



Newsletter from the European Plant Science Organisation



EPSO News N° 31 / June 2013



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7th EPSO Conference 'Plants for a Greening Economy', Greece, 1-4 September 2013 – register and submit your abstract for oral presentation selection until 7 June 2013!

Dear colleagues,

The time for us to get together and enjoy another fantastic EPSO Conference has almost come. With three months to go, following a hard but fruitful effort by the EPSO and the local organisers, we are all very excited to be able to provide such a conference and to once again contribute towards an urgently needed better understanding of plant functioning and to a more efficient exploitation of the plant world to the benefit of mankind.

As promised and expected, top quality scientists from all over the world will honor our conference by presenting their most recent research findings to enrich our knowledge with the astonishing advances in various areas ranging from basic science to applied research and industrial applications. Experts from the European Parliament and Commission and the ERA-Net on Molecular Plant Science will discuss with us science policies. With all of the 47 invited speakers and chairs having confirmed their attendance (see page 2), many offers from the participants for oral presentations, all contributing to the 10 scientific sessions and 1 science policy session, it holds the promise to become a great event. Have a look yourself at the [Conference programme](#).

A wealth of information on several equally important plant science issues will also be discussed in numerous posters and two dedicated poster sessions. Finally, the fascinating beauty of Porto Heli ensures an idyllic environment conducive to intelligent exchange of ideas, no doubt the most important aspect of any conference. In short, there will be a lot of food for thought as well as cultural and entertainment parts to foster networking.

Now is the time to register and submit your poster abstract until 7 June 2013 to be considered for selection of oral presentations! In addition, sponsor and exhibition opportunities are open. Visit the [conference website](#) for more information, to register online and to book your accommodation. Contact us to hold your project/network meetings as side events at low prices on 5 and 6 September at the conference venue.

A final piece of advice if we may: do not miss the chance to stay in Porto Heli for two more days after the conference to attend the Plant Phenotyping workshop (5.9) and discover (6.9) the magnificent sea shore and surroundings, all coupled with the legendary Greek hospitality.

Promising an unforgettable September, we are looking forward to welcome you all in Greece!

Contacts: [K Metzloff](#); [G Skaracis](#); [K Karkala](#)

EPISO representatives will meet for their General Meeting 1 September 2013 in Porto Heli, Greece – Preparations with your input and the EPISO Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (Heribert Hirt, Eckhard George and Karin Metzloff) met in Brussels, Belgium, 14 May 2013. The two major goals were to discuss next steps for input to the Horizon 2020 legal files and first Work Programmes as well as to finalise the draft agenda and start preparations for the 1 September 2013 General Meeting. Maurice Moloney gave input by phone afterwards.



Based on your replies to the themes for parallel discussion groups, the ExCo decided the following programme: Report on EPISO's achievements in the past years; Discuss European and global science policy; Discuss Fascination of Plants Day.

The 4 parallel sessions will be:

- “Towards H2020 – involving SMEs, extension services, farmers” – guests from farmers and company organisations – lead M Moloney
- “Education and outreach” – update on the Education Action Plan, Discuss next Fascination of Plants Day

(incl. Discuss idea school experiments web site) – lead T Bisseling and T Hvoslef-Eide

- “Agricultural Technologies” – from GM to organic farming – bridging the gap – lead H Hirt
- “Basic plant science in H2020” – ERC and societal challenges - guests from the European Commission – lead t.b.a.

Finally, new Board members will be voted and EPISO Workshops and Working Groups will be discussed.

Most of the EPISO representatives already confirmed their participation – please contact us if you have not done so yet until 15 June. We will contact you in June to perform the administrative votes by email (to be submitted to the Belgian ministry end June) and to ask you which parallel discussion you wish to join during the General Meeting.

We very much look forward to a very lively discussion with you at our General Meeting and great activities with you in the coming year and beyond to boost plant science and its contribution to our society in Europe and globally!

