

(2). (PCR) (PaConsII-F/R) *S-RNase* S- : S_1S_2 (), S_1S_5 (), S_2S_3 (), S_2S_4 (), S_3S_4 (), S_3S_6 (), S_3S_9 (), S_3S_{12} (), S_6S_9 (), S_4S_x () S_5S_x (). S_3 S_3S_{12} (38.6% 24%,). : *Prunus avium* L., S-

(*Prunus avium* L.) (2014–2018) 44 983 t, 22 044 t 5 606 t Webster (1996) Quero-García et al. (2019) , Faust and Surányi (1997)

genotypes). The use of the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) with consensus primers for the second intron (PaConsII-F/R) of *S-RNase* and allele-specific primers revealed eight alleles that generated the following S-allelic constitutions: S_1S_2 (one genotype), S_1S_5 (one genotype), S_2S_3 (five genotypes), S_2S_4 (one genotype), S_3S_4 (two genotypes), S_3S_6 (two genotypes), S_3S_9 (two genotypes), S_3S_{12} (six genotypes), S_6S_9 (two genotypes), S_4S_x (two genotypes) and S_5S_x (one genotype). The most frequent S-allele and allelic constitution in this work were S_3 and S_3S_{12} (38.6% and 24%, resp.). Based on the obtained results, the assessed genotypes have been assigned to nine incompatibility groups. This study represents the first fundamental stage of characterization of autochthonous sweet cherry genotypes originating from aforementioned countries, which needs to be enlarged through inclusion of new landraces.

Key words: *Prunus avium* L., indigenous genotype, S-allelic constitution, gametophytic self-incompatibility, Balkan Peninsula

INTRODUCTION

Sweet cherry (*Prunus avium* L.) is an economically important fruit species in the countries of the Balkan Peninsula. According to Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the average annual sweet cherry production (2014–2018) was 44,983 t, 22,044 t and 5,606 t in the Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Serbia and Republic of North Macedonia, respectively. Webster (1996) and Quero-García et al. (2019) reported that this fruit species may have originated within a region around the Caspian (Sea) and the Black Sea, as well as that a number of local genotypes, adapted to particular agro-ecological conditions, resulted from its spreading across Europe. Also, Faust and Surányi (1997) pointed out that sweet cherry occurs

naturally in Europe and areas of northern Africa. Since the origin of these old genotypes is mostly undocumented, and cases of homonyms or synonyms might occur, a reliable identification is required. This also represents a recurrent problem in the collection and conservation of autochthonous sweet cherry genotypes worldwide.

Cherry germplasm in the Balkan countries is adapted to different and inappropriate environments; it is potentially provided with useful genetic variability (i.e. fruit quality, resistance), e.g. the Ohrid region is a typical area for sweet cherry growing whose assortment is primarily based on the autochthonous genotypes of high quality fruits, mainly Ohridska Dolga Šiška (Gjamovski et al., 2016). In addition, this material with useful traits can extend the list of potential parental cultivars to be used in breeding programmes and can also be the main factor for revitalizing major Macedonian sweet cherry growing regions.

Fotiri -Akši et al. (2016) reported that newly released Serbian sweet cherry cultivar 'Canetova' originated from natural population. 'Ranna Tcherne' is one of the most widespread early ripening local sweet cherry cultivar in the Republic of Bulgaria, quite often used as parent within breeding programmes (Malchev, 2016).

The first sweet cherry cultivar released at Fruit Growing Institute (FGI), Plovdiv, Republic of Bulgaria was 'Kossara', which was derived from the cross 'Ranna Tcherne' x 'Bigareau Burlat' (Malchev and Zhivondov, 2016; Mari et al., 2018).

