Slight increase in application numbers in 2017 compared to 2016

In the period from 1 September to the end of the year 2017, the CPVO received 1,294 applications in total, that is 106 applications (+8.9%) more than in the same period of 2016. The increase was particularly important for ornamentals with a total of 696 applications (+148; +27.0%) and to a lesser degree for fruit varieties with a total of 164 applications (+30; +22.4%). By contrast, decreasing application numbers were received in the other two crop sectors: 202 applications (–69; –25.5%) for agricultural crops and 232 (–3; –1.3%) for vegetables. As for the entire year, the CPVO also observed a slight increase of 3.7% with variations according to the crop sector similar to the one for the last 4 months of 2017. When looking at the figures since the establishment of the Community system, one gets the impression that the application numbers seem to have stabilised. More statistics on 2017 are available on the CPVO website.

Election of the new chairperson and vice-chairperson of the AC

During its meeting of 4 October 2017, the members of the Administrative Council (AC) of the CPVO were invited to elect their new chair and vice-chair for a period of 3 years, stating from 4 October 2017. Ms Bistra PAVLOVSKA from Bulgaria was appointed chair of the AC and Mr Marien VALSTAR from the Netherlands was elected vice-chair.
Focus on...

A new strategy: People - Innovation - Excellence

The new CPVO strategic plan covering the years 2017 to 2021 was adopted by the CPVO AC on 4 October 2017. This latest version of the CPVO strategy covers the second mandate of its president, Martin Ekvad.

The CPVO formulated its future strategy taking into account past experiences as a basis to determine future goals in the light of challenges ahead. The strategic plan shows how the CPVO will achieve excellence in its main activities, thanks to highly skilled and motivated staff. It demonstrates also the need to create, disseminate and exchange knowledge in order to engage stakeholders and it outlines the active and prominent role of the CPVO in dealing with questions on plant varieties in general and plant variety rights in particular.

The mission statement for the period covered by the 2017-2021, broadly in line with the one defined for the period 2010-2015, states a clear raison d'être for the CPVO:

>To deliver and promote an efficient intellectual property rights system that supports the creation of new plant varieties for the benefit of society.”

The CPVO strategic plan 2017-2021, recognises that the key values which will ensure the CPVO remains a cutting edge are the people in the organisation, continuous innovation and a focus on excellence in everything the CPVO does.

> TO BE NOTED

No increase in fees in 2018!

The CPVO sets its fees at a level which should lead to a balanced budget in the medium (5-year) term. While we strive to keep our costs to an absolute minimum and provide value for money, certain increases (in particular, due to inflation), must be passed on to applicants.

It is essential that applicants have a clear vision as to what they can expect as regard fees. In this way, they are better able to plan for their expenditure. The CPVO has therefore put in place a procedure whereby the fees for applicants change only every 4 years. The next change (which will take place in 2020) will see a revision of application fees, examination fees and annual fees, but in the meantime, the good news is that for 2018, there will be no changes.

> INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

New CPVO international relations strategy adopted by the AC

On 9 October 2014, the CPVO AC adopted a strategy for international cooperation. Two years after its implementation the CPVO has reviewed the objectives of the strategy in the light of the EU trade policy in the field of intellectual property rights in order to support the external dimension of EU policies. The AC adopted the new strategy on the occasion of its annual meeting of 4 October 2017. This new strategy aligns the objectives of the CPVO with the European Commission communication Trade, growth and intellectual property — Strategy for the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in third countries [non-EU countries] (the ‘EU strategy’).

The CPVO, together with the EC services, the Member States and other international organisations, is working outside the EU in an effort to strengthen the CPVR IP-protection system. The key elements of this cooperation are the exchange of knowledge, and the support of EU users on registration and enforcement overseas, in cooperation with the EU Member States.

The CPVO objective is to contribute to the EU’s policies in the field of IP rights, so that European breeders can count on effective tools and practices that facilitate their access to emerging markets. For EU breeders doing business outside the borders of the EU, being able to access and secure their IP rights is a key strategic advantage, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The CPVO’s 2017-2021 strategic plan underlines the importance of the CPVO’s continuing activities to network with other partners strengthening IP-rights protection outside the EU.

