



Guest Editorial



Providing enough food for generations to come, preventing the destruction of nature and wildlife by extensive agriculture and preventing the pollution of the environment by fossil fuel-based industry are the greatest challenges of the 21st century (Van Montagu, 2011). In that aspect, a profound study of plants and the development of “Green” biotechnology may help to alleviate these global issues “for Good” of humankind.

Various issues of green biotechnology were addressed at the conference “Green for Good II”, which took place in the town of Olomouc, Czech Republic, on June 17–21, 2013. The conference name followed in the line of an initial event that took place two years ago, when Olomouc hosted a postsymposium to “BIOTECH 2011” organized by the Swiss and Czech biotechnology societies in Prague in June 2011 (Káš, 2013).

This time the conference was held as an official event of the European Federation of Biotechnology and the Czech Biotechnology Society. The main organizer of the conference was the Centre of the Region Haná for Biotechnological and Agricultural Research that represents one of the 14 regional branch offices of the European Federation of Biotechnology (EFB, www.efb-central.org), a non-profit federation of national biotechnology associations, learned societies, universities, institutes, biotech companies and individual scientists. EFB's aim is to promote research and innovation at the cutting edge of biotechnology and safe, sustainable and beneficial use of new inventions, to improve scientific education and to facilitate communication between scientists and the public. At present, EFB has 108 institutional and 13,500 personal members.

The aim of the conference was to stimulate cooperation between different fields of research, development and innovations in the field of plant biotechnology. The possible use of genetically modified plants with regard to the increasing population growth and the urgent need to produce a sufficient amount of food and feed was brought up in the opening lecture given by the president of the European Federation of Biotechnology, Prof. Marc Van Montagu, and then further discussed by the participants throughout the whole conference. The fact that during the conference Prof. Van Montagu was officially announced as a World Food Prize Laureate 2013 for his groundbreaking work in plant biotechnology (Forgrave, 2013) gave the meeting a special glance. The World Food Prize, sometimes called “the Nobel Prize in Agriculture”, was established in 1986 by Dr. Norman E. Borlaug (Swaminathan, 2009) in order to focus the world's attention on the ongoing hunger crisis and on those whose work has significantly helped in efforts to end it.

The attendance of over 100 participants from 16 countries proves that the organizers have managed to compile an attractive scientific program with intriguing lectures from the top researchers in their respective fields from all over the world. The program was divided into four sessions—Crop Improvement, BIO-TECHNO, Plant Stress Responses and Tolerance, and Plant Bioenergetics, in which 38 invited speakers presented their contributions. A vigorous scientific discussion has evolved during a poster session with 70 posters. The abstracts of the lectures and posters are available in the Book of Abstracts (<http://www.cr-hana.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/book-of-abstracts-G4G2.pdf>).

The organizers have expressed their satisfaction with the smooth running of the conference and hinted that there might be a Green for Good conference number three in two years' time. For more information about the symposium as well as the picture gallery, please visit <http://www.cr-hana.eu/en/759/green-for-good-ii/>.

This Special Issue compiles invited review papers of the conference participants, covering various aspects of plant biotechnology and related fields of science.

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