



European Plant Science Organisation

To all EPSO Representatives and Supporting Scientists

Brussels, 21 December 2006

Dear Colleagues,

On the day before the launch of the new European Framework Program 7 we would like to share our thoughts about the past, present and future of plant science in Europe.

Six years ago 22 institutes and universities in Europe decided to change science policy in Europe in support of plant science. We felt that as scientists we had to take action because plant science was threatened to be eliminated from European Framework Programs. As a consequence, this would also have seriously impacted plant science programs at national levels. Today we know that this was the right decision and that we could make a strong case for plant science in Europe. Politicians are aware of plants again, although they still may not have fully realized their importance for the future of European agriculture, economy and environment. EPSO now represents 136 research institutes and universities from 24 countries. Collectively we have put plants back on the European Agenda and we are now beginning to have impact on the national levels as well.

As the result of your ideas and commitment during the past six years, funding is available for plant research in the 6th and 7th Framework Programs and the ERA-NET on Plant Genomics was established. Interestingly, until now ERA-PG is the only ERA-NET that issued a multinational call for research projects with a substantial commitment, 30 Mill € for the 1st call. In 2004 we launched one of the first European Technology Platforms, the TP "Plants for the Future", which represents an impressive vision of plant research for the next 20 years that has received much praise from all stakeholders and politicians at the European and national levels. The launch of the TP Strategic Research Agenda Proposal was supported by presentations from the European Research Commissioner, Mr. Potocnik, and the Chair of the European Parliament Committee for Industry, Research and Energy, Mr. Chichester. Together with your colleagues from industry and farmers associations, you then held consultations that had the full attention and interest of administrative representatives responsible for plant research programs in your countries. Selected countries already began with the implementation of ideas from the TP Strategic Research Agenda.

On the science side, EPSO built a strong reputation among scientists in Europe and globally. EPSO has become the preferred contact in Europe for international scientists and companies interested in plants. Our concept to engage the best scientists in Europe to help us build a global EPSO network has been successful. Your efforts and contributions have also established the EPSO Conference as one of the international top plant science events not to be missed. We could witness this during our 3rd Conference in Visegrad this summer, which was attended by an impressive number of junior and senior scientists from 30 countries. EPSO workshops have now established the same reputation as visionary and high quality think-tanks in emerging areas of plant science.

Building on this success, EPSO Member Representatives made several important decisions at the last General Meeting. The EPSO Board was charged to strengthen EPSO's core activities, continue Science Policy activities, and provide increasing support for national policy activities in future. The General Meeting also decided to broaden activities in 2007, including the EPSO Newsletter (which will focus on science programs and funding opportunities in Europe), the EPSO Online Portal on Plant Science (to provide links to major science resources, tools, events and job opportunities), and the EPSO World Wide Human Resource Network (to connect European tutors to European junior scientists abroad).

EPSO remains committed to promoting plant sciences in European science policy on behalf of its institutional members. The quantum leap in our new activities will allow EPSO to grow our membership to institutions and universities beyond Europe, to individual scientists interested in plants, and to Science Associations. A special bonus will be the free Personal Membership we extend to all scientists of EPSO Institutional Members. We hope that this will be a strong incentive for more research institutions and universities to join EPSO as new Institutional Members. New members will greatly enrich EPSO's activities and policy statements and at the same time convey a strong message to decision makers of EPSO representing a united plant community. It will create a stronger link to the young generation, the scientists and customers of tomorrow, so that together we can contribute to a sustainable society in the future.

As a first step, EPSO moved its headquarters to the centre of Brussels across the street from the European Commission and the European Parliament. EPSO is now in the neighborhood of National Permanent Representations and many European associations. We are looking forward to welcome you in our office for stimulating discussions and a cup of coffee should business take you to Brussels. We already organized several meetings and events at our new headquarters, which has greatly increased interactions with our partners and friends.

