

# Consolidating knowledge on plant species in need of urgent attention at European level

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Biodiversity is high on the political agenda

which means.....

there are **high** ( too high?) **expectations**  
from

decision makers with regards

to **information on biodiversity!**

Governments and heads of states have committed  
to

halt/significantly reduce the rate of  
loss of biodiversity by 2010

This is reflected in major political processes  
at global, EU and pan-European level

In addition, specific strategies are being implemented such as

the [Global Plant Diversity Strategy](#)

supported at regional level by

the [European Plant Diversity Strategy](#)

(Planta Europa and Council of Europe)

Sound, reliable information to assess progress  
(or not!) on biodiversity trends and  
to target priority actions is needed

This includes need for information  
on plants which require urgent attention  
at European level

## Several projects initiated or foreseen at European level :

- [Council of Europe](#) : '50 Threatened species of the European Flora in need of urgent conservation measures' (cf Bern expert group on plants)
- [IUCN](#) : 'Top 50 species'
- [Request by the European Commission](#) for an 'EU Red List'

**As a possible contribution to and in close collaboration with all these initiatives....**

A project launched in March 2003 by the European Topic Centre on Nature Protection and Biodiversity\* and the 'Conservatoire Botanique National de Brest' with support from the French Ministry for Ecology and Sustainable Development

on:

**a database on plant species in need of urgent attention at European level**

\* *A branch of the European Environment Agency*

## Purpose of the project:

- to set up an **information system** in support to action for conservation of the **most threatened European endemic and sub-endemic plant taxa (EX, EW, CR)**
- on the basis on synthetic and interpreted information available from **40 European countries**

## The survey includes 5 steps :

- Review and analysis of the IUCN global list of threatened species (1997)
- Extensive review and analysis of the most up to-date national red lists on plants in Europe
- Preliminary assessment of species status at world level, using IUCN criteria (EX, EW, CR)
- Peer review within a wide network of European botanists : 3 Specialist Groups (IUCN-SSC), Euro+Med Plantbase
- Information incorporated into a European database

