



PRESS RELEASE
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Brussels celebrates the International Day of Potato with a high-level event and industry exhibition

On Tuesday 27 May, Brussels marked the second edition of the International Day of Potato with a high-level conference and interactive exhibition, gathering key stakeholders from across the potato value chain, from growers and traders to processors and policymakers. Co-hosted by the European Potato Processors' Association (EUPPA), the European Potato Trade Association (Europatat), the European Snacks Association (ESA), Copa-Cogeca and the European Starch Industry Association (Starch Europe), the event spotlighted the economic, nutritional, and environmental value of potatoes in Europe and beyond.

Held under the theme *"From seed to fork: ensuring a sustainable, competitive, and resilient potato value chain"*, the conference spotlighted the crop's multiple benefits from nutrition and food security to innovation, sustainability and cultural heritage. More than 100 potato stakeholders, decision makers, national and regional representatives, as well as potato lovers, joined in the heart of the EU district in Brussels.

Resilience, Innovation and Sustainability

The event opened with keynote remarks by Raschad Al-Khafaji, Director of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Brussels Office, who praised the **increasing collaboration among actors across the European potato value chain** and underscored the **vital role of potatoes in advancing global food security and climate resilience**.

Participants also heard from Magdalena Montaigu, Head of the Agriculture and Rural Development Unit within the Permanent Representation of Poland to the European Union, who reflected on Poland's leadership in European potato production and **ways to further improve the competitiveness of the sector**.

Ricard Ramon, Head of Unit at DG AGRI, European Commission, presented the EU's new long-term vision for agriculture, **highlighting its significance for the European potato sector**. He emphasised that food security remains a key priority on the European agenda and **reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to supporting the sector**.

A panel discussion moderated by the agri-journalist Rose O'Donovan explored how the European potato value chain is evolving to meet sustainability goals while remaining competitive. Panellists included Geoffroy d'Evry, President of UNPT in France and Chairman of Copa-Cogeca Working Party on Potatoes; Tigran Richter, President of Europatat; Kristof Wallays, member of EUPPA, Elisabet Nadeu, Senior Policy Analyst at Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP); and Michal Kicinski, Senior Manager Sustainable Agriculture at CropLife Europe.

Panellists highlighted **Europe's leadership in potato production, trade, and innovation**, stressing the importance of maintaining momentum across the value chain and fostering collaboration as well as the **need for a supportive policy framework**. They emphasised the **crop's versatility and resilience to climate change and the need for continuous innovation** to maintain competitiveness and further enhance sustainability of production. A number of key enablers such as **access to pest and disease management tools** were cited as essential for potato growers and breeders, as well as the **potential of new genomic techniques (NGTs)**. Speakers called on policymakers **to ensure the right conditions are in place for the sector to continue contributing to Europe's food security and climate resilience**.

A showcase of innovation across the potato chain

Following the conference, a dynamic exhibition featured “seed-to-fork” innovations and sustainability initiatives from key actors across the value chain, including PepsiCo, Agristo, Royal HZPC, Warnez, and potato starch companies under Starch Europe.

Guests concluded the celebration with a networking cocktail, sampling a variety of potato-based dishes that showcased the crop's versatility and culinary value.

A European success story with global reach

Potatoes are deeply rooted in European culture and are seen as a modern, sustainable and nutritious solution to the world's evolving food needs. As the world faces growing challenges such as climate change, food insecurity and resource scarcity, the potato sector is stepping up – investing in innovation, sustainable practices, and supporting fair trade.

To maintain Europe's leadership in potato production, processing and trade, the potato value chain calls for a supportive EU policy environment that fosters competitiveness, reduces regulatory burdens and enables access to the tools needed for a successful green transition.

‘We are proud to have brought the entire potato value chain together for this year's International Day of Potato. This strong show of unity reflects our shared ambition to ensure potatoes continue to thrive as a sustainable, competitive, and essential crop for Europe's future’, stated Nuria Moreno, Secretary General of the European Potato Processors Association (EUPPA).

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