In sweet cherry, apart from very few exceptions, most genotypes are self-incompatible and certain pairs of genotypes are cross-incompatible (reciprocally or unilaterally). This gametophytic self-incompatibility mechanism is controlled by the multiallelic two linked genes of S-locus – S-RNase (Boškovi and

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Tobutt, 1996) *SFB* (Yamane et al., 2003),
 (S-RNase)
 (SFB),
 S-
 25 S-
 (Vaughan et al., 2008).
 1300
 (18 S-
 : $S_1, S_7, S_9, S_{10}, S_{12}, S_{14}, S_{16}, S_{18}, S_{19}, S_{21}, S_{22}, S_{24}$),
 60
 (), 0
 S-
 () (Schuster, 2017).
 Vaughan et al. (2008)
 S-
 ,
 S_{27}, S_{32}, S_{37}
 S_{34}
 ,
 (Szikriszt et al., 2013).
 - PCR-
 , S-
 (FRI),
 (Mari and
 Radi evi , 2014; Radi evi et al., 2015).
 , S-
 ,
 (Ipek et al., 2011; Ercisli et al.,
 2012; Cachi and Wünsch, 2014a; Lisek et
 al., 2015; Schuster, 2017; Marchese et
 al., 2017).
 Mariette et al. (2010)

and *SFB* (Yamane et al., 2003) genes,
 - expressed in the style and the pollen,
 - respectively. The stylar product (S-RNase)
 - interacts in an allele specific manner with
 - the pollen product (SFB) to inhibit pollen
 - tube growth in the styles containing an
 - identical S-haplotype.

To date, 25 S-alleles have been reported
 in sweet cherry (Vaughan et al., 2008).
 The analysis of in total 1,300 sweet cherry
 cultivars revealed a polymorphism (18
 different S-alleles: S_1 to S_7, S_9, S_{10}, S_{12} to
 $S_{14}, S_{16}, S_{18}, S_{19}, S_{21}, S_{22}$ and S_{24}) that
 allowed identification of 60 incompatibility
 groups (IGs), a group of 0 of unique S-
 genotypes and a group of self-compatible
 (SC) cultivars (Schuster, 2017). Vaughan
 et al. (2008) reported six S-alleles
 identified only in wild cherry of Western
 Europe, which were attributed to S_{27} to
 S_{32} alleles. In addition, a new S_{37} allele
 and the sour cherry S_{34} -allele were
 identified in Turkish sweet cherry
 landraces and genotypes selected from
 populations growing wild in the Black Sea
 area (Szikriszt et al., 2013).

- Due to the application of consensus/allele-
 specific PCR-based methods and obtain-
 ed high polymorphism, the S-locus has
 - also been used as a genetic marker for
 - genotyping and identification of domestic
 - and foreign sweet cherry cultivars at Fruit
 Research Institute (FRI), a ak, Republic
 of Serbia (Mari and Radi evi , 2014;
 Radi evi et al., 2015). Additionally, S-
 genotyping has become a useful tool for
 diversity assessment in local sweet cherry
 germplasm in different countries of
 Europe and northern and western Asia,
 which revealed high levels of genetic
 diversity among landraces (Ipek et al.,
 2011; Ercisli et al., 2012; Cachi and
 Wünsch, 2014a; Lisek et al., 2015;
 Schuster, 2017; Marchese et al., 2017).

- However, Mariette et al. (2010)
 - reported a reduction in genetic diversity
 - from wild to landrace to modern sweet

cherry cultivars, as well as that domestication and breeding had two major impacts on a decrease of diversity. Sweet cherry landraces such as the Italian 'Kronio' and the Spanish 'Cristobalina' and 'Talegal Ahin' are the source of self-compatibility, for which DNA markers have also been developed (Marchese et al., 2007; Cachi and Wünsch, 2014b).

Recently, the interest in collection and evaluation of autochthonous sweet cherry genotypes with good agronomic properties in the Balkan region and molecular characterization of this material have been increased at the FRI, a ak, in collaboration with University Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Institute of Agriculture, Skopje and FGI, Plovdiv (Mari et al., 2018, 2019a, 2019b; Radicevic et al., 2019).

The aim of this study was to summarize all known data on the S-alleles in autochthonous sweet cherry genotypes in the aforementioned Balkan countries and to report new genotype data which have not been previously published. Obtained results will be useful to both breeders and growers to better manage this valuable autochthonous cherry material.

