



EPSO News N° 34 / February 2014



In this issue:



Editorial

Editorial

A focus on Social Media

EPSO Activities

- News from the EPSO Board Meeting
- EPSO welcomes new President
- Johnathan Napier joins EPSO Board
- Research Action Plan Workshop
- Horticulture in the 21st Century
- Plant ETP at EC ETPs workshop
- Dublin Plant Biology Conferences
- ERA-CAPs first call results and second call launched
- EPSO launches new working group 'Basic Plant Sciences'
- New Members section on the EPSO website
- Engage in the EU elections

Members' News

- A plant scientist writes from Kyiv
- EMBRAPA and Julich intensify bilateral co-operation
- Anne Glover speaks at Dundee Women in Science festival, 8 March
- New open access journal—Current Plant Biology
- bioSYNergy—synthetic biology for solar energy
- Light in the darkness: Plant MRI
- Reorganisation of Agroscope in Switzerland
- 1st conference of the International Society for Molecular Farming

Outreach Activities

- Final FoPD success stories
- Tweeting — not just for birds
- How blogging benefited my PhD

National Research Funding

- Panorama of plant research funding opportunities in Switzerland

European and Global Research Programmes

- Horizon2020 Societal Challenge 2
- Upcoming deadlines

In Brief

Upcoming Meetings

Career Opportunities

About EPSO

Surfing the Plant Sciences: A focus on Social Media

On page 8 of this issue of EPSO News, in the "Outreach and Public Dialogue Activities" section, we have a focus on Social Media in the plant sciences.

The first article is written by Anne Osterrieder, a Research and Science Communication fellow at Oxford Brookes University, and Alun Salt, from the Annals of Botany blog. They introduce Twitter, the microblogging site in which messages can be a maximum of only 140 characters. The restricted length of the messages makes it useful for short updates, sharing of useful links, and quickfire messages and exchanges. You may follow EPSO on the username [@EPSOEurope](https://twitter.com/EPSOEurope), where we are updating the feed with news pertinent to the European Plant Science community. Anne curates a [list](#) of plant scientists on twitter.



TWEETS	FOLLOWING	FOLLOWERS
337	269	1,000

In the second article Sarah Shailes, a student from the John Innes Centre in the UK, writes about her experiences of blogging during her Ph.D. At EPSO we are starting a blog, where we hope in the coming weeks and months the empty pages will fill up and provide an open forum for plant scientists to share their interests, thoughts and experiences, and be involved in a project allowing interactions across borders. So whether you have seen a recent paper that interests you, would like to write about a broader topic, would like to practice scientific writing in English, or have a comment on the career and experiences of plant scientists, then please consider contributing some writing to the blog. We particularly invite young scientists to become actively involved and contribute to the running of the blog. If you have any ideas or questions please [contact us](#). We will link to a list of bloggers writing about plant science, so if you know a good one, please tell us. We recently added an excellent contribution from John Davison entitled "GM Pollen in Honey: a constituent or an ingredient?" so please view it here: <http://epsoblog.wordpress.com/>, and join the discussion.

At the [FESPB/EPSO conference](#) we plan to host a session on science communication, therefore we encourage EPSO members to suggest short talks on interesting outreach or media activities by themselves or others at their institute. Furthermore, we encourage all scientists to join us in communicating the conference online. We will have various materials to those interested in helping us: a camera, camcorder, and audio recording equipment. Would someone be adventurous enough to attempt a podcast from the conference? At this point all possibilities remain open, so don't hesitate to contact us if you would like to join us in these activities.

We look forward to helping to improve the online presence of the plant sciences in Europe, and we hope you will join us for the ride, by contributing and interacting with us on different platforms.

Contact: [Calum MacKichan](#).

EPPO Board elected new President, discussed Horizon 2020, new EPPO Early Career Network and Basic Research Working Group - 20 November 2013

The [EPPO Board](#) met in Brussels, Belgium, 14-15 March 2013 and elected the new President, José Pío Beltrán!

On science policy, the Board focused on preparing the briefing for EPPO members on the 1st call of the Horizon 2020 Programme and EPPO's input to the Horizon 2020 Work Programmes 2016/17. This will be based on the first input developed by EPPO and ETP 'Plants for the Future' partners, updated during the Plant ETP workshop (see page 3) towards the Research Action Plan (27-28.11.2013) in which many EPPO experts participated, and continuing discussions in the coming months.

