

# Latest News ESA

## ESA integrates the Eastern European Seed Network

On 22 November, the Eastern European Seed Network (EESNET), decided on its full integration into ESA with immediate effect. With that, ESA now is the true single voice of the organised seed sector in Europe.

Founded in 1999, EESNET assembled a number of national seed associations from Central and Eastern European countries including the Balkans, but also the Ukraine, Turkey and others. One of the main objectives of EESNET was to prepare the seed sector in these countries for the membership of many of them in the European Union and with that for the taking over of the so-called '*acquis*', the existing body of relevant seed legislation and rules, as well as many more international standards and agreements. Over the years, many of EESNET's member associations became full Association Members in ESA and this triggered the consequent proposal and decision now taken in Prague to fully integrate EESNET into ESA to concentrate available resources, assure efficiency and effectiveness.

"This is an important step, a real milestone, for our association and for the seed industry in Europe!" comments Garlich von Essen, Secretary General of European Seed Association.

But he also underlines that it is also a challenge with the increased diversity of opinions, practical market situations, and implementation of existing legislation. "All of this will require specific attention from ESA Secretariat and Members, to assure that our positions will continue to be based on the full appreciation of the opinions and needs of the membership."

It was therefore concluded that specific attention must be paid to consultation mechanisms, especially where there is no direct membership of companies from the respective countries. Furthermore, it was agreed to continue a multilateral exchange on Secretaries General level in spring 2011 and to offer to hold ESA Section or Working Group meetings in CEECs to facilitate the attendance and contributions from ESA members from this area.

Summarizing the results, Garlich von Essen is optimistic about the effect of the integration: "The full integration of all seed associations and companies under the common roof of ESA is not a loss for or of EESNET and it is also not a win of ESA; it is a success of our common membership to establish the most effective and efficient common organisation for defending its interest – in ALL of Europe and beyond."