

## Thematic Workshop 4 and Planta Europa Targets

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Planta Europa Thematic Workshop 4 deals with the impacts on wild flora and their correction, and in the Sustainable development.

The main topics discussed are the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Forest certification and standards for sustainable development, Compatible agricultural policies and practices. To better understand how posters and oral presentations contribute to the thematic workshop I would like to introduce the European Plants Conservation Targets related to the workshop. I am going to quote the English edition of the European Plant Conservation Strategy, a very useful tool for anyone involved or interested in plant conservation.

Reversing the impacts of intensive agriculture and forestry: Targets 2.9 – 2.11

Almost 60% of the land surface in Europe is used for farming. The request for high productivity generates practices that are harmful to nature conservation. This industrial agriculture eradicates wild plants and destroys rare habitats. There is much pressure to reform the European's Common Agricultural Policy in the direction of increasing subsidies towards environmental friendly practices instead that productivity. Within Europe there are several relatives of economically important plants, especially vegetable, tree fruits, vines and cereals. These rich gene pools native to Europe are very important sources of genetic variation for breeding purposes. Unfortunately agriculture is subject to fashion, and farmers cultivate only those cultivars that are more in demand on the market and most productive. Furthermore EU regulations reduce the variety of crops that can be sold within the EU boarder.

The genetic diversity present in crops and other useful plant species provides the basis for improving sustainable crop production, and for ensuring that useful plant species have sufficient genetic diversity to meet growing and changing human needs.

There is also a rich diversity of forestry trees. This diversity of traditional land-races and old varieties of food crops is now greatly diminished due to replacement by modern, uniform cultivars.

The natural resources of Europe have been exploited to sustain economic development. About 46% of Europe is forested, with the great majority of forests having been managed for centuries often leading to uniformity in age. The use of seeds obtained from alien populations may cause genetic pollution. On the positive side marginal land is being abandoned and is reverting to scrub and woodland and there is now an increasing trend towards natural regeneration.

It is very important to note that EPCS targets include lower plants as well. Cryptogams play a key role in our environment, even if they are often overlooked. In particular Lichens are very useful as bioindicators, and to some extent as plants of economic interested, especially within local population in remote areas.

They are threatened by several factors, the main ones being pollution and habitat destruction. Fungi play an essential role in sustainable development. However too little attention has been paid to conservation of lower plants, and their inclusion in the EPCS is very important

From the above mentioned information Planta Europa selected the following European Plant Conservation Strategy Targets:

2.9	Plant conservation benefits of effective Rural Development Plans (including agri-environmental schemes) and other relevant environmental stewardship incentive measures, promoted in all European countries.
2.10	Management plan for at least 5 endangered taxa of wild crop relatives initiated in at least one protected area in each of 5 or more European countries.
2.11	80% of the genetic diversity of 30% of wild crop relatives and other socio-economically and ethnobotanically important species stored in genebanks.

The papers presented at the thematic workshop gave a very interesting contribution to the above mentioned targets. Regarding the forestry targets BURGARELLA *et al.* outlined the importance of genetic diversity, LAGUNA *et al.* underlined the importance of endemic plants for sustainable development, Simonson *et al.* gave an overview of effects of aliens in the conservation of a woodland. Two papers (SORIANO *et al.*, and BARRENO) posed the basis for conservation of Lichens and their importance as bioindicators. Papers related to Fungi and sustainable use are those of IBLOÖLU *et al.*, SALERNI *et al.*, and VENTURELLA *et al.*

### Medicinal Plants

As outlined by TRAFFIC, and reported in one of the presentation of thematic workshop, 80% of human being relies on plant and animal based medicines. Derivatives of wild plants and animals are not only widely used in traditional medicines, but are also increasingly valued as raw materials in the preparation of modern medicines and herbal preparations. Increased demand and increasing human populations are leading to increased and often unsustainable rates of exploitation, with some wild species already threatened with extinction as a result. Although a great deal of information on the use of wildlife for medicinal purposes is available from published pharmacopoeias and ethnobiological studies, in most cases little is known regarding harvest and trade volumes, trade controls, market dynamics and conservation impact. I think that these statements made by TRAFFIC fully agree with Planta Europa targets related to Medicinal Plants:

3.1	Best practice for the conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants (and other sociologically important plants) identified and promoted to relevant policy makers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By 2004: Evaluation of case-studies and other relevant information completed</li> <li>- Synthesis of literature on best practices for conservation and sustainable use of plants in Europe completed and promoted to relevant policy makers</li> </ul>
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The papers presented at the thematic workshop gave a good contribution towards the targets. SORIANO *et al.* outlined the importance of the knowledge of medicinal plants in conservation. CHAUSER-VOLFSON gave an useful overview on the cultivation of Aloe species of medicinal interest. The presentation by SCHIPPMANN AND KLINGESTEIN really centred the target on medicinal plants. They set standards and performance criteria on sustainable wild collection of medicinal and aromatic plants.