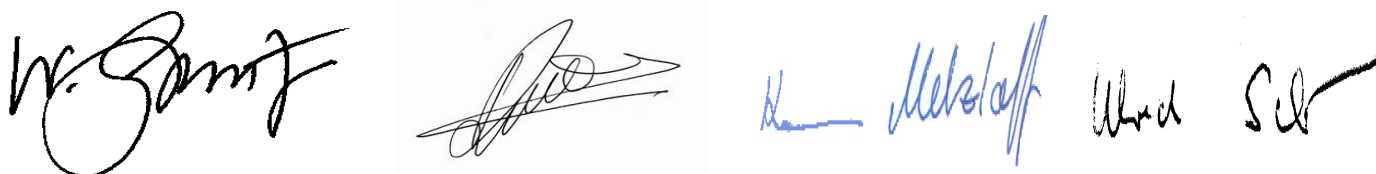
Your vision for EPSO will be implemented by the new Board you elected this year and the new Executive Committee: President Wilhelm Gruissem, Vice-President Dirk Inze, Treasurer Ulrich Schurr and Executive Director Karin Metzloff. The new EPSO Science Writer, Isabelle Caugant from France, will join the team in February 2007. As you can imagine, EPSO's expanded activities also means more work for the office staff. We are fortunate to welcome Ivana Migliore from Italy as Secretary and AnnaKarin Hedin from Sweden as the Executive Assistant for the Technology Platform (replacing Manuela Deckers, who is on maternity leave). They are joining Katrien Molders, our Executive Assistant.

We would like to use this occasion to thank our past board members for their vision and commitment that have taken EPSO to where it is today: Marc Zabeau, the founding EPSO President, Vice-President Mike Bevan and Treasurer Pierre de Wit, as well as Chris Bowler, Paolo Costantino, Denes Dudits, Mark Stitt and Lothar Willmitzer.

On the following pages please find an overview of EPSO benefits and groups of members that were developed by the EPSO Board, and the list of our current members. Your feedback and advice will be very welcome and greatly appreciated.

Finally, we would like to thank all of you for your vision, commitment and support of EPSO. Together with you the EPSO Team looks forward to shaping the future of plant science in Europe.

The EPSO Executive Committee wishes you and your family
A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year



Wilhelm Gruissem, Dirk Inze, Karin Metzloff and Ulrich Schurr

EPSO Membership Benefits – an Overview

Note: Institutional Member benefits are relevant to Personal Members and vice versa.

EPSO advises policy and decision makers at national and European level on Science Policy

EPSO is a key adviser in furthering the plant sector in Europe in partnership with other stakeholders (in the Technology Platform “Plants for the Future”) and national research councils (in the ERA-Net on Plant Genomics). In addition to advice at European level, EPSO will offer increasingly information to decision makers at national and regional level. To do so, EPSO will continue to collaborate with related stakeholders in Europe and key science organizations from the regional to a global level. The EPSO workshops will be an important tool to develop such information for emerging opportunities.

Such advice is part of two higher level approaches: A global effort to boost plant science in partnership with similar academic associations outside Europe; and the Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE) to promote basic science at European level and to advocate strong independent scientific advice in European policy making.

→ Benefit mainly for EPSO Institutional Members. Continuing activity

The Electronic Directory – your address book of individual and institutional members

The database includes the area of expertise of individual and institutional members world wide. Young scientists have the opportunity to create their EPSO national (junior) web site.

→ Access is restricted to EPSO members. New activity starting April'07

The EPSO Online Portal to plant science – your link to main science funding and information sources

This portal will link to funding agencies at national and European level in Europe, to scientific databases, online tools, meetings, research locations and will have web-casts of seminars and lectures at member institutes.

→ Access is restricted to EPSO members. New activity starting April'07

The EPSO Bi-annual Conference is a top level snap shot and outlook of all areas in plant sciences

EPSO Conference awards honour outstanding posters. EPSO Conference grants provide financial support to students and to senior scientists from new Member States to participate to the conference.

