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UPDATE: XX IPPC ATHENS 10-15 JUNE 2023

On May 14th the Local organizing committee (LOC) had its first kick-off meeting in Athens regarding initial decisions on organizational matters towards preparations for the XX IPPC ATHENS 10-15 June 2023. The members of the Board of the Hellenic Society of Phytopathology met with representatives of the Agricultural University of Athens (the host University) and the head of the Global Events Congress Organizing group.

The week thereafter, the LOC, after discussing organizational matters on e-platforms, plans to work under a virtual communication scheme by visiting other Greek Universities beyond Athens as well as National Agricultural Institutions and private sector operators.

With regard to the date of XX IPPC ATHENS 2023, the local organisers along with the Global Events Congress Organising group are happy to announce that the original congress dates of 10-15 June 2023 are confirmed. This is in line with the expectation that the effective halt of the COVID-19 pandemic by the vaccination will open the borders for international participants to safely travel and participate in this big event two years from now.

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PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES AGAINST SPREAD OF *XYLELLA FASTIDIOSA* IN MEDITERRANEAN REGION

The bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* first appeared in Europe in 2013 in Italy where it has caused huge damage to olive groves in the Apulia region. Since then it has been observed in other parts of Italy as well as other Member States of European Union such as France and Spain. The bacterium, in addition to olives, infects and destroys many other plant species such as almond trees, cherries, and a wide range of forest and ornamental plants, causing significant damage to agriculture and the environment. The bacterium is transmitted by the transport of infected plants but also by insect carriers such as cicadas.

Inspectors from the Department of Agriculture of Cyprus detected the bacterium *X. fastidiosa* in a consignment of olives from Spain. To prevent the spread and establishment of the pest on the

island, the Department of Agriculture immediately took the necessary measures. Phytosanitary Inspectors of the Department of Agriculture, on Wednesday April 21, 2021, proceeded to take a sample of two olive plants imported from Spain the previous day, Tuesday April 20, 2021, by a private individual in the area of Agios Athanasios in Limassol. They were ornamental olive plants established in private garden area.

Upon confirmation of the location of this pest by the national reference laboratory, the Department of Agriculture immediately implemented the National Emergency Plan and from April 26 to 28, 2021, took the recommended measures for preventing any further spread of the pathogen in proper olive groves.

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NEMEDUSSA CONSORTIUM ADVANCING NEMATOLOGY EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICA



To develop the research and educational capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa in the field of nematology, or the study of roundworms, a joint Erasmus+ KA2 project was recently launched. The Erasmus+ project, Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE): Nematology Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (NEMEDUSSA), is a joint effort by a consortium of Universities from Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe.

This three-year project (2021-2023) is co-funded by the European Union (Erasmus+ KA2 CBHE) and VLIR-UOS, and is linked to the objectives of the Erasmus+ Programme. The aims are to encourage cooperation between the EU and Partner Countries and support eligible Partner Countries in addressing challenges in the management and governance of their higher education institutions.

Specifically, NEMEDUSSA aims to increase awareness of nematodes and expand educational and research capacities in higher education and other institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa in this field. Nematodes or roundworms cause significant damage and yield loss to a wide variety of crops often together with other pathogens. Unfortunately, nematodes are often overlooked or misdiagnosed, resulting in the unnecessary use of unhealthy agro-chemicals. Nematodes can also be used as bio-control agents against insect pests and/or as bio-control agents for environmental health and biodiversity.

Despite the profound adverse impact plant-parasitic nematodes have on productivity worldwide, it is striking how concealed the discipline of nematology has remained, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. This project aims to address the need for increased capacity and specialized

training in handling these pathogens, so that plant-parasitic nematodes are managed correctly and beneficial nematodes can be implemented as biocontrol organisms.

To achieve this, the project focuses on 6 core activities:

1. Developing Curricula. Develop curricula in nematology on BSc and MSc level for the integration into existing educational programmes in English and French, for both lecturers and students.
2. Training Staff. Improve the nematological expertise of academic and technical staff to enhance teaching capacity.
3. Upgrading lab facilities. Increase the number of student microscopes, lab and demonstration equipment to augment hands-on training.
4. Nematology digital learning platform. Develop an open-access platform to share and disseminate nematological knowledge, develop curricular modules, knowledge clips, etc.
5. Nematology Network. Enhance cooperation between nematologists in Sub-Saharan Africa by providing networking tools, workshops on relevant topics in nematology and sharing good practices in education, promoting collaboration with a focus on young nematologists.
6. Creating awareness. Facilitate dissemination activities and involve a range of different stakeholders such as farmers, extension service workers, policy makers, students and private and public sector.

Ghent University (Belgium) coordinates NEMEDUSSA, in cooperation with:

- University Abomey-Calavi, Benin
- University of Parakou, Benin
- Haramaya University, Ethiopia
- Jimma University, Ethiopia
- Kenyatta University, Kenya
- Moi University, Kenya
- Ahmadu-Bello University, Nigeria
- University of Ibadan, Nigeria
- North West University, South Africa
- Stellenbosch University, South Africa
- Makerere University, Uganda
- Muni University, Uganda
- University Côte d'Azur, France

The work of this project is further supported by 36 associated partners from the private and public sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa.

For more information about the NEMEDUSSA project, please see www.nemedussa.ugent.be or contact us at nemedussa@ugent.be.

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IAPPS Mission: to provide a global forum for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, integrating, and promoting plant protection concepts, technologies, and policies that are economically, environmentally, and socially acceptable.

It seeks to provide a global umbrella for the plant protection sciences to facilitate and promote the application of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to the world's crop and forest ecosystems.

Membership Information: IAPPS has four classes of membership (individual, affiliate, associate, and corporate) which are described in the IAPPS Web Site www.plantprotection.org.

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