East Asia PVP forum meeting and national awareness raising seminar in Myanmar/Burma (11-12/9/2017)

On 11 September 2017, the East Asia Plant Variety Protection Forum (EAPVP) held its 10th annual meeting in Myanmar/Burma with the participation of representatives of Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries and China, Japan, South Korea and the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV). The EAPVP invited the European Union (CPVO), France (Groupement national interprofessionnel des semences et plants (GNIS)) and the Netherlands (Naktuinbouw) as observers and presenters.

On 12 September 2017, the government of Myanmar/Burma with the support by Japan organised the national awareness raising seminar for Myanmar/Burma. The main topic was the impact of PVP on the development of agriculture and implementation of the UPOV system of PVP. The CPVO participated in this seminar outlining the structure and benefits of EU plant variety protection system.
**OAPI seminar on PVP system, Dakar, Senegal (26-28/9/2017)**

As part of the initiative launched by the Organisation Africaine de la Propriété Intellectuelle to raise awareness for the potential contribution PVP could have in enhancing the seed sector in the region, a seminar was organised in Dakar jointly with the government of Senegal and UPOV. The seminar addressed stakeholders from Senegal and neighbouring countries and was facilitated by the Agricultural Research Institute (ISRA). The 3-day seminar triggered interesting discussions amongst the participants on the various topics presented by representatives of GNIS (France), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) (Canada), the African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA), Naktuinbouw (Netherlands), CPVO (EU) and the organisers. A highlight was a visit to ISRA’s distinctness, uniformity and stability (DUS) trial site, where applications for new varieties of peanut are currently undergoing testing. The well-set-up trials were the occasion to discuss technical aspects of variety protection and to obtain a demonstration of the level of expertise available in one of the identified OAPI-focal test centres for the conduct of DUS examinations. This was the third seminar in the region as part of the road map designed to improve the PVP system. OAPI member states have the long-term aim of boosting agricultural productivity through new and improved plant varieties. The roadmap is the core of a project for which a funding request is currently under evaluation by the Commission.

**CPVO cooperates with Chinese PVP authorities**

At the occasion of the 9th National Forum on Agricultural Intellectual Property in Qingdao, China, on 15 November 2017, the president of the CPVO signed an administrative arrangement (AA) with the two Chinese PVP authorities. The AA focuses on exchange and cooperation in administrative and technical matters in the context of increasing demand for PVP in China. The number of applications that are close to the ones received by the CPVO and the increasing number of botanical taxa covered by the protection system require the creation of additional DUS test capacity. Therefore many of the activities planned under the AAs aim to increase the throughput by enhancing the efficiency and qualifying new DUS centres.

**Administrative arrangement with ARIPO**

The CPVO attended the 41st session of the AC of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO) on 20 November 2017, held in Lilongwe, Malawi, where the regulations for the implementation of the Arusha protocol for the protection of new varieties of plants have been adopted. Following that adoption, the CPVO and the ARIPO formalised their cooperation on capacity building by signing an AA in Geneva on 15 December 2017. The major cooperation activities to be performed under this arrangement would contribute to support ARIPO’s capacity building and technical cooperation on issues relevant in the area of PVP. Another area of cooperation identified under the arrangement is the organisation of joint awareness and sensitisation programmes on the development of a legal and administrative plant variety rights (PVRs) system and its enforcement. This agreement will have an initial duration of 5 years as from the date of signature. The CPVO and the ARIPO may decide to review the cooperation activities deployed under this arrangement and to evaluate their implementation.

**UPOV week in Geneva (23-27/10/2017)**

CPVO representatives attended the UPOV Council, the Consultative Committee meeting, the Administrative and Legal Committee as well as the two working groups on international cooperation and on variety denominations.

Items of particular interest for the CPVO were the ongoing developments of the electronic application form (EAF) for which the name UPOV PRISMA has been approved. It was also agreed that the EAF could be made free of charge for an introductory period before an amount of CHF 150 per application will be charged. The UPOV office reported on PVP statistics for the period 2012-2016. It was noted that in 2016 there was a 9.6 % increase in the number of applications for PVP (16 455 in 2016 compared to 15 017 in 2015), and that the number of titles granted increased from 12 409 in 2015 to 12 550 in 2016 (1.1 % increase). The total of 117 427 titles in force at the end of December 2016 represented a 4.6 % increase on figures for 2015 (112 215).

