



Brussels, 12 June 2023

Europatat Congress 2023: A successful event for the European potato sector

On 5 and 6 June the European potato community gathered for the Europatat Congress 2023 in Gdansk, Poland. Under the slogan *“The Changing Geopolitical Landscape and the Future for Potato Trade”*, the first-time ever Polish edition of Europatat’s annual event focused on the impact of current geopolitics for international agri-food trade and on the effect of EU’s Green Deal’s goals and new consumption trends for the potato sector inside and outside Europe.

With more than 100 participants from more than 14 different European and non-European countries, the Europatat Congress 2023, which was co-organised by Europatat and the Polish Potato Federation, consisted of two days of internal meetings, a public conference and Gala Dinner, and the visit to Farm Frites Poland the distillery Podole Wielkie.

On Monday 5 June, Europatat members reviewed the different activities of the association during the meetings of its five Commissions (consumption potatoes, seed potatoes, sustainability, technical and regulatory issues, and RUCIP). External speakers such as **Cedric Porter**, from the World Potato Markets, and **Albert Schirring** from Bayer presented the latest potato market data and the results of a study on glycoalkaloids, respectively. Other topics covered during the day were related to export markets, wireworms, quality requirements, packaging, green claims, among many others.

On Tuesday 6 June, the Europatat Congress’ public conference was preceded by the annual meeting of the association’s General Assembly. Europatat members had also the opportunity to hear from guest speaker **Blair Richardson**, CEO of Potatoes USA, how the potato sector is organised in the United States of America, and the work on nutrition research and promotion that is being done by the Alliance for Potato Research & Education (APRE) and Potatoes USA.

Krzysztof Cieciora, Undersecretary of State of the Polish Ministry Agriculture and Rural Development, opened the public session by emphasizing the importance of potatoes *“for millions of people worldwide”* and the role of the European and Polish sector in that task. In that sense, **Tomasz Bieńkowski**, President of the Polish Potato Federation, highlighted that Poland is currently *“the second largest producer of potatoes in the EU and the potato industry has a significant share in Polish food production, which annual turnover reaches several billion zlotys.”* **Tigran Richter**, President of Europatat, also pointed out the importance of the Polish market for potatoes.

The kick off of the Congress was followed by the keynote speech of the food expert and chef **Grzegorz Łapanowski**, who gave an inspiring presentation on the potential of potatoes in relation to new consumption trends such as local food, plant-based diets, zero waste, *“fast good”*, or sensual or spiritual food. For the jury member of the Polish edition of Top Chef, the potato sector needs to change the way of communicating towards consumers by *“creating a brand (make potatoes a fashionable product!), increasing consumer knowledge and focusing on quality”*.





After a lunch break, the panel composed by **Mykola Gordiichuk**, Vice-President of the Ukrainian Potato Growers Association, **Geoffroy d'Evry**, President of NEPG (North European Potatoes Growers) and UNPT (Union Nationale des Producteurs de Pommes de Terre), **Jörg Renatus**, Managing Director of Europlant International, and **Jarostaw Wańkowitz**, Supply Chain Director at Farm Frites Poland SA, discussed how both the changing geopolitical landscape and new political priorities at European and national level are affecting agri-food trade in general, and potato trade in particular. There is a gap between ideology and reality, members of the panel agreed, and therefore, new agricultural technologies (including new Breeding Techniques) and global, regional and local partnerships and more needed than ever.



Closing the Europatat Congress 2023, **Berta Redondo Benito**, Secretary General of Europatat, concluded that, *“in challenging times for the potato trade, communication with consumers, the society and other parts of the supply chain, as well as cooperation through partnerships, are key for the future of the sector.”* She invited participants to join next year’s Europatat Congress in Brussels, which, as announced during the meeting of the General Assembly, will be organised on 23 and 24 May 2024.

Note to the Editors:

Europatat is the European Potato Trade Association, comprising both national associations and individual companies involved in the trade of seed, ware and early potatoes throughout Europe. Its members include a wide range of traders (including breeders, distributors, storers, packers, importers and exporters) delivering seed potatoes to farmers, raw material to the food industry, and packed potatoes to the retailers and food service sector.

For further information or queries please get in touch with secretariat@europatat.eu