Contact: [Karin Metzloff](#)



HORIZON 2020
THE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

EPISO first input to Horizon 2020 Work Programmes 2014–16 and continued advise on Horizon 2020 overall discussion

The European Commission (EC) is preparing the draft for the first Work Programmes under Horizon 2020 and invited the European Technology Platforms (ETPs) for input. EPISO and its partners in the Plants for the Future ETP consulted you – our members – and recommends to the EC (4 April 2013) six main headings: ‘Resource use efficiency and resource stewardship; Enrich / enhance beneficial plant compounds during cultivation, harvesting, processing for healthy human nutrition & animal feed and reduce non-beneficial compounds; Improve plant composition and performance for novel (non-food) products; Resilient plants – improved plant health; Resilient plants – increase yield and yield stability in dynamic environments; Horizontal actions’.

In addition to the legal files, the EC develops a proposal for a Strategic Programme for the 2014–16 Work Programmes that point to 12 Focus Areas having a high potential in terms of well-established research areas and the need for building critical mass to address the societal challenges. Most relevant for the plant sector are: ‘Sustainable food security’, ‘Personalising health and care’, ‘Waste: a resource to recycle, reuse and recover raw materials’ – where we recommend including waste prevention, ‘Water innovation: boosting its value for Europe’, and to a smaller extent ‘Smart cities and communities’, ‘Competitive low-carbon energy’, ‘Energy

efficiency’, ‘Overcoming the crisis’ and ‘Disaster-resilience’. To contribute to this focused approach, we added references to these in our input from 4 April (by 22 May).

In parallel, Members of the European Parliament together with the Member States continue to work on improving the European Commission’s [Horizon 2020 proposal](#) in the so called trilogue, on which EPISO and its partners in Plant ETP are further consulted. The goal is to achieve compromise between the most important issues agreed in the ITRE Committee and the Council discussion. Once agreed between the trilogue parties, these will be voted by the entire plenary European Parliament.

Amendments address most importantly basic science in the societal challenges programme, better support for international cooperation and in addition some amendments will enable plant scientists to better contribute to the overall bioeconomy building by specific attention to needs and opportunities for agricultural, horticultural and forestry production; emphasis on food quality, nutritional value and health aspects etc.

A crucial point of discussion will be the budget breakdown once the overall H2020 has been agreed. EPISO urges policy makers to maintain the proportional allocation to the various societal challenges and to the ERC as proposed by the EC.

To get involved and discuss these ideas as well in your country, **contact:** [Karin Metzloff](#), [Uli Schurr](#) and [Eckhard George](#).



Next steps following FAO-EPSCO Workshop on Plant Sciences for Sustainable Crop Production

This Joint [FAO-EPSCO Workshop](#), held in Rome, June 2012 with over 90 participants from Europe and from developing countries, makes the following first recommendations to policy makers: Review donor guidelines CRPs (how to open up for European scientists to initiate / join?); Add to existing or create new Joint Programming Initiative, consider an Article 185 initiative (Member States and European Commission); Embed in (new) ERA-Nets and in Horizon 2020; and harmonise national-level partnership building mechanisms across EU member states.

The EPSCO core group leading next steps to ensure the initiative (C Spillane, K Metzloff, JC Glaszmann, W

Gruissem, V Verdier, B Thomas, E George, B Osborne, S Lewicki) discussed with national bodies, European Commission and FAO further steps. For instance, considering how the three pilot initiatives – i) cassava value chain, (ii) underutilized and local fruit and vegetable crops, (iii) legume and cereals mixed and intercropping – could contribute to the Horizon 2020 Programme (EC DG RTD and DG AGRI), how they could be relevant for the European Innovation Partnership on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (DG AGRI), submitting a proposal to COST, follow up meetings with the Brussels office of FAO, fostering discussion on an Article 185 option (joint initiative of several Member States with the EC and one partner outside of Europe).

To further complete the survey on the interest of the EPSCO membership in the three possible pilot initiatives and beyond you can still return to us the [online questionnaire](#) that was sent to all EPSCO members and other workshop participants last year. To get involved, please **contact:** [Karin Metzloff](#) and [Charles Spillane](#)

EIP Strategic Implementation Plan in progress

The European Innovation Partnership (EIP) for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability, established by the European Commission as one of the main initiatives of the European Commission to support research and innovation in agriculture, is a network facility to build a bridge between science and the application of innovative approaches in practice.