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MATERIAL AND METHODS

Plant material and DNA extraction

Twenty-five autochthonous sweet cherry genotypes (Table 1) were used in this study. These genotypes, corresponding to landraces or cultivars of unknown origin, were sampled in orchards of individual growers in the Republic of Serbia (the regions of a ak and Belgrade) and the Republic of North Macedonia (the Ohrid region), as well as in the sweet cherry collection of FGI, Plovdiv (Republic of Bulgaria).

Young fresh leaves of the genotypes were collected in the spring, frozen in liquid

–80°C .
 Doyle and Doyle (1987).
 TE
 RNase A (Invitrogen,
 Groningen,
 –20° , PCR.

**PCR
*S-RNase***

S-RNase
 Sonneveld et al. (2001, 2003). PCR
 ,
 , *S-RNase*
 (PaConsII-F / R, Sonneveld et al., 2003)
 S₁
 S₆ , S₉ S₁₂
 (Sonneveld et al., 2001, 2003).
 S-
 Mari and Radi evi (2014) Mari et al.
 (2015, 2018).

S-
 PCR
 ,
 (70 V/cm 4 h), 2%
 1.5% (70 V/cm 2-3).
 PCR
 BIO-PRINT-
 1500/26M (Vilber Lourmat, Collégien,
).
 1 Kb
 (Invitrogen, Groningen,).

S-RNase 25

nitrogen and stored at –80°C. Genomic DNA was isolated from leaves according to the method of Doyle and Doyle (1987). Extracted DNA was dissolved in TE buffer, treated with RNase A (Invitrogen, Groningen, the Netherlands) and kept at –20°C until used for PCRs.

PCR analysis for *S-RNase* genotyping

Identification of the *S-RNase* alleles in autochthonous sweet cherry genotypes was based on the method reported by Sonneveld et al. (2001, 2003). The PCRs were performed by using the consensus primer pairs specific for the second introns of the *S-RNase* (PaConsII-F/R, Sonneveld et al., 2003) and the allele-specific primers for S₁ to S₆, as well as for S₉ and S₁₂ alleles (Sonneveld et al., 2001, 2003). Annealing temperatures for aforementioned S-alleles were reported in the studies by Mari and Radi evi (2014) and Mari et al. (2015, 2018). Sweet cherry cultivars of known S-alleles were used as reference genotypes.

Detection and visualization of the DNA fragments

PCR products obtained with the consensus primers were run on a 2% agarose gel (70 V/cm for 4 h), whereas products of allele-specific PCRs on a 1.5% agarose gel (70 V/cm for 2-3 h). Visualization of DNA bands was performed by ethidium bromide staining and under ultraviolet light of BIO-PRINT-1500/26M imaging system (Vilber Lourmat, Collégien, French Republic). For sizing of DNA fragments, 1 Kb plus DNA ladder (Invitrogen, Groningen, the Netherlands) was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study presents an overview of *S-RNase* alleles identification in 25 autochthonous genotypes from the main sweet cherry growing regions of the Republic of Serbia, Republic of North Macedonia and Republic of Bulgaria (Table

(1). S-PCR

S-RNase (PaConsII-F/R)

$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_9, S_{12}$.

S-

: S_1S_2 (), S_1S_5 (G -1), S_2S_3 (G -7, G -14, G -15, G -16 and), S_2S_4 (OCK-1), S_3S_4 (G -10 G -12), S_3S_6 (G -4 G -13), S_3S_9 (G -8 and), S_3S_{12} (G -5, G -6, ODŠ-O1, ODŠ-O2, ODŠ-S1 ODŠ-S2), S_6S_9 (G -2 G -11), S_4S_x (OCK-2 Ohridska Crna) S_5S_x (G -9). S-

" "

Schuster (2012, 2017).

: I, III, IV, VI, X, XIII, XIV, XVI XXII (1);

XXII (24%)

'OCK-2, GT-9

(S_4)

OCK-2 (S_5 GGT-9) S-

(Mari et al., 2019a, 2019b).