# Species fact sheet model

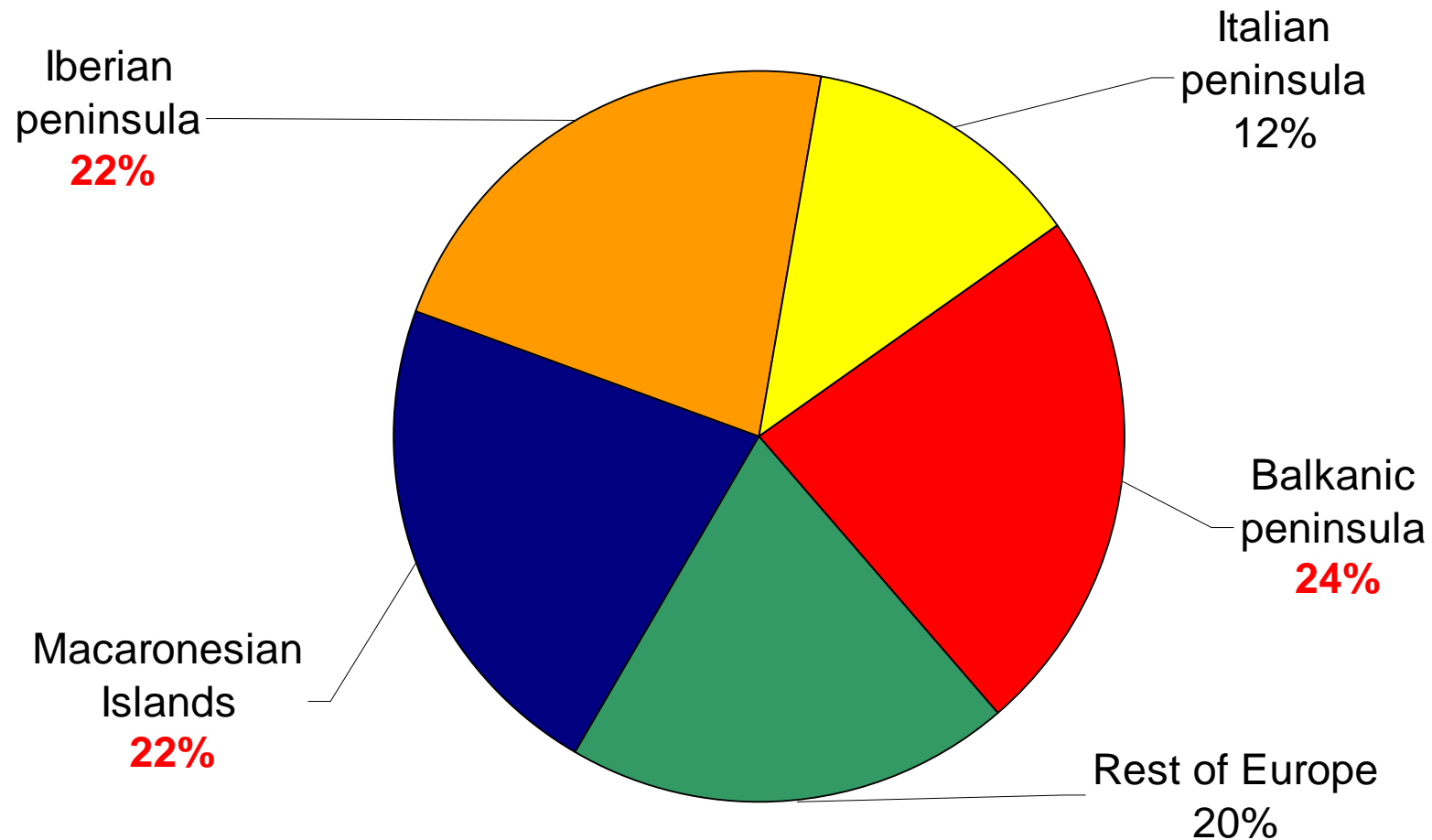
<i>Centaurium favargeri</i> Zeltner	Category	Cult.	Level	Distribution	Cultivation	Protection	Threats	Recovery Plans
GENTIANACEAE 2003	<b>EW</b> Criteria	1	A	- FRANCE : Languedoc Roussillon : Aude (11) (EX) - FRANCE : Languedoc Roussillon : Hérault (34) (EX) - FRANCE : PACA : Bouches du Rhône (13) (EX) - FRANCE : PACA : Htes Alpes (05) (EW) - FRANCE : PACA : Vaucluse (84) (EW) - GEORGIA (EX)	BREST : Conservatoire Botanique National (2003)  GAP : Conservatoire Botanique National Alpin (2003)  KEW : Royal Botanic Gardens  NEUCHATEL : Jardin Botanique de Neuchatel (1976●)  3 gardens	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Bern Conv.</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Habitats Dir.</b>	1.3.1 - Mining  1.4 - Infrastructure development  1.4.2 - Human settlement  7.2 - Flooding.  9.9 - Restricted range  12 - Unknown	1
<b>Commentary</b> <p>This small annual has been recorded from a relatively large area : 11 localities in the South of France and also some in Georgia.</p> <p>It is a plant of open habitats, riversides, clearings of ripisylves, etc.</p> <p>Most of records are old. The last record is mentioned in 1990 at Valserrès (Hautes-Alpes), with two populations totalling about 3000 plants. These two close populations have been washed away by a flood of the Durance river, which has carried away the substrate.</p> <p>Fortunately, seeds of this population as well as the type population (Cheval-Blanc, Vaucluse) had been collected before extinction, so that the species is now in cultivation.</p> <p>Mentions of this species in Portugal and Spain are erroneous</p>					<b>References</b> CHAS, E. 1994. C.B.N. PORQUEROLLES & LESOUEF, J.-Y. in OLIVIER, L. & al. 1995. LOPEZ-GONZALES, G. 1980. PEDROL, J. 1986. ZELTNER, L. 1970. ZELTNER, L. 1987.			