As regards molecular techniques, the UPOV technical committee (TC) agreed that possible future collaboration between UPOV, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) might include the harmonisation of terms and methodologies used for different crops and the possible development of standards, after agreement by those organisations.

The focus for the work group (WG) on a possible international system of cooperation was on existing arrangements for cooperation in DUS testing as well as on existing quality assurance systems in UPOV member states. Representatives of the CPVO gave presentations on both topics. Further items considered by the groups were related to novelty, priority as well as to cooperation in administrative matters.
Bilateral meetings with ESA, Plantum (17/1/2018) and with Ciopora (23/1/2018)

The CPVO had its annual bilateral meetings with the European Seed Association (ESA) and Plantum as well as with the International Association of Breeders of Asexually Reproduced Ornamental and Fruit Varieties (Ciopora). Major topics amongst others discussed with all three breeders organisations were: the state of affairs of an possible extension of the duration of protection for certain species (in particular, having in mind that the first protection titles are coming to an end now), the outcome and potential follow-up of the minimum distances project, the proposal to offer a possibility of an advanced payment of annual fees for right holders as well as aspects related to the confidentiality of the breeding schemes indicated by applicants in the application documents. Furthermore the CPVO updated the organisations on the joint CPVO-European Commission project on a common IT system for plant varieties in the EU as well as on the CPVO-European Patent Office (EPO) cooperation. An exchange took place on potential CPVO-breeders organisations joint activities at the occasion of international fairs. A further exchange took place on priorities within the international strategy of the CPVO. Here in particular, cooperation with China within the IP Key project was discussed.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

Appointment of Paul van der Kooij as the chairperson of the CPVO Board of Appeal

The Council of the European Union has decided to appoint Paul van der Kooij as the chairperson of the Board of Appeal of the CPVO on 19 February 2018 for a period of five years. This is the third five-year term of office of Mr van der Kooij in this position. We wish him well in this new term of office.

Decisions reached by the Board of Appeal of the CPVO (BoA) and judgments by the Court of Justice of the EU (the full texts are available in the PVR case-law database)

Judgment in the case T-140/15 of 23 November 2017

By judgment of 23 November 2017 the General Court has annulled the decision of the Board of the Appeal (BoA) in the ‘M02205’ case. By decision No A010/2013, the BoA had rejected an appeal seeking annulment of the CPVR ‘M02205’. The General Court has, first, stated that a third party seeking annulment of a CPVR must adduce evidence and facts of sufficient substance to raise serious doubts as to the legality of the CPVR. Considering the factual elements put forward by the applicant before the BoA, the General Court concluded that the BoA should have made investigations of its own motion in order to ascertain that the distinctness of the variety ‘M02205’ had been established on the basis of the test results derived from those trials. Therefore the case has been remitted back to the BoA.

Decision of the BoA in the case of ‘Cripps Pink’ of 14 September 2017

By decision A007/2016 of 14 September 2017 the BoA rejected an appeal lodged by Pink Lady America LLC against the CPVO decision NN17 of 19 September 2016 not to declare null and void the CPVR EU 1640 granted for the ‘Cripps Pink’ variety of the Malus domestica Borkh species, for lack of novelty. The BoA confirmed the interpretation given by the CPVO, taking into account its reasoning that no evidence has been provided indicating any sales or disposals within the European Union earlier than 6 years before the date of entry into force of the basic regulation (BR). It should be remeinded that where an application for a CPVR has been filed within one year from the entry into force of the basic regulation (the 1st September 1994), a derogation exists by virtue of Article 116(1) BR. Concerning the selling or using of the variety outside the European Union, the BoA found that the evidence submitted by the appellant do not provide substantive proof raising serious doubts as to the validity of the CPVR at issue as they do not prove that material of the variety was sold, or otherwise disposed of, by or with the breeder’s consent for the purpose of exploiting the variety.

