



European Plant Science Organisation
www.epsoweb.org

Open letter

BREXIT: The necessity of avoiding the fragmentation of European Science.

Brussels, 25.7.2016

Dear EPSO members,

We are writing following our General Meeting in Prague 25-26 June to let you know that the European Plant Science community as represented by EPSO is devastated by the news that the UK will leave the European Union. The UK is a hugely important contributor to all areas of Plant Sciences in Europe.

We welcome the position of the new UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, to approach negotiations on Brexit in a constructive and pragmatic spirit, although we believe actions are needed to avoid the fragmentation of European Science as a result of Brexit.

EPSO would like to assist in expediting the reintegration of British plant science into Europe in whatever way it can. In a similar way EPSO is continuing its efforts to integrate plant science from all countries across Europe – East to west, north to south, and beyond including the world members and partners. All EPSO activities are independent of EU membership and based on the principle of open science. This includes EPSO membership and linked activities such as EPSO working groups, science and policy events, scientific advice on policy, support for scientists themselves and science engagement with society at large. EPSO encourages greater involvement by UK scientists because EPSO offers a route whereby they can continue to have input into the content of future European research programmes and initiatives, such as Food 2030, whatever the negotiated settlement for Brexit.

EPSO would like to offer all support from the organization that it is able, for the speedy set up of arrangements whereby UK plant science can continue to participate in the Horizon 2020 European Research and Innovation Programme including the ERC, Marie Curie and Societal Challenges programmes. Since EPSO has many members across 28 European countries and in three countries outside of Europe, we can build on their expertise to develop new ideas to help develop an inclusive collaborating Europe and world. EPSO will discuss with BBSRC representatives we collaborate, e.g. as an official observer in ERA-CAPS, the best way to ensure that UK science can contribute to European projects and research collaborations in the future.

EPSO members are encouraged to maintain or initiate new scientific collaborative actions among the plant scientific communities in their countries and colleagues from the UK as well as from all European countries, our world members and beyond.

Science is at the forefront for collaborations across borders and scientists will be part of the solutions our world urgently needs – as already stated by several EPSO representatives on the occasion of the 2013 General Meeting ([video compilation at www.epsoweb.org/about](#)) and reinforced at the 2016 General Meeting.

As an initial point of information we would like to emphasize that ERA-NETs include members beyond the EU, and indeed the ERA-CAPS project is coordinated by BBSRC (UK) with NSF (USA) as one of its consortium members. Pre-proposals to the 2016 ERA-CAPS call are invited for submission until 28th September. Similarly, UK scientists should continue to consider funding applications to the Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs), such as FACCE, HDHL and WATER, as these are not limited to European Union membership.

The research of today will determine the social, economic and environmental landscapes of the future – as seen in the recent study [The Economic, Social, and Environmental Value of Plant Breeding in the European Union](#) commissioned by the Plants for the Future European Technology Platform in which EPSO represents academia. **Together scientists can help build an inclusive, collaborating and fairer Europe and world.**

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Useful links

EPSO breaking news: www.epsoweb.org

EPSO publications: www.epsoweb.org/archive-epsoweb-publications-and-statements?981448774=1

EPSO member institutes and universities: www.epsoweb.org/membership/members

EPSO representatives: www.epsoweb.org/membership/representatives

About EPSO

EPSO, the European Plant Science Organisation, is an independent academic organisation that represents more than 220 research institutes, departments and universities from 28 European countries, Australia, Japan and New Zealand, and 3.300 individuals Personal Members, representing over 28 000 people working in plant science. EPSO's mission is to improve the impact and visibility of plant science in Europe, to provide authoritative source of independent information on plant science including science advice to policy, and to promote training of plant scientists to meet the 21st century challenges in breeding, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, plant ecology and sectors related to plant science. www.epsoweb.org