## Preliminary assessment

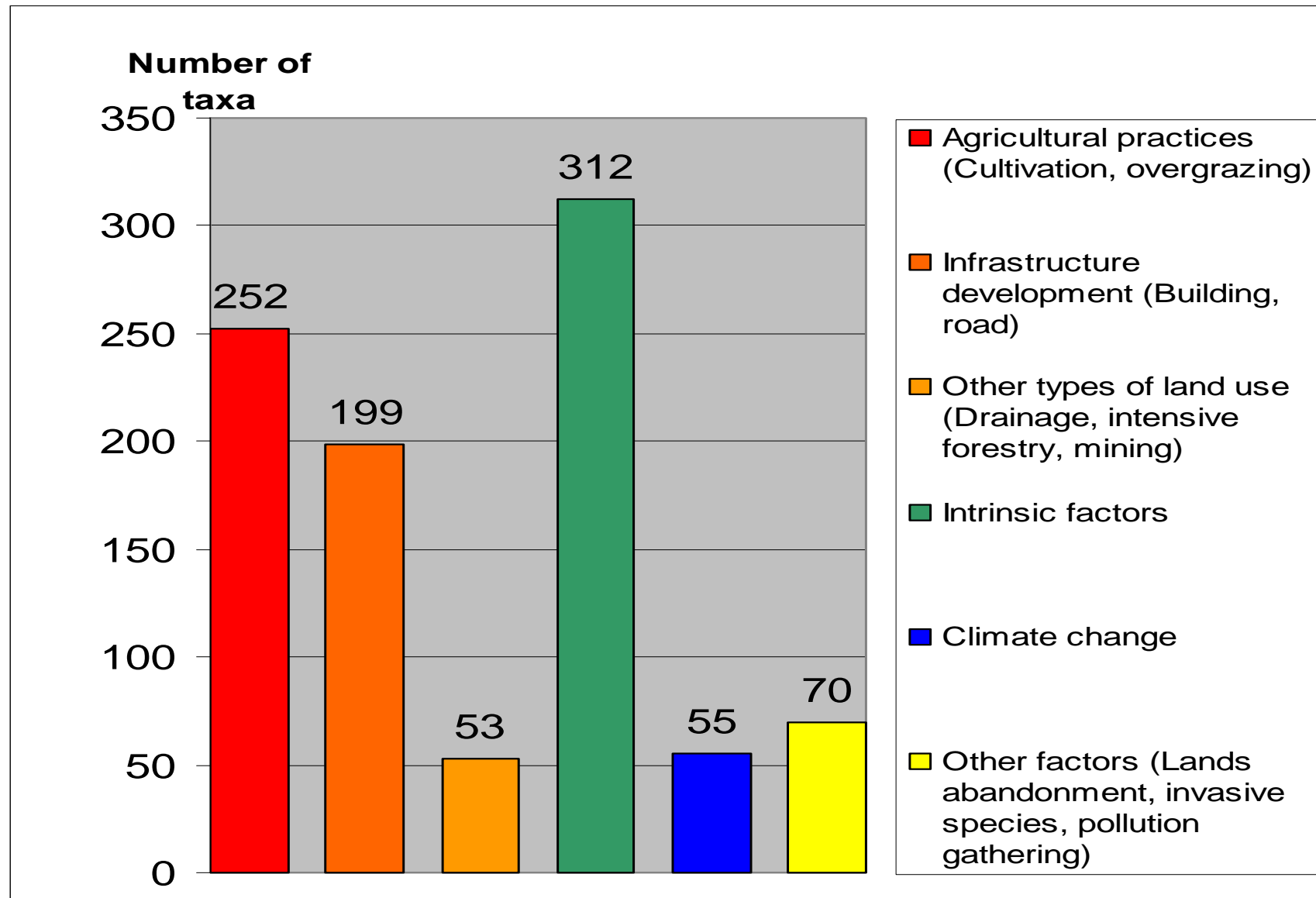
In Europe, **650 plant taxa** are extinct or close to extinction:

- **58** Extinct (EX)
- **25** Extinct in the wild (EW)
- **567** Critically Rare (CR)

