

Dear Euroseeds Members,

Dear colleagues and friends from the European and international seed community!

It is with great pleasure that I invite you for our **Euroseeds2021 Congress** which will be held from **18 to 20 October** in the beautiful city of **Prague** in the Czech Republic. The past 12 months have been marked by unprecedented turmoil and uncertainties due to the COVID pandemic. This, of course, has also affected our usual seed industry gatherings, including our Euroseeds Congress. Last year, we had to postpone our planned gathering in Malta and instead organised a fully virtual event. But given the extraordinary progress in vaccine development and the planned dissemination throughout Europe and worldwide, **we are confident that we will be able to meet in person in October.**

Still, **your health and safety remain our primary concern and organisational priority.** We will therefore take specific measures to assure that you can confidently enjoy a buzzing, vibrant and engaging Congress in a safe and protected environment. This will include the request for vaccination certificates and/or valid test results to enter the venue. We will also offer testing possibilities on-site and the usual sanitisation kits will be available throughout the Congress. And, importantly, to avoid unnecessary traffic and movement of participants and protect our meetings, **we have concentrated accommodation on our Congress venue, the Hilton Prague Hotel**, which will add its much acclaimed safety concept to our own measures. All this will help to minimise external exposure and with that support the safety of all of you and all of us.

There is another important change I would like to draw your attention to.

Over the past years, many of our guests have asked us to reconsider the timing and set-up of our programme. Those of you who come from far often wished to use the weekend to explore the cities and sights of our host countries; those who live close sometimes prefer to spend their weekends at home but did not want to miss a full day of trade and meeting opportunities.

We therefore have decided to start our Congress only on Sunday evening with our customary Welcome Evening Reception. There will be no trade and no exhibition on the entire Sunday. **Both trade and exhibition and our regular Section Meetings will then start on Monday morning and run through full 3 days until Wednesday afternoon.**

And more is new!

We also for the first time offer a special registration for virtual participants who may not (yet) be allowed to travel or have other important obligations preventing them from coming to Prague.

Virtual participants will be able to follow all our Section Meetings and Assembly General and be updated on policy developments and key issues. In addition, **we offer a virtual networking area that will enable you to engage and grow your business network.** And **we will hold a number of exclusive on-line Q&A sessions, reserved for virtual participants only**, with members of the Euroseeds team and external experts, to discuss special regulatory or other important issues.

Our Congress web platform will provide all registered participants, on-site and virtual, with regular updates on programme and other relevant information. As of June 1st, you will already be able to make your individual meeting requests, inquiries, confirmations and appointments directly via the Congress platform, supporting a seamless business environment for both your on-site and remote meeting schedule.

With all this, we are confident to offer all of you, whether you will join us in Prague or follow us from anywhere else in the world, the top-class trade, exhibition and policy exchange event that Euroseeds is known for.

I am looking forward to welcoming you in Prague for the Euroseeds2021 Congress and hope you all stay well and healthy until we meet again!

Garlich von Essen

Secretary General