



# ESA News



**September 2012**  
**ESA\_12.0631**

## ESA Meetings (selected)

- **01.10.2012**  
**Combined CRLA, WGBR, WGPB meeting**
- **14.-17.10.2012**  
**ESA Annual Meeting**
- **17.10.2012**  
**ESA SVO wic Meeting**
- **07.11.2012**  
**ESA WG Biodiversity Meeting**
- **13.11.2012**  
**ESA WG FSS Meeting**
- **20.11.2012**  
**ESA CIPR Meeting**

Dear members,

we are all gearing up to our 2012 Annual Meeting which will take place in a little more than two weeks at the Sheraton Hotel in Brussels. We didn't think that it would be possible to reach the record attendance we had in Budapest last year - but now it seems we will not only get close but even surpass the number of attendees we saw last year! We hope that the changes in set-up and practical organisation we have put in place will help to assure that attendees will enjoy a smooth organisation, exciting trade and interesting discussions in our Section meetings and of course in our General Assembly. With Gerd Sonnleitner, President of the European Farmers Union and Sir David Baulcombe, Professor at Cambridge University (and author of the influential report "Reaping the benefits" that helped to shift the debate on agricultural policy from set-aside, early retirement and extensification to a more realistic view on market shortages, increasing demands and sustainable intensification) we have two prominent speakers that will look at customers' and societies' expectations on our sector. I am convinced that this will be highlight of our congress!

The Congress will also provide the opportunity to update you on the state of affairs on many of the important issues we have addressed over the past twelve months and how we will try to bring the voice of the seed industry into the policy debates at EU and national level.

From the revision of the seed marketing and plant health rules to low level presence of GMOs in seed, from the proper balance of our IP tools, the plant breeders rights system and the patent protection for biotechnological inventions, to the quality assurance in our seed treatment operations - there are many and there challenging developments to address for the European seed industry. And we have worked hard over the last year to elaborate positions, from highly technical to overarching political ones, to explain the specific needs of our sector to decision makers.

But to do that effectively, it is not enough to have sound arguments, technical expertise and practical experience. It is equally important to explain the links between our often rather abstract and highly specific issues with general political and societal challenges and goals and how we can contribute to achieve these, provided we can work in an enabling and supportive regulatory and political framework. Next to decision makers themselves, we must engage more with those that influence their views, concerns and expectations, i.e. with representatives of the media, with other stakeholders and society at large. To do so, we have worked a lot on modernising our communication tools, have set up our presence on different social media and improved our website. In this Newsletter, you will read more about all of this; and you will surely see a lot more during the Annual Meeting and in the coming weeks and months.

I am looking forward to welcoming you in Brussels for an exciting 2012 Annual Meeting!

With kind regards,  
Garlich von Essen, Secretary General

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## External Meetings (selected)

- **03.10.2012**  
**"Advancing on Sustainable Agriculture"**  
**Brussels (BE)**
- **10.10.2012**  
**"Innovating for a sustainable and productive Agriculture"**  
**Brussels (BE)**
- **11.-12.10.2012**  
**CPVO DUS expert meeting for agricultural crops**  
**Angers (France)**
- **22.-26. 10.2012**  
**ISF Midterm Meetings**  
**Montevideo (UY)**
- **29.-30.10.2012**  
**UPOV: CAJ Advisory Group (CAJ-AG)**  
**Geneva (CH)**

## Improving "Look and Feel": New ESA Website launched

Dear members,

to download this newsletter you probably took a first look on our new ESA Website that was in fact launched today! We are happy with the result and hope you will like it too. This article will explain to you our thoughts behind the change and also guide you through the main new features which mostly affect the public part of the website anyway.

We felt the public part needed a fresh new style—especially now that we are enhancing ways to communicate with our main target groups, namely decision makers in the European Parliament and European Commission, Brussels based media and of course the interested public. In addition to improving the "Look and Feel", we wanted to appear more transparent by introducing our association and us, the general secretariat, in greater detail. Finally, another clear aim was to deliver structured information by making use of a drop-down menu.

Let's now have a look at each section as well as the new colourful footers on the bottom of each page.

As you might have seen already, we re-organised and renamed the main menu on the top of the page: The new sections are called "About ESA", "Members" "Topics" "Publications" and "Contact". The earlier mentioned transparency aspect is mostly reflected in "About ESA" while "Members" is shown in a new interactive map which illustrates our members' location. While "Publications" appears self-explanatory we tried under "Topics" to explain all our relevant content, by also adding today's societal challenges and overarching policy objectives.

