celebrated the successes of the EPCS and highlighted the key issues identified in the review process that will need to be addressed in the new strategy to ensure more effective and comprehensive implementation of the GSPC at national and European levels. These include the need for a new EPCS but with fewer targets that are more aligned with the GSPC targets, the inclusion of more actions on climate change, ecological corridors, the ecosystem approach and sustainable management, and clearer information on national implementation strategies. The review has also illustrated the urgent need for an effective on-line clearing house mechanism to report and monitor progress with target and highlight good practice or methodologies.

Coordination of the EPCS, currently carried out by Planta Europa, needs to be significantly strengthened. Key alliances with other conservation organisations also need to be further developed.

Peter Skoberne, Planta Europa Steering Committee Member, chaired the Side Event. Jonathan Rudge, Executive Director of Planta Europa presented the results of the review of the EPCS and recommendations for the way forward. Informal presentations were made by Stella Simiyu from the CBD secretariat who highlighted the important role that regional strategies can play in facilitating national implementation of the GSPC; Carolina Lasen Diaz, Secretary of the Bern Convention, who spoke on the importance and relevance of the EPCS for implementation of the Bern Convention; Jan Plesnik of the Czech State Nature Agency who spoke of the importance of the EPCS and Planta Europa as a facilitator for national implementation of the GSPC in the Czech republic, with a highlight being the identification of Important Plant Areas (Target 5 of the GSPC) between 2002 and 2005; Peter Wyse Jackson, Chair of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation, who spoke of the importance of the EPCS and the Planta Europa network for facilitating regional initiatives for plant conservation and Europe and the opportunity for even better linkages between ex situ and in situ efforts in the region; and Dr Jane Smart, IUCN Head of Species Programme, who introduced the new IUCN 'Rapidlist' species preliminary assessment tool which will provide an important tool for initial assessment and development of a pan European Plants Redlist.

Many of the speakers spoke of the important role that Planta Europa, and Plantlife International, have played in continuing to provide a high profile for plant conservation and the GSPC in Europe.

### **Key Recommendations for Implementing the GSPC in Europe**

- ✓ Develop a new European Plant Conservation Strategy (EPCS) with fewer targets more closely aligned to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, with information to facilitate national implementation of the targets
- ✓ An on-line clearing house facility to monitor progress with targets, promote good practise, disseminate key data, and raise awareness of the EPCS and GSPC in Europe should be developed as a matter of urgency
- ✓ Review the role of lead organisations and change the system if necessary
- ✓ The new EPCS should include more emphasis on the ecosystem approach and more actions related to mitigating the effects of climate change and developing ecological corridors
- ✓ Increased and targeted awareness raising of the EPCS/GSPC and plant conservation issues in general, particularly aimed at the EU, national government agencies, the scientific community in Europe and the general public
- ✓ The commitment of national governments and the role of national GSPC focal points must be strengthened to implement the EPCS/GSPC, which should include improved reporting on progress, and the development of national implementation and funding strategies

- ✓ Planta Europa's role in providing advice on fund-raising or assisting members to fund-raise for implementing the EPCS should be increased
- ✓ Planta Europa and its members need to maintain and develop alliances with other scientific, conservation and policy organisations in Europe to increase effectiveness of the EPCS
- ✓ Planta Europa's role as a key coordinator of the EPCS needs to be strengthened significantly

The EPCS Review will be an important information document for informing debate at the Planta Europa Conference in September when a new European Strategy will be discussed and developed. Key outputs from the conference will be:

- An action plan for European implementation of the GSPC (a revised EPCS) up to and beyond 2010
- Guidance/best practice to assist national implementation
- An exemplar to the CBD of a regional implementation of the GSPC to be presented at the CBD COP 9 in 2008

The full review document can be downloaded from [http://www.plantaeuropa.org/pe-EPCS-final\\_review.htm](http://www.plantaeuropa.org/pe-EPCS-final_review.htm)

The implementation of the EPCS has been reviewed in preparation for the Fifth Planta Europe Conference to be held in Romania in September 2007, where a new strategy will be developed to facilitate the continued implementation of the GSPC up to and beyond 2010.