S-

1). The S-allelic constitution of each genotype was determined after combining the results obtained upon PCR amplification with the consensus primers for the second intron of *S-RNase* (PaConsII-F/R) and the primers specific to alleles $S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_9$ and S_{12} . Among the assessed genotypes, the following S-allelic constitutions were determined: S_1S_2 (Ranna Tcherná), S_1S_5 (G -1), S_2S_3 (G -7, G -14, G -15, G -16 and Kuklenska Belica), S_2S_4 (OCK-1), S_3S_4 (G -10 and G -12), S_3S_6 (G -4 and G -13), S_3S_9 (G -8 and Ohridska Brza), S_3S_{12} (G -5, G -6, ODŠ-O1, ODŠ-O2, ODŠ-S1 and ODŠ-S2), S_6S_9 (G -2 and G -11), S_4S_x (OCK-2 and Ohridska Crna) and S_5S_x (G -9). The S-genotype for Bulgarian autochthonous cultivar Kuklenska Belica is published in this paper for the first time.

Considering the obtained results, the autochthonous genotypes were assigned to their corresponding IGs, previously published by Schuster (2012, 2017). Therefore, we determined the following nine IGs: I, III, IV, VI, X, XIII, XIV, XVI and XXII (Table 1); the results of our study will extended these groups by including autochthonous Balkan genotypes. Group XXII was the most common IG, comprising nearly a quarter (24%) of the assessed genotypes. Three genotypes were not assigned to previously identified IGs, since the second allele for OCK-2, Ohridska Crna and G -9 was not determined. The single band for these genotypes on the agarose gel (on the position corresponding to allele S_4 for OCK-2 and Ohridska Crna, as well as allele S_5 for G -9) could mean either that two S-alleles have the introns of the same size, or the primers do not match the sequence of the second allele (Mari et al., 2019a, 2019b).

Therefore, the additional analysis will focus on possible identification of the second S-allele of these genotypes through cloning and sequencing of the

1. S-

Table 1. S-genotypes and incompatibility groups of autochthonous sweet cherries

Origin*	Name of genotype	S- S-genotype	IG	Reference for S-genotype
RS	G -1	S_1S_5	XIV	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -2	S_6S_9	X	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -4	S_3S_6	VI	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -5	S_3S_{12}	XXII	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -6	S_3S_{12}	XXII	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -7	S_2S_3	IV	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -8	S_3S_9	XVI	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -9	S_5S_x	/	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -10	S_3S_4	III	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -11	S_6S_9	X	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -12	S_3S_4	III	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -13	S_3S_6	VI	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -14	S_2S_3	IV	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -15	S_2S_3	IV	Mari et al. (2019a)
RS	G -16	S_2S_3	IV	Mari et al. (2019a)
MK	ODŠ-O1	S_3S_{12}	XXII	Mari et al. (2019b)
MK	ODŠ-O2	S_3S_{12}	XXII	Mari et al. (2019b)
MK	ODŠ-S1	S_3S_{12}	XXII	Mari et al. (2019b)
MK	ODŠ-S2	S_3S_{12}	XXII	Mari et al. (2019b)
MK	OČK-1	S_2S_4	XIII	Mari et al. (2019b)
MK	OČK-2	S_4S_x	/	Mari et al. (2019b)
MK	Ohridska Brza	S_3S_9	XVI	Mari et al. (2019b)
MK	Ohridska Crna	S_4S_x	/	Mari et al. (2019b)
BG	Kuklenska Belica	S_2S_3	IV	/This study
BG	'Ranna Tcherná'	S_1S_2	I	Mari et al. (2018)

* ISO 3166

*Country according ISO 3166 code list.

In this study, a total of eight different S-alleles: S_1 , S_2 , S_3 , S_4 , S_5 , S_6 , S_9 and S_{12} in 25 local Serbian, Macedonian and Bulgarian sweet cherry genotypes were determined. The number of times identified and frequency of the S-RNase alleles in the assessed cherry germplasm is shown in Table 2 (excluding three genotypes for which the second allele was not determined). Therefore, the most frequent allele in this material was

S_3 (38.6%)
 -
 (>10%)
 S_2 S_{12} (15,9%
 13,6%). , Ercisli et al. (2012)
 S-
 37
 -
 (39%) S_{12} (19%).
 S-
 ,
 -
 S-
 ,
 (Cachi and
 Wünsch, 2014a).

