



Speech of the Secretary General of the CIHEAM, Plácido Plaza, during the [CIHEAM Bari](#) and the [Euphresco](#) Network for phytosanitary research coordination and funding, organised an online International Workshop on the Plant Health Research Priorities for the Mediterranean Region on Wednesday 12 May 2021.

“Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank all of you for your participation to this international workshop on Plant Health Research Priorities for the Mediterranean Region, organised by CIHEAM Bari and Euphresco.

In particular I would like to thank the participants representing **19 countries and also the participants representing the International Organisations** (the Arab Society for Plant Protection, the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization, the European Food Safety Authority, the International Plant Protection Convention Secretariat, the Interreg-Balkan Mediter, the Interreg-Med, the Joint Programming Initiative on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change, the Mediterranean Phytopathological Union, the Near-East Plant Protection Organization, the PRIMA Fondation, and the Union For the Mediterranean).

We have seen today how the Mediterranean region is particularly vulnerable due to the serious threats of numerous quarantine and emerging pests and the lack of funds for research activities in support of statutory plant health.

We all agree that a sustainable plant protection strategy is more essential than ever and that research plays a key role in underpinning plant health activities, providing solutions but also build bridges between the national and international communities of plant health research funders and policy makers.

For these reasons, CIHEAM and EUPHRESKO, two international actors actively involved in different fields of plant health, believe that plant health research is the main challenge countries face in terms of pests as well as infrastructure and expertise.

The compendium and the workshop are the first steps to advance and reinforce the collaboration among Mediterranean countries that will be future contributors and beneficiaries of this partnership.

We believe that plant health challenges require a rethink in the organization of research activities in all countries and that research coordination is necessary in order to increase efficiency and impact.



Therefore, the action of CIHEAM and Euphresco, jointly with other key international organizations, is necessary for improving and strengthening cooperation, sharing objectives and priorities, but also facilitating procedures to scale-up research activities from national to regional, involving all actors as research communities, funders of plant health research and policy makers.

We hope that this initiative can be translated in the coming months into the structuring of ideas into project proposals with the mediation of CIHEAM and EUPHRESCO and the participation of experts from interested countries, and the support of national and international research funders and policy makers.

We will consider the opportunity that these items, when the CIHEAM's countries will consider appropriate, will be discussed during a CIHEAM Ministerial meeting.

Today, the coordination of research is more important than ever considering the difficult situation we all are experiencing due to the pandemic against which only research can provide solutions.

We hope that this first initiative, that is realised during the International Year of Plant Health 2020, will be a common basis in bringing forward a joint vision and common actions on the ground at the country level, and this will certainly require, more than ever, a stronger regional cooperation.

I thank you for your attention"