## Geographical distribution of the most threatened plant taxa (EX, EW, CR) in Europe

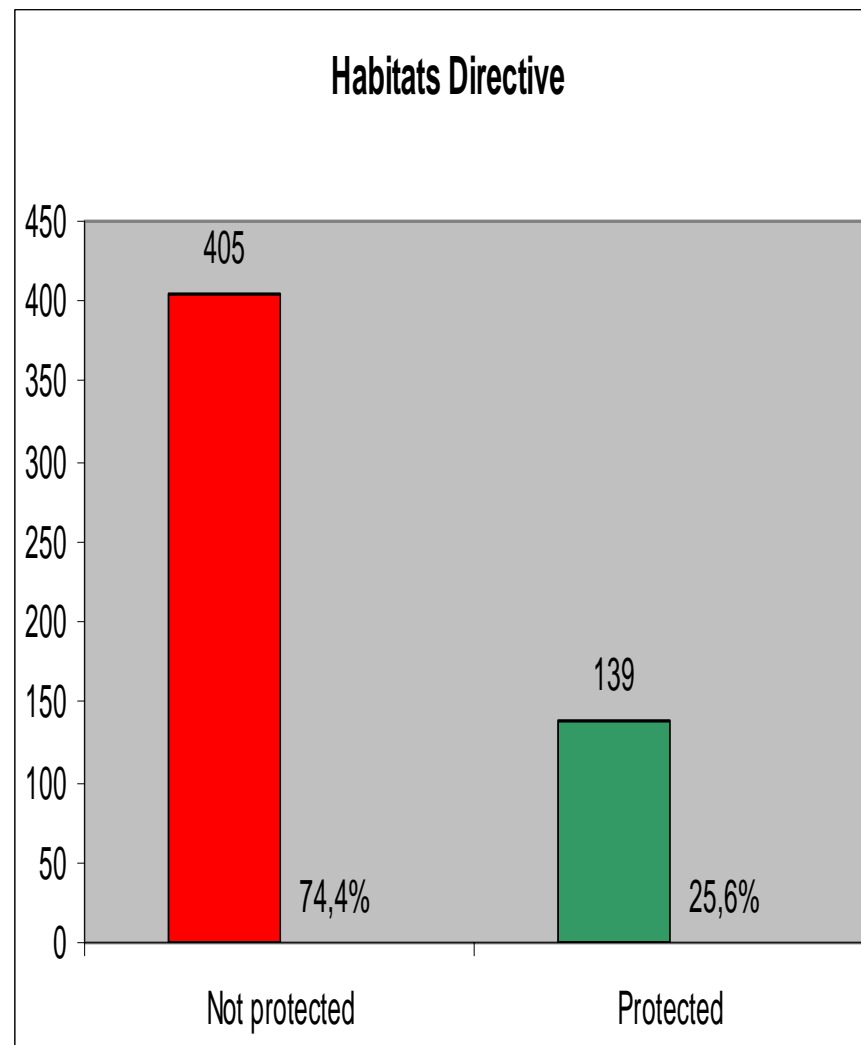
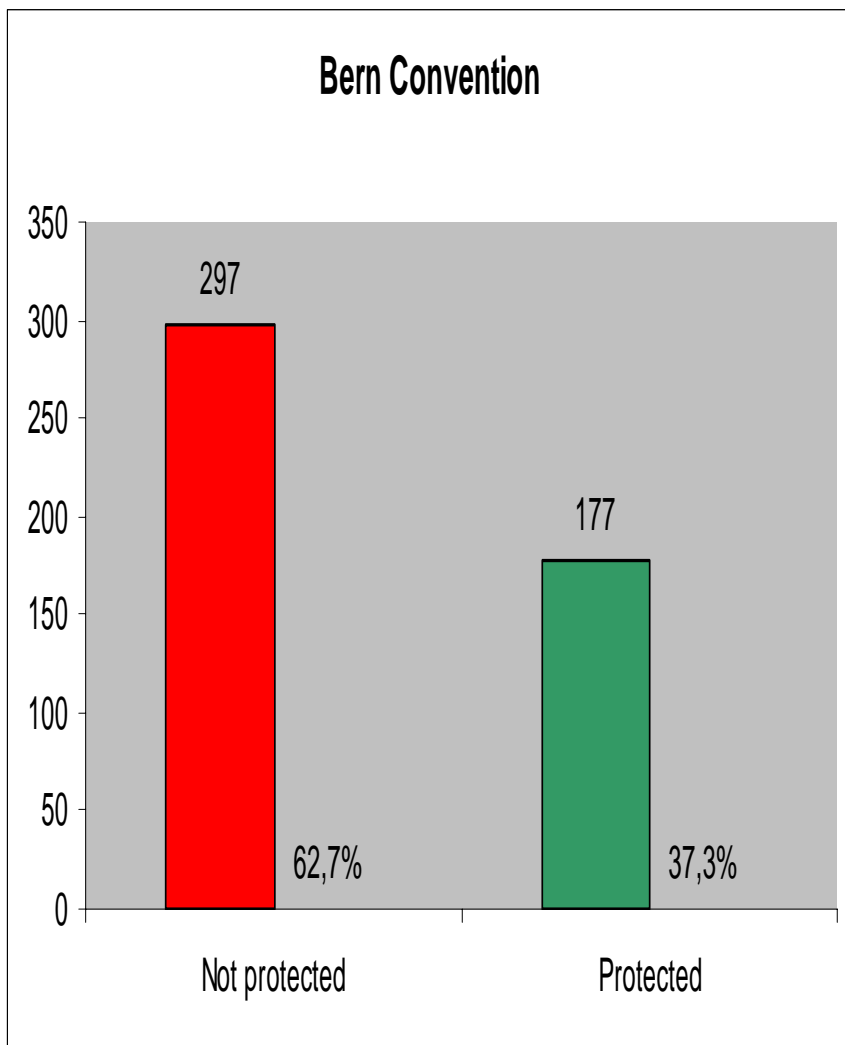