### Cites

To reach the EPCS targets relevant activities can be implemented using existing relevant initiatives, in particular among other, the Plant Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). As stated by Margarita Clemente, European Representative at the CITES Plant Committee, Planta Europa is invited to *walk together* with CITES *to pave our own path at regional level to contribute to our commitment.*

As a matter of fact CITES plays a key role in conservation, and can be a very useful tool to reach EPCS targets. CITES aims to regulate and monitor the international trade in selected species of plants and animals to ensure that international trade does not endanger the survival of populations in the wild.

At the core of the Convention are three lists of species, or Appendices. There are over 25,000 plant species subject to CITES controls - around five times as many plants as animals. This fact can give an idea of the need to work for plant conservation. The attention of media, and of policy makers as well, is more focused on animals whose emotional impact is higher. Most of the plant species are included in Appendix II.

• **Appendix I:** lists plants threatened with extinction which are, or may be affected by trade. Trade in wild-taken plants for commercial purposes is prohibited. More than 300 plant species are included in this Appendix.

• **Appendix II:** lists plants which, although not necessarily threatened at the moment, may become so if trade were not regulated. This Appendix also includes species similar in appearance in order to secure better control. Trade in both wild-taken and artificially propagated plants is allowed, but is regulated. Over 25, 000 plant species are included in this Appendix!

• **Appendix III:** lists plants subject to regulation within the territory of a CITES Party and for which the co-operation of other Parties is needed to prevent or restrict their exploitation. Over 30 plant species are included in this Appendix.

For plants in all three Appendices, trade in artificially propagated specimens is allowed. All CITES trade is covered by a system of permits.

Article IV of the convention states that an export permit shall only be granted when, *inter alia*, 'A Scientific Authority of the state of export has advised that such export will not be detrimental to the survival of that species'.

CITES controls apply to plants, 'alive or dead' and to 'any readily recognisable parts and derivatives'.

This means that it's not just the plants themselves that are subject to controls, but parts of the plants including seeds, cuttings and leaves. Products made from plants may also be subject to CITES controls and if the name of a CITES-listed species is written on packaging then the product is considered to contain it and therefore subject to CITES controls.

There may be annotations next to the species listing in the Appendices specifically including, or excluding, certain parts and derivatives. For example, certain timber listings are annotated so that only logs, sawn timber and veneer sheets are subject to controls. Similarly, orchids included in Appendix I are annotated to exclude seedlings and tissue cultures transported in sterile containers from control.

Herbarium specimens and material preserved in spirit are also subject to the provisions of CITES. However, there is a special CITES registration system which allow exchange by scientific institutions of scientific material using a simple label system.

I think it is worthy to say that all Cryptogammes are eligible for CITES protection. There was some discussion whether or not fungi were eligible due to the problematic taxonomic status. The first area that required some clarification was whether at the time of CITES negotiation and agreement, the term flora was taken to include Fungi.

From the available information, the Secretariat and the botanists of the Nomenclature Committee concluded that it is likely that the Fungi were included in the popular understanding of the term 'flora' at the time that the Convention and its Appendices were drafted. The Secretariat and the Nomenclature Committee therefore recommend that the Conference of the Parties consider that the Convention can apply to Fungi.

In conclusion I would like to quote some parts of the preamble of CITES:

1. Contracting States,

2. Recognizing that wild fauna and flora in their many beautiful and varied forms are an irreplaceable part of the natural systems of the earth which must be protected for this and the generations to come;
3. Conscious of the ever-growing value of wild fauna and flora from aesthetic, scientific, cultural, recreational and economic points of view;
4. Recognizing that peoples and States are and should be the best protectors of their own wild fauna and flora;
5. Recognizing, in addition, that international co-operation is essential for the protection of certain species of wild fauna and flora against over-exploitation through international trade.

As you can see the targets that Planta Europe is successfully reaching coincide with the preamble of CITES.

### **Papers and References**

ANONYMOUS -2001- *European Plant Conservation Strategy*. Planta Europa Secretariat, London.

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