→ The Conference has Public access. Only Personal Members can apply for support grants. Ongoing activity

The EPSO Workshops are organized on selected topics on request of its members

EPSO organizes top level workshops with a bottom up principle bringing distant disciplines together to break down barriers between disciplines and foster new promising research areas.

→ Benefit mainly for Institutional Members. Ongoing activity

The EPSO Bi-monthly electronic Newsletters – your update on science and science policy

This Newsletter will focus on Research Funding at national and European level open to cross-national research, News on Research Programs across Europe, EPSO's activities, job openings and meeting announcements.

→ It will be sent to Member representatives and Personal Members only. New activity starting April'07

The EPSO Job listings – your job opportunities

Current job offers relevant to the plant sector globally will be displayed for 3 months on the EPSO web, linked to the EPSO online portal and included in the Newsletter. This ensures a top job brokerage for the plant sector.

→ The job list has public access and benefits all members. Ongoing activity

The EPSO World Wide Human Resources Network – your anchor in European science

EPSO members volunteer as tutor for early career scientists, e.g being well connected to your home country / Europe while you are abroad. EPSO members revive the tradition of summer student programs around Europe.

→ Only Personal Members can apply for a tutor under this scheme. New activity starting April'07

The Virtual Institute for Plant Science in Europe will focus on junior scientists

This activity will not start yet, only after existing schemes were surveyed to identify and discuss opportunities for EPSO. It could provide information on Master Programs across Europe, establish training opportunities, and provide frontier research grants in the longer term.

→ Benefit for Institutional and Personal Members. New activity that will start earliest in 2009.

GROUPS OF MEMBERS and SUPPORT from other parties

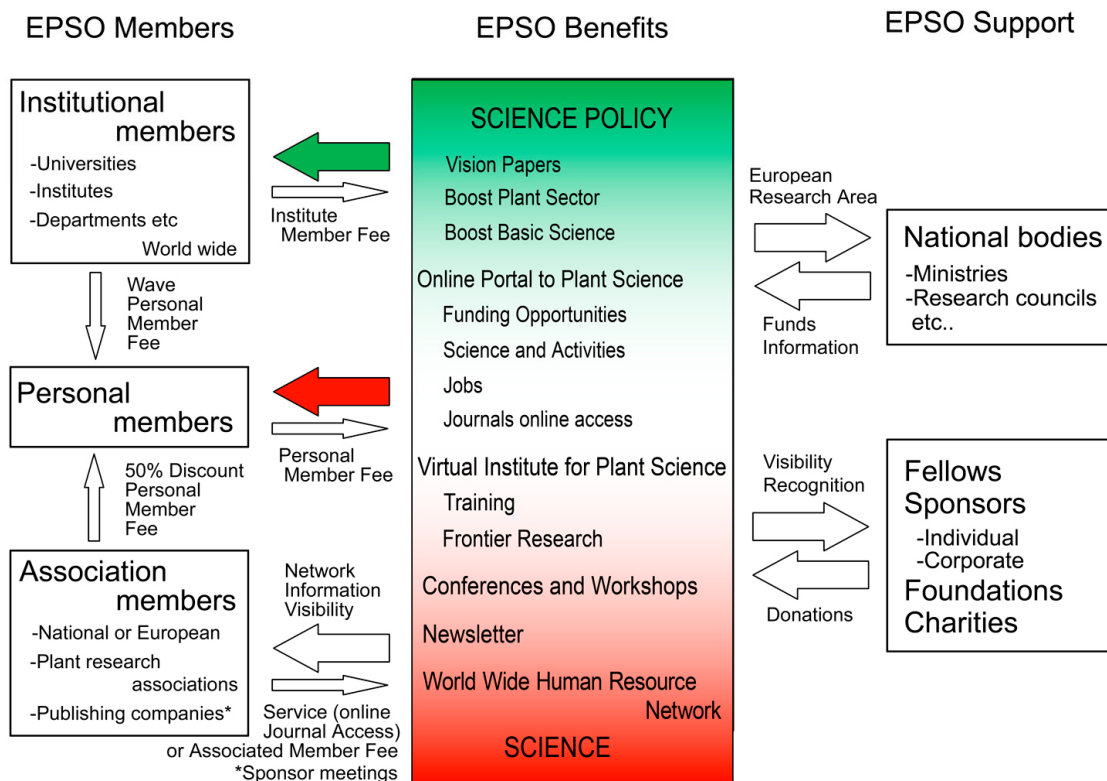
EPSO will offer membership to three groups: to institutes, universities, departments or research units thereof; the institutional membership is offered, from 2007 on as well outside of Europe; for individual persons the Personal Membership is started as a new possibility from July 2007 on; and for associations it will be possible to join as a Member Association from 2007 on.