To further increase support for scientists, the Board is developing the concept for the EPPO 'Early Career Scientist Network' – which started with a lively discussion in the Board to ensure emphasis on independent excellent scientists, the academic age, and possible activities such as proposing speakers for

EPPO conferences and brainstorming issues for the future of science. In addition, Ton

Bisseling will start the new EPPO Working Group 'Basic Plant Scientists' to develop input for the European as well national levels as needed (see page 5). For a start, Beat Keller extracted some initial basic research themes from the Horizon 2020 input at the November workshop. First Working Group members are EM Aro (FI); T Bisseling (NL), C Bowler (FR), W Gruijssem (CH), J Jones (UK), B Keller (CH), M Koornneef (DE), C Martin (UK), J Mundy (DK), D Scheel (DE), M Stitt (DE), C Tonelli (IT) and D Weigel (DE).



We will take these activities further with the EPPO representatives at the General Meeting on 22 June 2014 in Dublin. **Contact:** [Karin Metzloff](#)

EPPO Welcomes José Pío Beltrán as New President



During the EPPO Board Meeting, José Pío Beltrán was unanimously voted to become the new EPPO President. Pío is Professor of Research at the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), at the Institute for Plant Cell and Molecular Biology in Valencia, Spain. He worked at the Montana State University in Bozeman with Prof. Gary A. Strobel on host-parasite

interactions and at the Max-Planck-Institute for Plant Breeding on the molecular genetic analysis of flower development with Dr. Hans Sommer and Prof. Heinz Saedler.

His scientific interests include the genetic control of floral transition and flower and fruit development in crop plants such as tomato and various legumes. He has published over one hundred scientific papers and holds three patents based on tools to make hybrids, to develop parthenocarpic fruits and to increase the

number of flowers per plant. Pío has been a Member of the Board of Governors of the Joint Research Centre of the European Union since 2003. He was the President of the FESPB from 2008 to 2010 and was elected as member of the EPPO Board in 2011.

Pío believes that EPPO should consolidate as the voice of plants in the European Union and is convinced of the central role that plants will play in a European Knowledge Based Bio Economy. He is committed to continue EPPO's strong role as one of the three stakeholders in the 'Plants for the Future' European Technology Platform – with industry and farmers. The application of knowledge and innovation in products and services is a consequence of scientific excellence, thus he would like to see more applications from plant scientists to the European Research Council calls. We should actively develop plans to favour plant research and innovation, paying special attention to the education of future European plant scientists, especially at the level of master and PhD degrees. Pío will devote special attention to the participation of young plant scientists in the activities undertaken by EPPO.

Contact: [José Pío Beltrán](#)

Maurice Moloney moves to CSIRO in Australia; Johnathan Napier becomes interim board member

In December EPPO board member Maurice Moloney left his post as director of Rothamsted Research and moved to a new post at CSIRO in Australia. Following his departure EPPO warmly welcomes Johnathan Napier as a new representative and interim board member. Johnathan obtained his BSc from the University of Nottingham, followed by a PhD in plant biochemistry from King's College, London. He carried out post-doctoral research in the Department of Plant Sciences, University of Cambridge, then taking up a position at Long Ashton Research Station in Bristol.

His research on the biosynthesis of polyunsaturated fatty acids has delivered some of the key advances in the last 15 years, including the functional characterisation of the omega-3 long chain PUFA biosynthetic pathway and its heterologous reconstitution in transgenic plants. His research group relocated to Rothamsted Research in 2003 where he is currently Institute Assistant Director and Programme Leader. Johnathan is also an Affiliated Lecturer at the University of Cambridge and Visiting Professor at the University of Nottingham.

Contact: [Johnathan Napier](#)



Dublin Plant Biology 2014 Conferences



Over 300 abstracts were submitted to select oral presentations for the [FESPB/EPSO conference in Dublin, 22-26 June 2014](#) 'Learning from the past, preparing for the future', led by the Irish society and EPSO members.

Be a part of this exciting event and discuss your research with colleagues from around the globe!