# Main threats reported

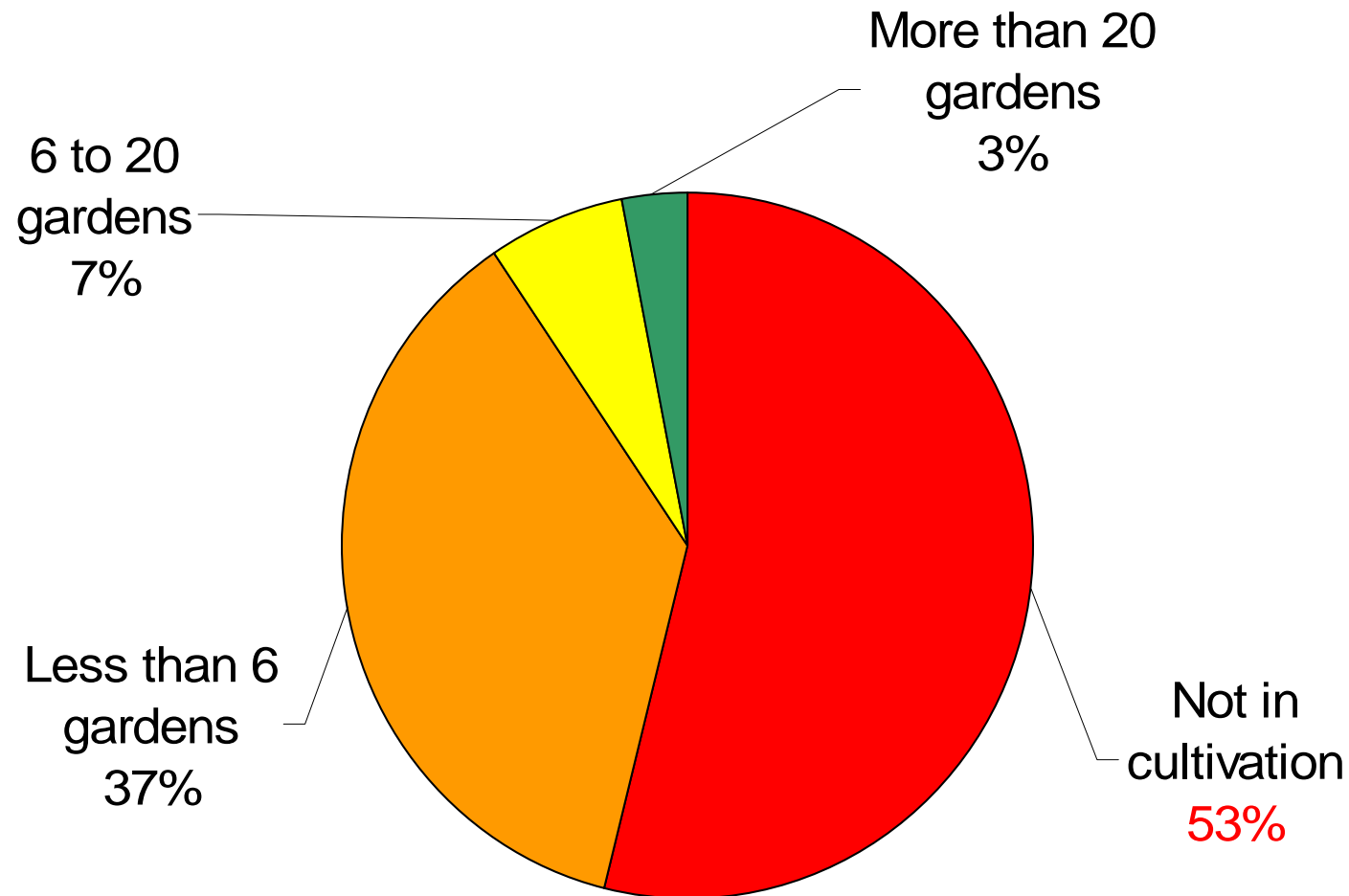


# **Insufficient conservation measures!