S_3 (38.6%) and a relatively higher frequency of occurrence (> 10%) was observed for alleles S_2 and S_{12} (15.9% and 13.6%, resp.). Also, Ercisli et al. (2012) found eight aforementioned S-alleles in 37 Croatian sweet cherry genotypes and reported similar frequencies for alleles S_3 (39%) and S_{12} (19%). The geographical distribution of S-alleles may indicate a common origin or genetic relationship of genotypes spread in closer areas or a possible association of certain S-alleles with adaptive traits correlated to climatic conditions in different areas (Cachi and Wünsch, 2014a).

2.

S-RNase

1

Table 2. Number of times identified and frequency of the S-RNase alleles in the sweet cherry autochthonous germplasm presented in Table 1

S-RNase allele*	Number of times identified	S-RNase allele frequency (%)
S_1	2	4.6
S_2	7	15.9
S_3	17	38.6
S_4	3	6.8
S_5	1	2.3
S_6	4	9.1
S_9	4	9.1
S_{12}	6	13.6
Total:	44	100.0

* (G -9, OCK-2)

*Three genotypes were excluded (G -9, OCK-2 and Ohridska Crna)

S_3 -
 (29,6%; Ipek et al.,
 2011), (34,4%; Lisek et al., 2015),
 (25%; Marchese et al., 2017),
 (38%; Cachi and Wünsch,
 2014a). , Cachi and Wünsch
 (2014a) , 545 -
 , -
 Schuster (2012) 64
 ,
 (, -
 28%).
 ,
 S_{12}

S_3 was the most frequent sweet cherry allele in Turkey (29.6%; Ipek et al., 2011), Czechia (34.4%; Lisek et al., 2015), Italy (25%; Marchese et al., 2017), Spain (38%; Cachi and Wünsch, 2014a). Also, Cachi and Wünsch (2014a) stated that among 545 European sweet cherry cultivars reported and compiled by Schuster (2012) and 64 local Spanish cultivars analyzed in their work, the most frequent allele was S_3 (approximately 28%). Contrary, S_{12} allele was very rare in the European cultivars (Cachi and

2014a), (Cachi Wünsch, 2014a), but is commonly found in Turkish and Croatian genotypes (Ipek et al., 2011; Ercisli et al., 2012). Considering our results, a relatively higher frequency of S_{12} allele in the Balkan countries may be associated with their long common history. S_2 occurrence in our study (15.9%) was similar to that reported in Turkish germplasm (14.8%) by Ipek et al. (2011), while the frequency of this allele in Croatian landraces was 8% (Ercisli et al., 2012). Marchese et al. (2017) stated the rarity of S_1 , S_2 and S_4 alleles in 186 local sweet cherry accessions from 12 Italian regions. Also, Cachi and Wünsch (2014a) found that S_2 allele was less frequent in the Western Spain (1%) and was not found in the genotypes originated from the eastern and northern parts of this country. The alleles S_6 and S_9 , occurring at a frequency of 9.1% in our study, were also common in Croatian (being found in 8%; Ercisli et al., 2012) and Turkish (S_6 – 11.1%, S_9 – 7.5%; Ipek et al., 2011) sweet cherry genotypes. Marchese et al. (2017) reported that S_6 was one of the most frequent S-allele in the Italian germplasm (19%), while S_9 was less frequent (4%). Similar results were published by Cachi and Wünsch (2014a), who reported the frequency of 26% for allele S_6 in Spanish landraces, and lower frequency for S_9 (8% in northern part, and less than 3% in the western and eastern parts of the country). A relatively high occurrence of the allele S_9 (20.4%) was observed in genotypes originated from Ukraine (Lisek et al., 2015). Regarding S_4 , occurring at a frequency of 6.8% in our study, this allele was extremely rare in the Italian (1%) and Croatian (2.5%) landraces (Ercisli et al., 2012; Marchese et al., 2017). A higher frequency for S_4 was found in Spanish (from northern part), Czech and Turkish genotypes (23%, 21.9% and 13.6%, resp.; Cachi and Wünsch,

Wünsch, 2014a), but is commonly found in Turkish and Croatian genotypes (Ipek et al., 2011; Ercisli et al., 2012). Considering our results, a relatively higher frequency of S_{12} allele in the Balkan countries may be associated with their long common history. S_2 occurrence in our study (15.9%) was similar to that reported in Turkish germplasm (14.8%) by Ipek et al. (2011), while the frequency of this allele in Croatian landraces was 8% (Ercisli et al., 2012).

