

ESSA celebrates 10th anniversary of the association & elections of the new Board at 2021 Annual Event

In early October the European Sprouted Seeds Association (ESSA) held its Annual Event 2021 in a digital format, celebrating the Association's 10th anniversary as a network of the sprouted seeds industry. The Annual Event, which was this year open to all interested food business operators, reflected on the sector's journey and achievements since the EHEC crisis in 2011 and brainstormed on the impact of the EHEC crisis on the sector and future policy developments, which are needed to support the growth and recognition of the sector. The event also focused on a number of matters related to sustainability, such as the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy and European and national plastics packaging policy.

Over a digital event, ESSA celebrated its 10th anniversary. The sessions involved two guest speakers, who provided a critical overview to the sector on the European and national plastics packaging policy as well as on sustainable and innovative agriculture in controlled environments. The speaker line up included Freshfel Europe Director Sustainability & Health Nicola Pisano and co-founder and secretary general of FarmTech Society Thomas Zoellner.

This year's Annual Event covered a wide variety of topics from achievements of the sector over the last 10 years, sustainability, to future priorities of the sector. The Annual Event 2021 was also the end of the mandate for Michal Stanek (Uniflora, Poland) who was a Board member of the Association for 5 years, out of which 3 years was in the role of the President of the Association. During the event Michal Stanek highlighted, *"Since the establishment of ESSA in 2011, ESSA members have been working hard first to save the industry following the EHEC crisis, then to support the industry in order to make it better and stronger and recognised. The sector needs to keep working on further improvements within the sector. So far ESSA has been focusing on food safety issues, however while going through the crisis ESSA has also engaged in a broader spectrum of topics, such as becoming a front-runner in crisis prevention and management"*.

The ESSA Annual Event 2021 Public Conference was preceded by the ESSA Statutory Annual General Meeting. During this part of the event an application of a new Board member was introduced. Following an electronic voting procedure, on 21 October the Board of ESSA welcomed Xi Wang, the supply chain manager at Ever Specials. Xi Wang affirmed that, *"I am looking forward to be able to contribute to the activities of the association with my technical expertise in the field of the supply chain and production of seeds for sprouting. I am confident that in addition to my knowledge gained through operational activities on a daily basis, my experience gained during the execution of training missions for the producers of seeds for sprouting in China and Myanmar as well as audits carried out by DG Sante in China in 2014 will also greatly contribute to the success of the association"*.

The current composition of the ESSA Board is as follows: Eva van der Plas (VanDerPlas Sprouts, NL) – President, Paul Flamand (Vitalfa, FR) – Vice President, Andrew Pao (J. Pao & Co Limited, UK) – Board Member/Treasurer, Xi Wang (Evers Specials, NL) – Board member.

After the elections, Eva van der Plas the newly elected President of ESSA stressed, *"Over the next years the association will continue to represent the interests of its members as a leading EU representative sector body to ensure smooth and sustainable operations throughout the supply chain"*.

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Note to the Editors:

More information can be obtained via the website of the European Sprouted Seeds Association (www.sproutedseeds.eu) or via the (info@sproutedseeds.eu).

European Sprouted Seeds Association (ESSA) represents interests of the sprouted seeds supply chain in Europe and beyond. ESSA currently has 50 members, including both producers of sprouted seeds, traders of seeds for the production of sprouted seeds and service providers. For more information, contact the association at info@sproutedseeds.eu or visit the association website www.sproutedseeds.eu.