EPSO will invite national and regional agencies to contribute financial support to EPSO's activities which will help realising the European Research Area and attract especially young people to (plant) science.

EPSO will offer to other interested parties visibility and recognition for providing financial resources to EPSO.

Such parties can be foundations, charities, publishing companies, institutional and individual sponsors and EPSO Fellows.

Creating a future for plant research in Europe



1 - Institutional Members

Legal entities, such as an institute, university, department or research unit thereof, from academia in the field of plant research are invited to become an institutional member to EPSO.

There are no limitations to this membership in Europe. Outside Europe only countries with an active plant science association, such as the USA where the ASPB is performing similar activities to EPSO, are excluded from this membership option. The procedure for Japan and Canada will be discussed with the respective national associations JSPP and CSPP.

Two specific cases are allowed for in this group of membership. The first one being "University clusters", giving the opportunity to a group of university departments / groups from different locations to join as one member to encourage participation of universities in EPSO. The second being "New Member State clusters", giving the opportunity to several research institutes and universities from always one New Member State or Candidate Country to form one member to EPSO. Switzerland and Norway are not eligible for the latter specific case.

EPSO's main activities for Institutional Members are the Science Policy, the Online Portal – specifically to Funding Opportunities, the Virtual Institute for Plant Science, the Bi-annual EPSO Conference and the EPSO Workshops. Subject to such members from outside Europe, the Newsletter will provide information as well on collaborative research opportunities between Europe (national and European funds) and other parts of the world.

People working at a Member Institute / university can register as a Personal Member to EPSO without paying the Personal Membership Fee to EPSO.

EPSO's benefits for Personal Members as shown below will ultimately benefit Institutional Members.

Institutional Members contribute the Institutional Membership Fee to EPSO. This is an annual fee according to the number of people working in the institute or university, related to plant science.

Institutional members are allocated to one of currently three classes: A* members are research councils or very large research units (beyond 600 people); A members are medium to large research units (from 50 people on, including university clusters) and B members are small research units (below 50 people, including New Member State clusters).

Institutional Members outside of Europe contribute 2/3 of the fee.

Reflecting the high input of institutional members to EPSO, they have one representative each to the General Meeting – the Annual Assembly of EPSO members (A* members have two to three representatives); three to nine supporting scientists – primary contacts for EPSO's activities; and ten seats in the EPSO board – elected by the General Assembly.

2 - Personal Members

Individual persons interested in plant science supporting the vision of EPSO and fostering its implementation are invited to become a Personal Member to EPSO. This invitation is open to all nationalities, professions, career stages and age groups world wide.

EPSO's activities with exclusive access to Personal Members are the Bi-monthly Newsletter, free online access to journals of member associations and affiliated publishers, eligibility to apply for an EPSO conference support grant, use of the EPSO world wide Human Resources Network. Other activities important to Personal Members include the Online Portal - specifically Plant Science Activities, the e-directory of EPSO members, e-job listings and the Virtual Institute of Plant Science.

EPSO's activities for institutional members as shown above will ultimately benefit Personal Members.

Personal Members contribute the Personal Membership Fee to EPSO. This is an annual fee according to the career state.

Personal members are allocated to one of currently three classes: Members are people working in their profession; Post-docs are people with a PhD or Dr degree not working independently yet; and students are PhD students approaching a PhD or diploma degree, and undergraduate students approaching a bachelor, Master or Diploma degree; and school students.