Another main change is the three bright footers at the bottom of each page. We felt it was finally time to highlight three of our central activities: the ESA Annual Meeting, the newly introduced ESTA scheme and a "News Room", which might be well extended in the foreseeable future. To round up the "Look and Feel" we also included three social media icons on the top of the page—their meaning and impact is explained in one of the following articles.

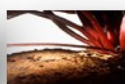
Unlike the public part, the members, and thus the part that you will use most widely, is not subject to many changes. We understood it is widely approved and appreciated amongst you, our members.

### We still want to raise the following simple, but important remarks:

1. To access the members area, you need to log in as usual (username and password stay the same) AND afterwards click on "Members" in the drop-down. Only then you will be directed to all private documents. The private menu will not appear automatically, like it was the case with the old page.
2. To retrieve all member-restricted documents (such as ESA newsletter, Seedlex, EU Common Catalogue etc) you need to be logged-in and then click on "Members" and chose the section "Members' Documents" from the top-down menu and then .
3. To return to the Home page in the public part after having logged-out, please click on the grey square with the ESA logo on the top left of the website.

Since this page was only launched today, we are open for your suggestions and are curious to receive your feedback.

We hope you like the new "Look and Feel" and wish you a good time exploring the various features. As usual: For any further questions or help please contact the ESA secretariat. (KB)





## Biotechnology and Plant Breeding: Perspectives Towards Food Security and Sustainability

The Secretary General addressed the Conference "Biotechnology and Plant Breeding: Perspectives towards food security and sustainability" which was organized by the Plant Breeding & Acclimatization Institute in Radzikow (Warsaw), Poland, in collaboration with the Society for Sustainable Agriculture and Resource Management (SSARM), India, the International Foundation for Sustainable Development in Africa and Asia (IFSADAA), Göttingen, Germany and Cereal Research, Szeged, Hungary.

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More than 100 researchers from all around the world (with a strong participation specifically from Central and Eastern Europe) discussed how the breeding sector may contribute even more to address the grand challenges of food security and food quality as well as sustainability and climate change in the years to come. All participants agreed that the enormous potential of plant sciences must not be threatened by overregulation and technology pessimism but must be unlocked by an appropriate enabling regulatory environment as well as strong, lasting and foremost visible support from governments. The abstracts of the conference are available from the Secretariat upon request. (vE)

### A case study on plant breeding - conference held in the EP

On September 18, 2012 a conference took place in the European Parliament in the organization of MEP Bill Newton Dunn, from the Greens group. The event addressed plant breeding related matters in patent legislation as well as many questions concerning the unitary patent, its history and the current standstill. One interesting presentation was given by Jean-Luc Gal, head of the Brussels Office of the EPO who addressed the new questions in the Tomato case referred to the Enlarged Board of Appeal regarding the patentability of products resulting from essentially biological processes. He stated that the Enlarged Board of Appeal is expected to deliver its decision on the questions in one or one and a half years. (SzCs)

### IPR in seed business – course of the Wageningen Business School

This year for the second time the Wageningen Business School organized the successful course on IPR in the seed business. The course was fully booked also for the second time and ESA was invited again to speak about the legal framework for plant variety protection and patents for plant-related inventions in Europe and to present and explain the ESA IP position adopted last year. In case you are interested to have the presentation given at the course please contact the ESA Secretariat. (SzCs)







## Benefits of using Social Media for ESA

Some of you might have already discovered ESA on LinkedIn, Facebook and since September also on Twitter. A plausible question would be: Why is ESA suddenly using social media? To answer this properly one first has to understand who the target groups of ESA are and how this target groups communicate these days. Let's make an easy example: We strongly believe that the public debate on the upcoming revision of the seed marketing legislation will spark the attention of the European Parliament, Brussels media and NGO's in particular for which ESA needs to be fully prepared. The latest figures indicate clearly that particularly Members of the European Parliament use Facebook as daily communication tool (70%), Brussels based journalist prefer Twitter (63%) while NGOs are mostly active on LinkedIn (83%) and Facebook (62%).

*(To view more results visit: [www.digitalpulse.eu](http://www.digitalpulse.eu) )*

Besides offering the opportunity to engage with and monitor our target audience , social media is significantly less expensive than advertising through traditional media and additionally drives more traffic to our website while improve the search engine rankings.

