

PRESS RELEASE

**The essential role of Plant Breeding for continued food and nutritional security
A celebration of Gregor Mendel's 200th Anniversary**

16 June 2022 - Plants for the Future ETP hosted on 14th June a lunch seminar around the topic of plant breeding and its importance in our agri-food systems.

Plants for the Future ETP, hosted a lunch seminar with the support of MEP Juozas Olekas from the S&D group of the European Parliament, who provided the opening statement, highlighting the challenges linked to climate change and the need to embrace innovation as part of the solution.

Professor Rod Snowdon, from Justus Liebig University in Germany, provided an overview of plant breeding and its evolution over time, leading to more timely, precise and predictable outcomes, while Professor Cathie Martin, from John Inness Centre in the UK, presented her ongoing research developing a vitamin D-enriched tomato using genome editing.

The ensuing discussion touched on several topics, mainly how to better inform the public and future generations about plant breeding, to increase understanding of new genomic techniques (i.e., targeted mutagenesis and cisgenesis); the need to ensure consistency between EU and international regulations to avoid trade disruptions; and the level of transparency needed to ensure freedom of choice for all players, including consumers, without resulting in stigmatisation and product discrimination.

The closing statement was provided by Daniel Azevedo, Chair of Plants for the Future's Board of Directors and Director in the Commodities and Trade team of Copa-Cogeca, highlighting the need to enable the agri-food chain, including the farming community, by providing access to the entire tool box on safe and innovative plant technologies, such as new genomic techniques, so they may contribute to increasing sustainability and food security, while improving competitiveness.

The seminar was attended by members of academia, the seed and breeding sector, the farming community, the EU commission and Parliament.

About us – Plants for the Future ETP (Plant ETP) is a multistakeholder platform representing the plant sector from fundamental research to crop production and distribution. Plant ETP brings stakeholders from the plant sector together to consider the challenges and opportunities of agricultural value chains in a holistic way, while developing a vision for future systems spanning food, feed, and biobased raw materials.

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