The Personal Membership Fee for Personal Members working in a members institute or university is waved, for those belonging to a Member Association: the Fee is reduced to 50%.

Personal Members will have at least one representative to the General Meeting – the Annual Assembly of EPSO members. Reflecting their number this will increase to always one representative per 500 members. They will have at least one seat in the EPSO board – elected by the General Assembly. Again, this can increase as Personal Membership grows beyond 5 000.

3 - Member Associations

Legal entities, such as associations interested in plant science supporting the vision of EPSO and fostering its implementation are invited to become a Member Association to EPSO. This invitation is open to all nationalities and professions world wide.

EPSO's benefit for Member Associations is twofold: The Networking with groupings active in the same area(s) as the association under the umbrella of EPSO to decrease their workload and maximise the output, and The Use of all EPSO activities in science policy and science itself.

People belonging to a Member Association can register as a Personal Member to EPSO with a 50% reduction for their EPSO Personal Membership Fee.










This will make membership to these associations more attractive and can strengthen them.

Institutional Members contribute a service or half of the Institutional Membership Fee to EPSO. The service can be free online access for EPSO Personal Members to journal(s) owned by the association.

Reflecting the different structure of Member Associations, they have one representative each to the EPSO Association Assembly – the Annual Assembly of EPSO Member Associations. This assembly will elect one representative to both, the General Meeting – the Annual Assembly of EPSO members, and to the EPSO board.

To 1 – List of the EPSO Institutional Members, December 2006

EPSO has 57 institutional members bringing together over 130 research institutes, universities and research departments from 24 countries in Europe with over 20 000 people working in plant science.

Austria 	University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU University, Vienna) University of Agricultural Sciences, Vienna
Belgium 	Flanders Interuniversity Institute for Biotechnology, VIB, Gent
Bulgaria 	AgroBioInstitute, Kostinbrod (New member States cluster with: Institute of Genetics "Acad. D. Kostoff" – Sofia; Institute of Molecular Biology – Sofia; Biology Faculty – Sofia University; Plovdiv University; Agricultural University of Plovdiv)
Czech Republic 	Institute of Experimental Botany, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Praha (New member States cluster with: Mendel University – Brno; Institute for Crop Protection – Prague; Department of Plant Physiology, Charles University – Prague; Institute of Plant Molecular Biology AS CR – Ceske Budejovice)
Denmark 	Institute of Molecular Biology, Copenhagen University
Estonia 	Tallinn University of Technology (New member States cluster with: Jogeva Plant Breeding Institute; Institute of Forestry and Rural Engineering – Estonian Agricultural University – Tartu; Estonian University of Life Sciences – Tartu)
Finland 	Viiki Research Program in Plant Biology, University of Helsinki Institute of Biotechnology, Turku University VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, Espoo Crops and Biotechnology, MTT Agrifood Research Finland, Jokioinen
France 	CNRS (National research organization with institutes in Bordeaux, Cadarache, Clermont-Ferrand, Dijon, Evry, Gif sur Yvette, Grenoble, Ivry, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Montpellier, Orsay, Paris, Perpignan, Poitiers, Roscoff, Rouen, Sophia-Antipolis, Strasbourg and Toulouse) INRA (National research organisation with institutes in Angers, Antibes, Antilles-Guyane, Avignon, Bordeaux, Clermont-Ferrand, Colmar, Corse, Dijon, Jouy-en-Josas, Lille, Montpellier, Nancy, Nantes, Orléans, Paris, Poitou-Charentes, Rennes, Toulouse, Tours, Versailles-Grignon) CIRAD, Paris
Germany 	Max-Planck-Institut für Züchtungsforschung, Cologne, Max-Planck-Society Max Planck Institute for Developmental Biology (University Cluster with: Centre for Plant Molecular Biology – Tübingen University and Institute for Biology II – Freiburg University) Max-Planck-Institut für molekulare Pflanzenphysiologie, Golm, Max-Planck-Society Fraunhofer Institute for Molecular Biotechnology, Aachen, Fraunhofer Society Gemeinschaft zur Förderung der privaten deutschen Pflanzenzüchtung e.V., Bonn Institute for Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK), Leibniz Institute, Gatersleben Institut Phytosphäre; Research Center Jülich Leibniz Institute of Plant Biochemistry, Halle (Saale) Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology, Jena
Greece 	Agricultural University of Athens (University Cluster with: University of Crete; National Hellenic Research Foundation)
Hungary 	Biological Research Centre, Szeged, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (New member States cluster with: Agricultural Research Institute HAS – Martonvásár; Agricultural Biotechnology Centre - Institute of Plant Biology - Gödöllő; Wheat Genetics and Breeding Department - Cereal Research Non-profit Company - Szeged; University of Szeged; Dept. of Plant Physiology and Molecular Plant Biology Eotvos