We strongly encourage you, our members, to support, share and engage with our web 2.0 activities to ensure that also your voice is efficiently represented and to make ESA's social media presence a true success! (KB)

You find us on the different channels by clicking on:

<http://www.linkedin.com/company/2630192?trk=tyah>

<http://www.facebook.com/euroseeds>

[https://twitter.com/ESA\\_euroseeds](https://twitter.com/ESA_euroseeds)

## WG Communications (WG COMM): Aims and recent developments

As reported on in the June newsletter edition, ESA established a new horizontal working group on the Promotion, Communication and Image (WG COMM) which had its first physical meeting in September, after prior conference calls.

In this physical meeting ESA's Secretary General Garlich von Essen defined the groups' aims as well as responsibilities:

### 1. Supportive role

WG COMM is not expected to create own content by developing positions as this is already the responsibility of other ESA WGs, committees and sections. Rather, WG COMM is expected to support the remaining WGs by using its experience and creativity to implement their ideas and convey their positions to the respective decision makers and wider public.

### 2. Platform to exchange expertise

We believe that all participants and their respective associations or companies can make use of each other's potential and existing communication material such as brochures, factsheets, reports etc. This will amplify the seed industry's messages and provide synergies from each other's successes and well as mistakes since its members face the same challenges (technology, social media) as well as restrictions (budget).

### 3. Revising existing material

Finally, the group is also responsible for reviewing the existing communication material and identify any deficits or gaps (which brochures, factsheets, website information, video etc might be still missing)





In addition to the definition of ESA's short– mid– and long-term aims, the ESA Secretariat was given the task to compile a selection of background material that ESA members have available and draw from it enough information to develop some “punchy” paragraphs. These can then be used by ESA as the starting point for reinforcing the importance of plant breeding.

Please contact me to discuss the opportunity to participate or further questions. We are currently looking for candidates with a communication background who are willing to actively support this group and participate twice a year in a meeting. (KB)

### **Industry meets Chinese IP officials – Brussels, September 19**

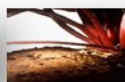
On September 19, 2012 the European Commission organized a stakeholder meeting with Chinese officials offering the possibility to European industry associations to present their respective IP concerns in China. ESA has asked for the possibility to speak at this even and was granted a short slot. At this occasion Sz. Csörgő explained briefly the current PVP situation in China to the audience, the concerns it causes and the needs of the seed sector. Main emphasis was put on China's accession to 91 version of the UPOV Convention and on matters of technical cooperation (such as facilitation of application requirements, take-over of DUS reports etc.). Just the day before this industry meeting the European Commission and the Chinese government agreed to elaborate a study on China's potential accession to UPOV 91 concerning which the Chinese party seemed to be rather enthusiastic. The timeframe for this project as well as the terms of reference are going to be agreed upon in early December. (SzCs)

### **CPVO WG Legislative Matters – Paris, September 26, 2012**

The second meeting of the CPVO WG on legislative matters took place on September 26 in Paris. Most of the items discussed already in the first meeting came back on the agenda but this time in the form of concrete proposals for potential changes in the future CPVR regulation. The following items were discussed: provisions to put the CPVR regulation in line with the EU IP enforcement directive; possible clarification of the EDV concept; how to deal with EDVs falling under the protection of the initial variety but not protected themselves; how to improve the provisions on provisional protection; how to clarify the moment of sales relevant for novelty. Important progress was made by the working group on a number of issues but still there are plenty of items to further discuss. The group will continue its work in early January 2013. However it was also mentioned by the Commission at this meeting that there is more time for the WG to discuss issues since the evaluation of the CPVR regulation is now put on hold until the next Commission enters in office in 2014. It was also hinted that in the time between now and 2014 DG SANCO is however trying take some non-legislative actions in order to improve the situation but this still has to be agreed upon within the Commission. Further information will be available later this year. (SzCs)

### **ICC Conference on IP in China**

The International Chamber of Commerce is organizing, jointly with the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT)/ China Chamber of International Commerce (CCOIC), a conference on 26 October in Beijing. This conference will address the theme of “ Increasing economic and business competitiveness using intellectual assets “ . The programme is available in English and Chinese at <http://www.iccwbo.org/Training-and-Events/All-events/Events/Intellectual-Property-Conference-in-Beijing/> and will include both Chinese and international speakers on topics including: the importance of IP in the economic and trade strategies of countries; the strategic importance of IP for businesses; the challenges of protecting





different types of technologies through patents and trade secrets; key licensing issues, including in standard setting; brand protection on the Internet. The conference will be held at the Intercontinental Hotel Financial Street in Beijing at 11 Financial Street, XiCheng District (<http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/intercontinental/en/gb/locations/beijing-financialstreet>), and attendance is without charge. (SzCs)