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A higher frequency for S_4 was found in Spanish (from northern part), Czech and Turkish genotypes (23%, 21.9% and 13.6%, resp.; Cachi and Wünsch, 2014a);

2014a; Lisek et al., 2015; Ipek et al., 2011), S_1, S_3, S_4, S_6 , S_{22} (Cachi and Wünsch, 2014a). Ipek et al. (2011) and Ercisli et al. (2012) reported S_1 (2.5%), S_3 (3%), S_4 (3%), S_6 (25%), S_{22} (12%) (Cachi and Wünsch, 2014a; Lisek et al., 2015). S_5 (2.3%), S_7 (5%) (Ipek et al., 2011; Ercisli et al., 2012). S_5 (1%; Marchese et al., 2017), S_9 (1%), S_{12} (Cachi and Wünsch, 2014a). Lisek et al. (2015) reported S_5 (20.4%), S_7 , S_{10} , S_{13} , S_{12} (Cachi and Wünsch (2014a) S_{13}, S_{16} , S_{22} S

Lisek et al., 2015; Ipek et al., 2011), and it was also observed that alleles S_1, S_3, S_4 and S_6 were highly frequent in cultivars from northern and central Europe, while alleles S_3, S_6 and S_{22} in southern Europe (Cachi and Wünsch, 2014a).

S_1 occurrence (4.6%) was a little bit higher compare to those reported in Turkish and Croatian genotypes (2.5%) by Ipek et al. (2011) and Ercisli et al. (2012) respectively, as well as in Italian germplasm (3%) reported by Marchese et al. (2017). The higher occurrence of S_1 was observed in genotypes originated from Czechia (25%) and northern Spain (12%) (Cachi and Wünsch, 2014a; Lisek et al., 2015). Our study revealed a low frequency of allele S_5 (2.3%), which was slightly lower in comparison with the occurrence of this allele in Turkish (5%) and Croatian (7%) germplasms (Ipek et al., 2011; Ercisli et al., 2012). S_5 was extremely rare in the Italian landraces (1%; Marchese et al., 2017), as well as in Spanish genotypes originated from the western part of the country (1%), while it was not found in the northern and eastern parts (Cachi and Wünsch, 2014a). Lisek et al. (2015) reported the high frequency of S_5 in the Ukrainian germplasm (20.4%), which greatly differentiates these cultivars from the cultivars originating in other regions of Europe.

Our research and study of Ercisli et al. (2012) revealed eight S-alleles: $S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_6, S_9$ and S_{12} . Ipek et al. (2011) found ten different alleles, S_7 and S_{10} in addition to the eight listed. Also, eight alleles were reported by Lisek et al. (2015), but S_{13} was detected instead of S_{12} . The allele S_{12} was not found in the Spanish germplasm either, and Cachi and Wünsch (2014a) stated ten identified alleles, namely S_{13}, S_{16} and S_{22} in addition to the list of aforementioned alleles.

The highest polymorphism of S-loci was observed in Italian landraces; Marchese

et al. (2017) reported 17 alleles, S₅, S₇, S₁₀, S₁₃, S₁₄, S₁₆, S₁₇, S₁₉ and S₂₂ in addition to the list of eight alleles.

There is no answer yet why some alleles are frequent in certain sweet cherry germ-plasms whilst other are rare; however, Marchese et al. (2017) speculated that some alleles may be linked with traits of adaptation to particular agro-ecological conditions or could be the result of a founder effect and selection events (Kato and Mukai, 2004).

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CONCLUSIONS

The overview presented in this study is the first fundamental stage of characterization of autochthonous material and needs to be further improved with some new S-alleles data on sweet cherries in the Balkan region.

To avoid the loss of this material, it is essential to collect and evaluate these genotypes to allow their conservation in sweet cherry collections.

In addition, all new information is very important for the breeding research and for appropriate choice of pollenizers in the orchard aiming to the efficient production of sweet cherry fruits.

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