

Successful 1st Euroseeds fully-fledged Virtual Congress

October 14, 2020

Euroseeds 2020 Congress

More than 400 participants attended the Euroseeds Congress on 11-13 October, marking a success for this first fully-fledged virtual experience. The congress featured an exhibition hall, a trade area, a networking lounge and most of all insightful presentations and panel discussions on many priorities topics for the seed sector in Europe.

“The EU Green Deal and its Farm-2-Fork and Biodiversity strategies: can plant breeding and seed innovation deliver?” was the common theme that brought together the different discussions. Plenty of experts came together on the virtual platform to look at all the aspects that will be decisive for the ability of the plant breeding and seed innovation sector to successfully contribute to a truly sustainable Green Deal.

The **intellectual property** discussion on Monday morning addressed the delicate balance between the need to fostering investment and protecting access. Francisco Garcia-Valero, **EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)**, explained the terms for reference of an upcoming study that will assess the **economic and sustainability impact of plant breeders rights’ in the EU**. Representatives from CPVO, UPOV and CIOFORA underlined a few potential challenges on the methodology but overall acknowledged the importance of such study.

The following horizontal topic focused on the **opportunities and restrictions of use of the latest plant breeding methods**. Petra Jorasch from Euroseeds presented the results of a **survey recently conducted by Euroseeds and published on Frontiers, Plant Science** on 25 September 2020. The survey confirms the enormous interest of companies in using new plant breeding methods for a wide range of crop species and traits.

Another panel debate kicked off with reference to the 25% increase target indicated in the Green Deal. A number of panelists including representatives from DG SANTE, COPA-COGECA, IFOAM, academia, and industry addressed the **drivers and limitations of the further development of organic farming**.

“Getting more from less: how to support a reduction of pesticide and fertilizer use without losing out on food security and safety” was the next horizontal

topic. Representatives from ECPA, COPA-COGECA and the industry tried to shed light on whether we can balance these goals with those of plant health and food security and what concrete measures may help to support such balance.

Tuesday morning featured two very interesting debates on the on-going evaluation of the **EU's seed marketing legislation**. The first one looked at the expectations and needs of professional seed users and seed suppliers while the second one concentrated on non-professional markets. Panelists included representatives from DG SANTE, EU Commission contractor for study, UPOV, CPVO, COPA-COGECA etc. Last but not least, the open part of the General Assembly looked at the overall direction of the EU's Green Deal, how realistic its objectives really are, and what means may be at the EU's disposal to resolve some of the conflicts of goals with other strategic policy priorities. Prof. Tim Searchinger, Senior Fellow and Technical Director, Food Program, World Resources Institute, USA, set the scenes and outlined **world trends in agriculture and food production**. In that context, how can plant breeding and seed innovation deliver was the question around which panelists such as MEP Paolo De Castro and Dorothee André, DG SANTE debated. Check out the [#Euroseeds2020 Twitter Moment](#) to see some highlights of the presentations and debates.

All the presentations will be available for Euroseeds Members on the Members Area.