**

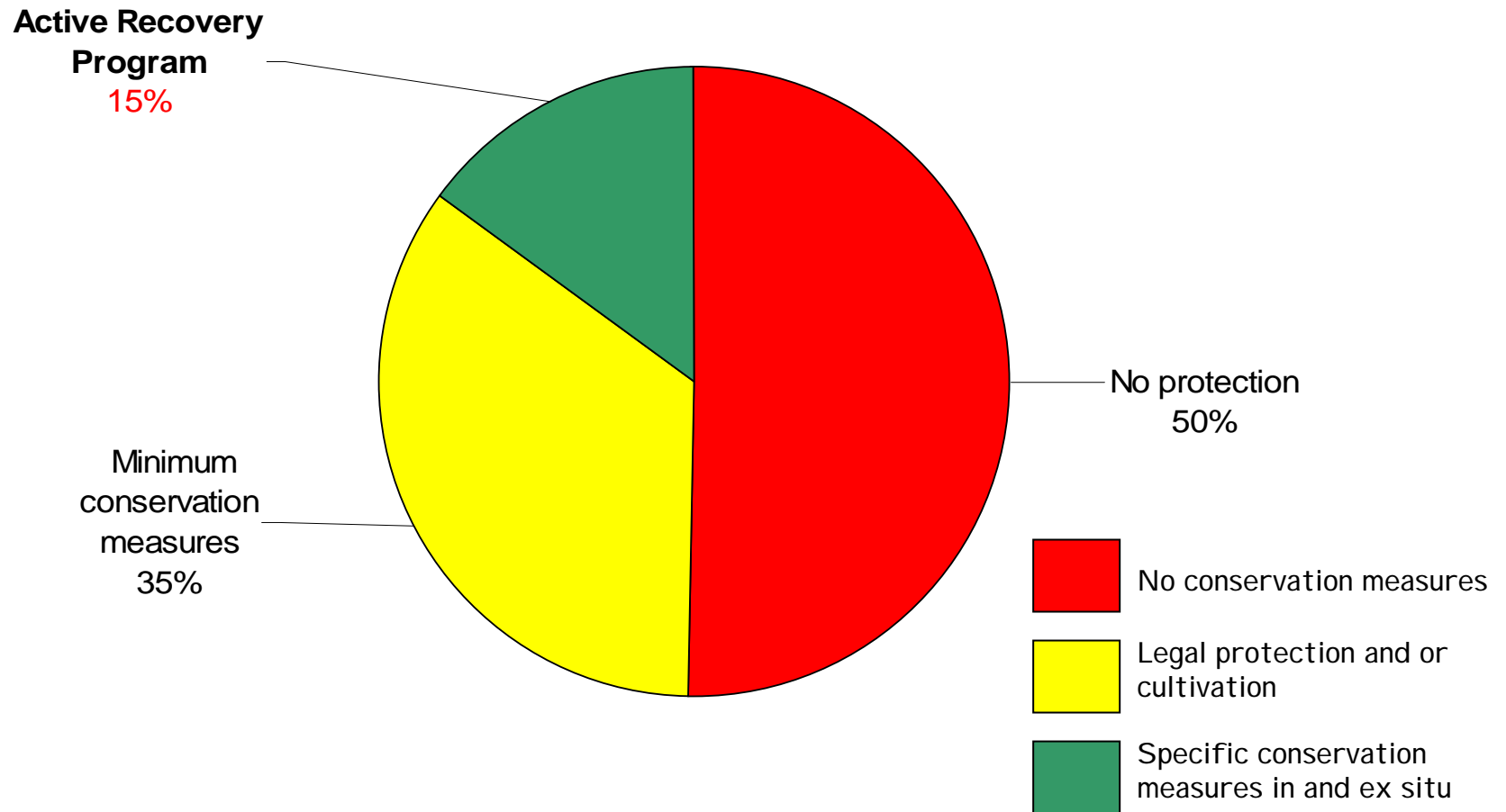
# Gaps in legal protection at European level?