Themes and invited speakers include: Plant Biology for Bioenergy - Gail Taylor; Plant Biology for Food Security - Steve Long & Bill Davies; Land Use and Greenhouse Gases - Axel Don; Plant-pathogen interactions - John Mundy & Jacek Hennig; Plant Metabolism - Christine Foyer & Alisdair Fernie; Plant Evolution and Phylogenetics - David Beerling & Isabel Sanmartin; Natural Variation in Plants - Carlos Alonso Blanco; Below Ground Processes - Hans Lambers & Sabrina Sabatini; Symbiotic Interactions - Giles Olroyd & Marc-Andre Selosse; Plant Development; Organelle Biology - Jim Whelan & Paul Jarvis; Abiotic Stress Responses - Javier Paz Ares & Graham Noctor; Plant Invasions and their Impacts - Phil Hulme & Heinz Muller-Scharer;

Plants and Environment - Ülo Niinemets & Jaume Flexas; Epigenetics - Claudia Köhler, Frank Johannes & Justin Goodrich; Photosynthesis and Respiration - Eva Marie Aro & Agu Laisk; Systems Biology - Dirk Inze; Phenomics - Uli Schurr; Science Policy; Synthetic Biology - Birger Lindberg Moller. The programme is at <http://europlantbiology.org/preliminary-programme/>. Register at <http://europlantbiology.org/registration/> - the early-bird deadline is 1 March 2014. All scientists and students working at an EPSO member institute and EPSO Personal Members benefit from the reduced registration fee for EPSO members.

Submit your poster abstract at <http://europlantbiology.org/call-for-papers/> - deadline is 21 March 2014.

EPSO received over 50 applications for the EPSO Conference support grants. We will finalise the selection and award process by end February.

The first completely joint EPSO/FESPB conference will be held in Prague, 27.6.-1.7.2016. EPSO, as well as FESPB, members will be invited to contribute from the start to make this a big success.

Until May 2014, [bids](#) to hold the 2018 joint conference are invited – a goal for you?

Contacts: [Karin Metzlauff](#) (both), [Bruce Osborne](#) (2014) and [Jana Albrechtova](#) (2016)

ERA-CAPS reveals results of First Call



Inspired by the call theme: "Expanding the European Research Area in Molecular Plant Sciences", an overwhelming 500 research teams from 21 European and non-European countries submitted proposals to the First ERA-CAPS call which closed on 15 February 2013. Following a two

step evaluation process, the 14 best ranked proposals involving 72 research teams from 11 different countries were funded. A total of 21 M EUR is hence invested in plant science research at the transnational level over the coming three years. The list of funded projects and investigators is available on the page: <http://www.eraCaps.org/joint-calls/era-caps-funded-projects>

Second ERA-CAPS call launched

In view of the success of this first call, the ERA-CAPS network [launched a Second call](#) for proposals that opened on 14 January 2014. The call will fund high quality collaborative transnational research projects in fundamental molecular plant science. Research themes include (but are not limited to): Food Security; Non-Food Crops; Adaptation to a Changing Climate; and Biotic/Abiotic Stress. The expected duration of projects will be three years while eligible consortia must comprise research groups from a minimum of 3 different countries.

In view of the high number of proposals received to the First call, the Second call is now operated following a two-step proposal stage to alleviate the workload for the investigators and the scientific evaluators. The submission period for step 1 (pre-proposals) ends on 14 March 2014, 12:00 CET.

Moreover, the ERA-CAPS network is pleased to welcome new partners to the Second call: FWO (Belgium, Flanders); MTA-OTKA (Hungary); MIUR (Italy); and SNSF (Switzerland) while NSF (USA) is now a full call partner, which entails that no parallel submission will be required for proposals involving research teams from the US. In total, 19 ERA-CAPS partner or associated organisations from 18 countries participate: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Switzerland, UK, USA.

A novelty is also the launch of a partner search tool that allows potential applicants to view each other's profiles and get in contact with peers to build a consortium. The list of profiles can be viewed [here](#) or you can [upload your own profile](#).

All useful/required call documents can be accessed through [this link](#).

Contacts: Call Secretariat: ERA-CAPS.CallSecretariat@dfg.de; Coordination: [Paul Wiley](#); Communication: [Freia Van Hee](#)



EPSO General Meeting
21-22 June 2014, Dublin



FESPB-EPSO Conference
22-26 June 2014, Dublin



**Blog for Young
Plant Scientists**



EPSO Representatives contact
[Karin Metzlauff](#) to confirm participation

Consult [homepage](#) or contact
[Karin Metzlauff](#) for more information

Contact [Calum MacKichan](#) for
more information

About EPSO

EPSO, the European Plant Science Organisation, is an independent academic organisation that represents over 220 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 3000 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 José Pío Beltrán (President – ES); Eckhard George (DE) (Vice-president); Eva-Mari Aro (FI), Ton Bisseling (NL), Aldo Ceriotti (IT), Svend Christensen (DK), Johnathan Napier (UK), 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 Metzlauff**
- EU projects, Accounts: **Karim Trabelsi**
- Newsletter, website, communications: **Calum MacKichan**
- Meetings, office, database and personal membership: **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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