



Centre International de Hautes Etudes Agronomiques Méditerranéennes

CIHEAM BARI

Press release

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Plant health research priorities: a challenge for the Mediterranean region

A joint CIHEAM-Euphresco online workshop was organized on 12 May, 2021 to provide an opportunity to high-level officials from organisations involved in policy making, research funding and research implementation in the Mediterranean region, to meet, exchange views, discuss and identify common plant health research priorities.

The workshop was organized in the framework of the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH2020) celebrations.

The opening was marked by the launch of the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJ04QW4ImYA> that displayed the important pests that threaten the Mediterranean region.

During the meeting a Compendium was presented which includes a summary of the results and an analysis of the information collected during a survey run by Euphresco and CIHEAM Bari. This work is the first attempt to gather and consolidate views of plant health research stakeholders from the Mediterranean Region.

The workshop was attended by around 80 people, from 20 Mediterranean countries and several international organizations and initiatives: the Arab Society for Plant Protection, the Croatian Agency for Agriculture and Food, the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization, the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies of Chania, the Mediterranean Phytopathological Union, the Near East Plant Protection Organization, the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention, the European Food Safety Authority, the Interreg Med and the Interreg Balkan Med Secretariats, the Joint Programming Initiative on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change, the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area, and the Union For the Mediterranean.

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During the workshop, 4 parallel working-group sessions were organized to allow representatives from countries in the Balkans, Near East, North Africa and Western Europe to discuss of the 'local' plant health problems and identify common sub-regional priorities to work together. The high-level representatives of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs), research performing organizations and research funding organizations illustrated and discussed their national priorities concerning both major pests and main research topics. Several national organizations to be involved in future collaborative research projects were also identified.

At the conclusion of the workshop, the following recommendations were made to give continuity to the initiative undertaken.

The Compendium is a useful tool to summarise plant health research priorities for the Mediterranean region. It is therefore suggested to periodically update the contents through the publication of supplements.

Dedicated workshops are needed to allow country representatives to continue their work on the research topics under the guidance of CIHEAM, Euphresco and other interested international organizations.

CIHEAM and Euphresco will act as facilitators of future regional actions, but the endorsement of Mediterranean countries would be necessary. Countries are invited to propose National Contact Point/s that will be responsible for the coordination of follow-up activities.