UPOV seminar on maximising benefits for farmers, Geneva, Switzerland (14-15/12/2017)

In December 2017, the CPVO president participated in a seminar in Geneva on ‘maximising benefits for farmers through the 1991 act of the UPOV convention’ organised by the UPOV with the assistance of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), United Nations (UN). Speakers and participants from most corners of the world participated and discussed issues such as how breeding benefits farmers and how farmers can get access to well-performing varieties under reasonable conditions. Farmers in different parts of the world face different challenges depending on factors such as the size of farms, socioeconomic situations and climate. One thing farmers have in common is that they need good varieties. During the seminar it was shown that the 1991 UPOV convention is sufficiently flexible to ensure that not only breeders but also farmers and society can benefit from its implementation.
EPO/CPVO Joint conference ‘Supporting innovation in the plant sector’, Brussels, Belgium (29/11/2017)

On 29 November 2017, the CPVO and the EPO held the joint conference ‘Supporting innovation in the plant sector’ in Brussels to illustrate the latest developments following the amendments of the Rules 27 and 28 of the European patent convention and the state of play of the cooperation between the two offices. The conference attracted participants from industry and academia, the European Commission, European Parliament, legal practitioners, national patent offices, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and researchers.

One of the topics outlined was how the EPO responded to the European Commission Notice C/2016/6997 in relation to essentially biological breeding methods by the amendments of Rules 27(b) and 28 of the European patent convention.

Enhancing the transparency of IP rights was a further key topic of the conference, with speakers explaining how third parties can follow all stages of both the patent and PVR granting processes. Patent applications and patents granted are mandatorily published, which signifies that the teachings set out in these documents are freely accessible to the public, for instance in the EPO’s patent database, Espacenet. CPVR documents are publicly available from the CPVO, either directly from the office’s website or on request. Industry initiatives such as the patent information and transparency online (PINTO) database, which provides a link between a plant variety and a patent or patent application, were presented with the aim of further enhancing transparency and access to information in the plant-related innovation field.

Activities under the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between EUIPO and CPVO

On 9 November 2017, representatives of the CPVO variety denominations team met at the premises of the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) in Alicante with trademark examiners to provide them with training on the use of the variety finder database and on the interpretation of the rules applicable to variety denominations under the basic regulation. The training implements the enhanced cooperation between the two agencies in the field of the interface between variety denominations and EU trademarks, this follows the implementation by the EUIPO of the new absolute grounds for refusal of trademark applications under Article 7(1)(m) of the European Union trademark regulation, given it may result in conflicts between trademarks and varieties denominations.

> Technical news

Project on a unique EU IT system on plant varieties

The European Commission and the CPVO are running a project to investigate the possibilities for developing a unique IT system for the purpose of implementing the marketing directives on plant reproductive material on the one hand and updating the CPVO Variety Finder on the other hand. The first meeting of the working group took place in March 2017 and as a follow-up of this first meeting, from July to November 2017 the CPVO organised a large consultation on information currently requested for the contributions to the common catalogues of varieties of agricultural and vegetable plant species, the CPVO Variety Finder and the Frumatis database. More than half of the EU Member States and some breeders associations participated in that consultation. The objective is now to identify whether the information collected today is pertinent, should be maintained or not and whether there are new needs for additional information or functionalities. Another meeting of the working group took place in February 2018 to discuss the follow-up. The next step will be to assess the resources necessary to implement this project.

Vegetable open day, Edinburgh, UK (12/09/2017)

This event was co-hosted by the CPVO, the British examination office (Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA)), and the technically qualified body Science & Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA), at the latter’s premises outside Edinburgh. More than 50 stakeholders, mostly from the UK, attended the event which outlined the latest developments in the CPVR system in relation to vegetables, whilst being able to visit the excellent field trials at SASA. As was to be expected, a major point of discussion were the ongoing Brexit negotiations and the impact these would have on the CPVR system. The CPVO and the UK authorities reassured participants that we were working together in close harmony in order to minimize any negative impact of Brexit to stakeholders.

