



EPSO News N° 45 / Spring 2017



In this issue:



Editorial

### Editorial

Institutions across the world prepare to celebrate Fascination of Plants Day on the 18th of May—join the initiative!

### EPSO Activities

- EPSO advises on science policy – Focus on European research and innovation strategy and on Agricultural technologies
- Aldo Ceriotti elected new EPSO President
- EPSO Board decides next actions on science and science policy
- Agricultural Technologies Working Group
- New Plant and Microbiomes Working Group
- Tree Biology and Biotechnology Working Group
- 39 European science organisations express their concern about recent developments in the US
- Sustainable agriculture through plant science promoted at the European Parliament

### Members News

- The BMBF supports young and innovative plant research with novel PLANT 2030 projects
- An overview of cereal genomics research at the University of Bologna, Italy
- New study shows wheat crop yield can be increased by up to 20 per cent
- Ancient peoples shaped the Amazon rainforest
- Building blocks are set for a research partnership between Europe and Africa
- Plants are fascinating! On May 18, 2017 we will show the world why

### National Research Funding

- Panorama of plant research funding in France

### European and Global Research Programmes

- Helping you make the most of European Research Funding

### Career Opportunities

### About EPSO

## Institutions across the world prepare to celebrate Fascination of Plants Day on the 18th of May—join the initiative!

The 18th of May will be the 4th official [Fascination of Plants Day](#), organised under the umbrella of EPSO. It provides the perfect occasion to celebrate plants in all their diversity and wonder. To date already over 45 countries have confirmed their participation.

This is your chance to bring your research to the wider public, and in order to celebrate in the best possible way, we ask you to join in!

Many plant science institutions, universities, botanical gardens, and museums, together with farmers and companies, will open their doors with a variety of plant-based events for all the family – to know what will happen near you and who to contact, log onto the [website](#) and click on your country's page.

The goal is to get as many people as possible around the world fascinated by plants and there are many ways to hold events at your institution, if you need inspiration take a look at our [success stories from 2015](#), including just a selection of the activities from across all five major continents.

You may also get involved online, we encourage you to share fascinating facts about plants, interesting information about your research, pictures of plants and pictures of you with them. Share using the hashtag [#PlantDay](#).

We look forward to everyone from schoolchildren to professors enjoying the day, and also hope for the fascinating world of plants to be broadcast to the wider public through local and national newspapers, television and radio.

EPSO provides you with publicity tools and further information for free via our [PR toolbox](#). You are invited to download the Flyers and/or Poster templates and as appropriate, replace the English text with your national language and yourself as contact person to inform about and coordinate Plant Day activities across your country.

**Contacts:** [Karin Metzloff](#) (overall coordination); [Przemysław Wojtaszek](#) and [Calum Mackichan](#) (European coordination); [Trine Hvoslef-Eide](#) (Coordination beyond Europe)



Fascination of  
Plants Day  
May 18<sup>th</sup> 2017



## EPSO advises on science policy – with a focus on European research and innovation strategy and on agricultural technologies

The European Commission (EC) is translating its strategy for the last three years of Horizon 2020 and beyond into the respective Work Programmes, jointly with the Member States and stakeholders. EPSO mainly contributes advice to [Societal Challenge 2](#) (SC2: Food Security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime resources & the bioeconomy) as an independent science organisation as well as jointly with industry and farmers as member of the Plants for the Future European Technology Platform (Plant ETP). The EC published two strategy papers: the [Strategic approach to EU agricultural research and innovation, final paper](#), 20.7.2016, and the European research and innovation for Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) [background document](#), 13.10.2016.

Along the process EPSO made a [Submission towards the EC Food 2030 initiative](#), 22.7.2016, provided [Input towards the EC Horizon 2020, Societal Challenge 2 strategy 2018-20](#), 25.7.2016, and EPSO was invited to several EC expert workshops towards the Food 2030 strategy. EPSO itself, and in the Plant ETP, highlights in meetings with the European Commission and in submissions to EC consultations the contributions from plant

science as well as cross-sectorial collaborations contributing to *EU strategic areas*.

Contributions from plant science breeding will be discussed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop of Plant ETP with the European Parliament on 29th March. You can find the main ideas from the 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop in the EPSO [Report on the Plant ETP-EP workshop on "Food and Nutritional Security"](#), 9.6.2016

For the longer term advice, EPSO: [Submitted to the EC consultation on Horizon 2020 Interim Evaluation](#), 28.12.2016, pointing out that "Horizon 2020 is a unique opportunity to bring European scientists and societies closer together to help build an inclusive, collaborative Europe and world." and highlighting urgently needed improvements in the Societal Challenges programmes to increase the impact of Horizon 2020.

In addition, EPSO is advising on New Plant Breeding Technologies ([Updated Statement](#) 12.01.2017 and [fact sheets](#) 21.3.2016), [Synthetic Biology](#) (statement 7.12.2016), as well as the implementation of the Nagoya protocol (in progress). Please read more on this and the other Working Groups in the EPSO Working Group articles on pages 5 & 6.

**Contact:** [Karin Metzloff](#)



## Aldo Ceriotti elected new EPSO President

Aldo Ceriotti from CNR (Italy) has been elected new EPSO President starting 1.4.2017 and focusing on EPSO building a community of plant scientists in

Europe and beyond towards "open science", showing the important role of plant science in and with society

and providing science advice to policy. Aldo thanked Cathie and Pio for proposing him as candidate for the next EPSO President and wishes to thank Pio for having acted as President during the last 3 years, and for his contribution to strengthen EPSO as a major voice of plant scientists in Europe. "It will be a pleasure to work with all Board and EPSO members to foster plant science in Europe", he concluded.

**Contact:** [Aldo Ceriotti](#)

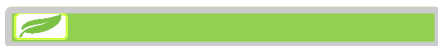
## Sustainable agriculture through plant science promoted at the European Parliament

On March 29<sup>nd</sup>, the European Technology Platform 'Plants for the Future', in collaboration with MEPs Jasenko Selimović and Julie Girling, organised the workshop "Decreasing environmental footprint of agriculture without decreasing yield" at the European Parliament. [Sun Chuanxin](#) from SLU Uppsala presented his

research on low methane rice showing how plant science and breeding can reduce greenhouse gas emissions without sacrificing yield.

The press release and an EPSO report will be published soon.

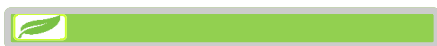
**Contact:** [Karin Metzloff](#), [Jens Sundström](#), [Sun Chuanxin](#)



**Fascination of Plants Day**  
13 October 2014, Brussels



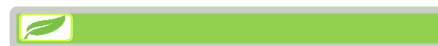
See [www.plantday.org](http://www.plantday.org) for more information



**Agricultural Technologies Working Group Meeting**  
30 May 2017, Berlin



Contact [Karin Metzloff](#) for more information



**EPSO General Meeting**  
12-14 June 2017, Helsinki



Contact [Karin Metzloff](#) for more information