# Ex-situ conservation measures are insufficient



# Too few species benefit from an active Plant Recovery Program



# Shortcomings of the survey due to:

## Availability of data on threatened plant species

- Sources are heterogeneous and national red lists only cover  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Europe

## Peer review for validation not fully satisfactory

- Experts not always familiar with IUCN criteria
- Insufficient knowledge on some species, including on conservation measures

## Taxonomic issues

- Some groups have not been considered fully (*Hieracium*, *Taraxacum*, *Rubus*)
- Non described taxa have been excluded

## Conclusions (1)

This database is an **evolving tool** which **for the first time** provides a synthetic perspective on some of the most threatened plant species in Europe, on **the basis of homogeneous criteria**.

## Conclusions (2)

This tool helps in:

- improving **knowledge**
- defining **priorities** for conservation
- drawing **lessons**:
  - ✓ **Gaps** in protection measures (legal status, in situ and ex-situ conservation)
  - ✓ Enhancing successful **experiences**
    - Creation of micro-reserves
    - Development of Plants Recovery Program

## Wishes for the future

To involve a pan-European expertise in order to:

- improve the tool
- facilitate continuous exchanges on knowledge related to plant status
- stimulate collaboration between main actors for conservation

## For more information about the project, contact:

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*Normania triphylla* (Lowe) Lowe : An example of a species extinct in the wild (Madeira) for which reintroduction is in progress

**Thank you!**

# Proposal for a method to assess priority need for conservation

Combining species status in the wild and  
ex-situ conservation status

	EX	EW	CR	EN	VU	NT	LC	DD	NE
Not cultivated	A	–	A	A	B	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	B	B
Cultivated in 1 to 5 sites	–	A	A	A	C	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	B	B
Cultivated in 6 to 20 sites	–	A	A	B	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>
Cultivated in more than 20 sites	–	C	C	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>
No information available	–	B	B	C	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	C	C
Not assessed	–	B	B	C	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	C	C

Conservation urgency need: **A** (maximum)    B (high)    C (medium)    *d* (little or nil)