Further information about this point are available since 23 January 2018 in the European Commission notice to stakeholders on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom, and EU rules in the field of EU plant variety rights.
Crop experts meetings

**Vegetable experts meeting, Edinburgh, UK (13-14/9/2017)**

Following on from the vegetable open day, the CPVO staged its annual vegetable-experts meeting at SASA. The group discussed numerous other items, particularly: aberrant plants in cauliflower (where an agreement was reached on having different uniformity standards to be adopted in a partial revision to the CPVO cauliflower protocol for plants recognised as being aberrant); the naming of variety types in pepper (where the pepper technical questionnaire will be adapted accordingly and provide for the revision of the UPOV guideline for pepper); updates on disease-resistance testing issues; publication of variety descriptions of parent lines on the CPVO website and updates on ongoing or proposed R & D projects on the creation of a joint melon database in the EU. The meeting also proposed seven new or revised vegetable technical protocols (TPs) to be presented to the CPVO AC in March 2018.

**Agricultural experts meeting (AEM), Angers, France (17-18/10/2017)**

The AEM took place in October in Angers. With 29 participants, the usually high attendance was continued in 2017. The discussion with experts was essentially turned to the elaboration of new TPs. The experts discussed further uniformity issues in relation to triticate varieties, the assessment of bulk characteristics such as oil profiles in oilseed rape varieties, the conditions for the resubmission of a new seed sample after the first year of testing and the adoption of additional characteristics by the CPVO where no application for a CPVR exists. It was agreed to dedicate a specific day at the AEM 2018 to discussions on maize. For that purpose, the AEM 2018 will take place in Italy, close to the Italian testing station for maize, on 5 and 6 September 2018.

**Participation in UPOV technical experts meetings**

**UPOV TWO 2017, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada (11 to 15 September 2017)**

Two experts from the CPVO attended the UPOV technical working party for ornamental plants and forest trees (TWO) in Victoria. At this occasion, several technical matters were discussed amongst 30 experts from 14 different UPOV member states, one breeder organisation and one non-UPOV member observer: colour group documents, duration of DUS testing, minimum distance project, potential use of the variety description... Five UPOV guidelines have been finalised for the following crops: Coleus, Hardy geranium, Grevillea, Guzmania and Oncidium.

**UPOV TWF, Kelowna, British Colombia, Canada (18 to 22 September 2017)**

CPVO experts participated in this meeting together with representatives of seven other EU Member States. The CPVO proposed in particular discussion papers on the duration of DUS testing and on challenges in the DUS testing of apple mutant varieties. The first point will be further discussed at the TC while the second item will result in a revision of the apple guideline in which breeders represented by Ciopora are expected to participate actively. The coordinator of the CPVO-financed minimum-distance project presented the results, with the suggestion that the notion of ‘relevant’ vs ‘non-relevant’ characteristics for the purpose of establishing distinctness may be further discussed at UPOV level.

**UPOV BMT, La Rochelle, France (6 to 10 November 2017)**

The UPOV working group on biomolecular techniques (BMT) was well visited by participants from all over the world. Contributions focused mainly on the setup of genetic distances and their use for the management of the reference collections but also focused on the effects of bulking for the reliability and the repeatability of the samples, aiming at reducing costs by discarding single-plant assessments. The next BMT meeting will take place at Montevideo, Uruguay in September 2018.

**Administrative Council adopted new test guidelines**

In its October meeting, the AC of the CPVO adopted new or revised protocols for the following crops: Abelia, Aglaonema, Cordyline, Salvia and Freesia. These protocols are binding for the conduct of technical examinations and will be applied to all new candidate varieties for which the technical examination starts in 2018.

**Promoting the CPVR system in international fairs an open doors**

From 16 to 18 January 2018, the CPVO together with the French Variety and Seed Study and Control Group (GEVES) participated in the SIVAL trade show in Angers, France, presenting a comprehensive and impressive offering of equipment and services for all plant productions.

From 23 to 26 January 2018, the CPVO exhibited in a joint ‘plant breeders’ rights in Europe’ stand with the Bundessortenamt (Germany), GEVES (France), the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB, UK) and the Naktuinbouw (Netherlands) at the international trade fair for plants IPM, (Essen, Germany).