### European Lobbying Training Workshop confirmed

The ESA Secretariat has the pleasure to announce that the European Lobbying Training Workshop is confirmed, and will take place on 26 & 27 November in Brussels. Following a "Save the Date" initiation, the Secretariat has received a large number of expressions of interest from national associations and public affairs representatives of companies. The main objective of the event is to set up a "public affairs team" within ESA in order to monitor the progress of the legislative proposal on the production and marketing of plant reproductive material, as well as other issues that may come up in the future. The event will also be an opportunity to inform participants on the ins and outs of the European decision-making process and will include a visit of the European Parliament. A draft programme will be circulated to national associations and company members in early October. (JP)

### Permanent Grassland

Just before the summer, the full list of amendments made by Members of the European Parliament to the legislative proposals on CAP reform were published, revealing a staggering 7000 amendments. Part of the greening proposals of the COM, the definition of permanent grassland and the rules for maintaining permanent grassland alone have attracted a set of 114 amendments! The main debate is whether the rules of managing permanent grassland should be laid down at the level of the individual holding or at a wider territorial level (national or regional). The ESA Secretariat has been actively engaging with MEPs to explain the specific nature of grass crops, their often lengthy crop rotation period and the importance for farmers to be allowed to reseed and renew their permanent grassland. A taskforce within the Section Forage & Grass has been set up to look into these amendments in more detail and identify those that the seed industry can support. At the moment, a vote on these amendments is scheduled for 27 November in the AGRI Committee of the European Parliament. In the meantime, the ESA Secretariat has also maintained strong contacts with the European Commission and Member State representations in Brussels. (JP)



### Croatian Seed Symposium

In view of the upcoming accession of Croatia to the European Union in July 2013, ESA was invited to speak at the Croatian Seed Symposium on policy developments at European level affecting the seed sector. This was an interesting opportunity to address an audience composed of breeders, researchers, traders, as well as representatives from the Ministry and public bodies. ESA would like to thank the Croatian Seed Association and the Croatian

Society of Agronomists for their kind invitation. (JP)





## From Better Regulation to Plant Reproductive Material

At the end of July, the European Commission made available the draft texts for legislative proposals concerning the marketing and production, with a view to marketing, of plant reproductive material and plant health. These are the result of several years of consultation with stakeholders and pave the way for a full legislative package that the COM aims to send to Council (Member States) and Parliament in early 2013. In addition to the Regulations on plant reproductive material and on plant health, this package will contain a regulation on animal health, a revised regulation on food & feed controls to include official controls for seed, and a horizontal financial regulation. The ESA Secretariat and its Working Groups Better Regulation and Plant Health have been actively analysing these draft texts in detail and will take the opportunity to comment on the draft text to the European Commission, ahead of the interservice consultation that should be launched before the end of October. The first point, is that it is a single Regulation that covers all species, and only lays out the main principles for seed marketing, with a lot of the more crop-specific and technical details to be defined at a later stage via implementing acts. This is also important to increase flexibility for changes due to technical and scientific developments. Overall, however, the draft text on plant reproductive material very much builds upon the existing system, in that the key principles of variety listing and seed certification are maintained. More flexibility will be given to the operators so that they may decide to carry out the necessary testing for variety registration or inspections, sampling and analysis of plant reproductive material for certification under the official supervision of the competent authorities. For conservation varieties, the new text proposes a system of variety listing on the basis of an "Officially Recognised Description" that would not require DUS testing, but a set of basic requirements including labelling. The ESA Secretariat will provide a "Comment piece" to the COM, with an article by article analysis, in order to finetune the text before its official publication towards Parliament and Council. (JP)



### September 14 — Plantum Annual Meeting

On September 14 the Annual Meeting of Plantum took place, this year organised by companies in the province of Limburg at the International horticultural exhibition the "Floriade". Apart from the statutory obligatory items on the agenda interesting presentations were made on developments in relation to Intellectual Property Rights, priorities of the Dutch government

in relation to top sectors, which includes also the seed sector, as well as the state of play regarding the evaluation of the EU Legislation regarding Seed Marketing. During the open part of the meeting Niels Louwaars, Director of Plantum, had a lively interview with Mr Paul Beck, Director of the Floriade on the concept of the Floriade2012 as an "experience" instead of an exhibition. In the afternoon the participants had the possibility to experience the Floriade themselves including a visit to Plantum members present on the exhibition. (BS)

**The next ESA Newsletter will be published on 31 October 2012**