	University – Budapest)
Ireland	BioResearch Ireland, BRI, Dublin
	Plant Science Group, School of Biological and Environmental Science, University College Dublin
Israel	Department of Horticulture and the O. Warburg Center for Biotechnology in Agriculture, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
	
Italy	Stazione Zoologica, Napoli
	Universita' degli studi di Siena
	National interuniversity consortium for plant molecular biology, Siena
	Centro Interdipartimentale Ricerche Biotecnologiche (CIRB), Bologna
	Università degli studi di Milano
	Institute of Plant Genetics (CNR-IGV), Bari
Netherlands	Wageningen University / EPS
	Plant Research International, Wageningen
	The Netherlands Institute of Ecology, Heteren
	Agrotechnology & Food Innovations, Wageningen
Norway	Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences – Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås
	
Poland	Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics, Warsaw, Polish Academy of Sciences (New member States cluster with: Department of Plant Genetics Breeding and Biotechnology - Warsaw Agricultural University; Institute of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology - University of Wrocław; Department of Physiology and Biochemistry - Research Institute of Pomology and Floriculture – Skierniewice; Department of Biochemical Genetics - Institute of Plant Genetics, PAS – Poznań)
	
Portugal	Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology, FCUL, Lisbon
	
Serbia	Institute of Molecular Genetic and Genetic Engineering, Belgrade (New member States cluster with: Faculty of Agriculture and Faculty of Biology, University of Belgrade; Molecular genetics and breeding, Institute of Field and Vegetable Crops - Novi Sad)
	
Slovakia	Institute of Plant Genetics and Biotechnology, Nitra, Slovak Academy of Sciences (New member States cluster with: Faculty of Natural Sciences, Dept. Plant Physiology, Comenius University – Bratislava; Botanical Institute, SAS – Bratislava; Institute of Forest Ecology, SAS, Zvolen; Institute of Landscape Ecology, SAS – Bratislava; Faculty of Plant Genetics and Breeding, The Slovak Agricultural University – Nitra; Research Institute of Plant Production – Piešťany)
	
Spain	Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-CSIC, Madrid
	Laboratori de Genètica Molecular Vegetal CSIC-IRTA, Barcelona
	Universitat de Barcelona
	Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Tecnología Agraria y Alimentaria INIA, Madrid
Sweden	Umea Plant Science Centre, part of two Umea universities
	
Switzerland	Zurich Basel Plant Science Centre
	University of Lausanne (University cluster with: Institute of Plant Sciences - University of Bern; Department of Molecular Biology – University of Geneva; Institute of Botany and Plant Physiology – University of Neuchâtel; Institute of Plant Biology – University of Fribourg)
UK	John Innes Centre, Norwich, BBSRC
	Horticultural Research International, Wellesbourne
	Centre for Plant Sciences (CPS), Faculty of Biological Sciences, University of Leeds

Scottish Crop Research Institute, SCRI, Dundee

Rothamsted Research, Harpenden

Plants and Environment Research Group, Lancaster University

The Sainsbury Laboratory