These international fairs offer an excellent opportunity for the CPVO to promote the Community plant variety rights (CPVR) system together with some of the examination offices performing the technical assessment of candidate varieties for EU plant variety rights.

Furthermore, the CPVO, every year in February-March, opens its doors and explains its mission and activities to the public as part of Made in Angers, the annual Angers Loire Valley event on the economy of the region.
21st Annual meeting with the examination offices, Angers, France

In December 2017, the CPVO held its 21st annual meeting with its examination offices (EOs), which was also attended by representatives from the European Commission, the UPOV office and the breeders’ organisations (Ciopora, ESA, Plantum and the European Consortium for Organic Plant Breeding (ECO-PB)), as well as by representatives from the non-EU PVR authorities from Switzerland and the EPO. The main subjects of discussion were the discrepancies between the information provided in the application documents (technical questionnaire) and the appearance of the plants in the DUS trial, the taking of photographs during visits to the growing trial, a revision of the procedure on the acceptance of additional characteristics and a revision of the template of TP. Participants were furthermore informed on CPVO-European Commission project on a single variety database, the modification of the variety denomination guidelines, the cooperation between the CPVO and the EPO as well as the state of play of various R & D and IT projects.

For R & D projects emanating from the work of the CPVO integration of molecular data into DUS testing (Immodus) group, it can be reported that a project proposal on the Immodus in durum wheat, has been granted cofounding by the CPVO. The project is coordinated by the Austrian examination office: Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES). Furthermore, an R & D apple project on epigenetics has been received by the CPVO. Immodus experts did express a positive opinion and the project is under consideration by the R & D advisory board.

Outside the scope of Immodus, a project to set up a database with descriptions and photos of melon varieties of common knowledge has been agreed for cofounding by the CPVO. The project is coordinated by Naktuinbouw.

Four R & D projects are ongoing at the moment. The project to test of the potential use of single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) markers on oilseed rape varieties is in the process to be finalised and the project report is expected to be published in Spring 2018.

A strawberry ring test project was started in 2016 aiming at the harmonisation of the implementation of the TP for strawberry. It is expected to be finalised in 2019.

The Harmores 3 project in the vegetable sector aims at harmonising resistance tests and to propose harmonised disease-testing protocols to be included in the CPVO TPs. The project covers seven vegetable diseases. The results are expected to be available in November 2019.

The Potatoes III project is a follow-up project of previous projects related to potatoes and aims at continuing the work to set up an EU potato database including morphological descriptions, DNA profiles and light-sprout pictures. It is coordinated by the Bundessortenamt. Results are expected in April 2018.

The case study on minimum distances between vegetatively reproduced ornamental and fruit varieties tried to consider the concern as expressed by Ciopora that the ‘distance’ between varieties is getting too small and thus the plant breeders’ right is becoming weaker. For that purpose Ciopora proposed as part of that project to re-examine on the basis of amended (‘mock’) protocols for three species (apple, rose and pelargonium) the last 50 CPVO-protected varieties. The amended protocols contained fewer characteristics or fewer states of expression in certain characteristics to be considered in the DUS procedure. The final report of this project was provided to the CPVO in July 2017. The results and the possible consequences are now to be considered by the CPVO and relevant crop-sector expert groups. The outcome will furthermore be presented to the forthcoming UPOV TWPs for ornamentals and fruits.
> **IT NEWS**

**Sharing online applications: link with UPOV PRISMA system**

The CPVO is happy to join version 2.0 of the UPOV online-application tool **UPOV PRISMA** as from 9/2/2018.

In the past, the CPVO developed an online application system and 96 % of the applications for CPVRs were filed online in 2017. In that same year, UPOV released UPOV PRISMA, whereby breeders can file applications in any participating Member State for a range of pilot species. Both systems are now linked: applications for EU PVP can — in addition to being filed with the CPVO directly — also be filed through the UPOV PRISMA application tool.

By filing an application for an EU PVP through UPOV PRISMA, the data related to the application can be transferred directly into the CPVO online system.