As a first step of what might turn into a long term commitment, EPSCO was invited by the European Commission, together with representatives from Member

States, regions, farmers' and forestry organisations, agricultural scientists, environmental and consumer organisations and up- and downstream actors, to provide strategic advice and guidance to the EIP through a Strategic Implementation Plan, which should give clear strategic guidance and orientation to the EIP.

The Sherpa drafting group joined forces in order to have a first draft for the Strategic Implementation Plan ready by the end of May. This Plan will serve as a basis for the discussion of the high-level Steering Board, which will gather for the second time on 11 July 2013.

Contact: [Karin Metzloff](#); [Astrid Sneyers](#)

ERA-CAPS news: Board Meeting Paris & September meetings at EPSCO conference venue in Porto Heli



The first joint call from the ERA-Net for Coordinating Action in Plant Sciences (ERA-CAPS) closed in February this year, and we were pleased to receive over 100 high-quality collaborative proposals from across our member countries. These applications are currently undergoing external peer review and we will know which are successful later in the year.

In April this year, ERA-CAPS held its second Strategic Workshop at INRA Headquarters in Paris. This workshop brought together the ERA-CAPS partners (predominantly funding agencies and ministries from across Europe and beyond), observers (such as EPSCO), along with invited guests to discuss the possibility of

becoming a self-sustaining network once our coordination funding from the European Commission ends in late 2014. There was great enthusiasm around the table to continue supporting transnational funding for molecular plant science through joint calls beyond 2014, and so we will now be working together to set up mechanisms to achieve this. This will include continued close working with EPSCO and relevant Joint Programming Initiatives such as FACCE-JPI.

ERA-CAPS is very pleased to be having its next internal management meetings at the 7th EPSCO Conference in Porto Heli, Greece this September. We will have a poster at the Conference, so we encourage you to come and have a chat during the Wednesday afternoon poster session.

Contact: [Paul Wiley](#)

Picture below: Delegates at the Second ERA-CAPS Strategic Workshop at INRA, Paris.





EPSO General Meeting
1 September 2013, Greece



EPSO representatives confirm your participation to [Karin Metzloff](#)



7th EPSO Conference
1-4 September 2013, Greece



Contact [Katerina Karkala](#) to receive regular update



“Horticulture for the 21st Century” Workshop
11-12 November 2013, Berlin



Contact [Marina Korn](#) to register

About EPSO

EPSO, the European Plant Science Organisation, is an independent academic organisation that represents more than 226 leading academic research institutes, universities and departments from 30 countries. Together they represent over 28 000 plant researchers and staff. In addition, EPSO has over 3100 personal members.

The mission of EPSO is to promote plant science and plant scientists, to represent plant scientists in discussions about future plant science programme priorities across Europe, to provide an authoritative source of independent information on plant science, and to promote training of plant scientists to meet 21st Century challenges in breeding, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, plant ecology and sectors related to plant science.

To achieve its mission, EPSO advises policy and decision makers at national and European level on science policy, as an independent body and as member of the Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE) and the European Technology Platform ‘Plants for the Future’ (Plant ETP). EPSO supports plant scientists via the EPSO conferences including support grants for junior and eastern scientists, workshops, tutorships and as information broker via EPSO News and its website.

EPSO’s strategy is defined by the representatives at the General Meeting and further elaborated by the elected Board. Current Board members are Heribert Hirt (President – FR); Eckhard George (DE) and Maurice Moloney (UK) (Vice-presidents); Eva-Mari Aro (FI), Jose-Pío Beltrán (ES), Ton Bisseling (NL), Aldo Ceriotti (IT), Bruce Osborne (IE), Christophe Plomion (FR) and Tomas Vanek (CZ).

EPSO’s strategy is implemented by its members and staff. Contact us to join our activities:

- Science policy (EPSO, ISE, Plant ETP), members, observers, association relations: **Karin Metzloff**
- EU projects, EPSO workshops, accounts: **Karim Trabelsi**
- Newsletter, website, communications, database, personal membership: **Astrid Sneyers**
- Conferences, office: **Katerina Karkala**

Since its creation in 2000, the organisation has become a strong advocate of plant research in Europe and an important voice articulating the contributions and needs of plant scientists at national and European levels and beyond.



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As the information provided in *EPSO News* can only be a selection, EPSO is happy to receive further and updated information for distribution.

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