It should be noted that although an application for EU PVP is filed through the UPOV PRISMA tool, the applicant needs to log into the CPVO online system to finalise and sign the application. Independently of whether an application is filed through the CPVO online system or UPOV PRISMA, the fees applicable for applications in the EU will apply. The link with UPOV PRISMA is currently limited to a few species (rose, apple, potato, lettuce and soybean) but more species are expected to join that list in the course of 2018.

> **HUMAN RESOURCES NEWS**

**Internal reorganisation at the CPVO as from 1 February 2018**

As much of the work of the CPVO is related to technical matters, it has been considered opportune to enhance the CPVO presidency with technical expertise. Dirk Theobald, the former Head of the technical unit therefore took on a portfolio with technical matters to support the presidency as senior adviser as from 1 February 2018. Some of his new tasks will also be linked to promoting the EU PVP system. Gerhard Schuon replaced Dirk Theobald as head of the technical unit.

Gerhard Schuon has been working as the CPVO quality audit service (QAS) team leader for 9 years. He has been replaced by Sergio Semon, technical expert specialised in vegetables with more than 20 years of experience at the CPVO.

Welcome to …

The CPVO is pleased to announce the recruitment of six new staff members between 1 September 2017 and 1 February 2018.

- **Mr Alexandru Mihai**, of Romanian nationality, appointed to the position of IT developer from 1 September 2017 for 3 years.
- **Mr Petre Kostov**, of Bulgarian nationality, appointed to the position of IT developer from 1 October 2017 for 3 years.
- **Ms Cécile Collonniére**, of French nationality, appointed to the position of technical expert from 1 November 2017 for 4 years.

Goodbye to…

- **Mr Jorge Alonso** who worked as a trainee in the legal unit/procurement sector from 1 September 2017 to 28 February 2018.

I started my traineeship in the CPVO last September, and after more than 5 months working here I can say that I’m impressed by the great working atmosphere. It has been an outstanding experience to work in such a multicultural environment and I would like to thank my colleagues for making the everyday work something amusing.

- **Mr Lucas Flores Dreosti** who worked as a trainee in the legal unit from 23 October 2017 to 28 February 2018.

Throughout this four months I have had the opportunity of being part in important and demanding IP cases which have given me a global but deep vision over PVR and the CPVO as institution. Although it was not my first stage at an EU agency, it is always impressive and exciting working in such environment and I cannot but to thank my colleagues who made me feel very welcome.

- **Ms Mathilde Saint-Jean**, of French nationality, appointed to the position of assistant to the registry from 1 December 2017 for 2 years.
- **Mr Christophe Yakovlev**, of French nationality, appointed to the position of deputy accounting officer from 1 December 2017 for 1 year.
- **Ms. Céline Morineau**, of French nationality, appointed to the position of technical expert from 1 February 2018 for 4 years.

We wish all of them the best of luck and success in their new functions at the CPVO.

> **QUALITY AUDIT NEWS**

**Mr Geert Dancet appointed chairperson of the audit advisory board (ABB)**

The CPVO AC appointed Mr Geert Dancet as the new chair of the AAB at its October 2017 meeting. Mr Dancet who recently retired from his position as the Executive Director of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) in Helsinki was pivotal in setting up the ECHA as one of the largest regulatory agencies in the EU and has profound experience in a public administration committed to independence, transparency and efficiency. Under his leadership the AAB will provide independent advice to the members of the AC in respect of any complaint raised in the context of the audit programme for the entrusted examination offices. His willingness to accept this role is much appreciated by the Members of the AC and by the CPVO.

**PUBLICATIONS**

The **Official Gazette of the CPVO 1.2018**, the **S2 Gazette** and the **Annex to the annual report 2017** have been published and are available for free in electronic format only (PDF).

You may download both gazettes from the **Gazette page**, the annex to the **Annual Report** from the **Annual Reports page**.

**Traineeship recruitment procedure**

The CPVO will host three trainees from 1 March until 31 August 2018, one for data protection, one for procurement and the other one for the administration unit. More advertisements will be published in April on the **CPVO website** for the next traineeship period starting on 1 September 2018. For further information on traineeships, please contact: traineeships@cpvo.europa.eu

Special thanks from the president to the contributors and the editorial team of this newsletter for their valuable work.