CIHEAM BARI

Press release

July 4, 2025

**Research and Training at the Heart of the 17th International Congress of the Mediterranean Phytopathological Union**

From July 7 to 10, 2025, the city of Bari will become a global hub for the scientific community, hosting the 17th International Congress of the Mediterranean Phytopathological Union (MPU) under the theme: *New Phytopathology Frontiers of Research and Education for Plant Health and Food Safety*.

The MPU is a non-profit regional organization committed to advancing knowledge in phytopathology, food safety, and related disciplines, with a strong focus on the agro-ecological regions of the Mediterranean. One of its core missions is to foster international cooperation among researchers, scientific societies, universities, research institutions, and stakeholders.

The Congress will officially open on July 7 at 9:00 AM at the Centro Congressi del Levante (Room 8) and will continue on July 8 and 9 at the Cosimo Lacirignola Campus of CIHEAM Bari. This prestigious gathering offers a vital opportunity for experts and professionals from around the world to engage in high-level discussions on pressing global challenges such as plant health and food security.

The programme features over 350 participants from 37 countries across Europe (16), the Near East and North Africa (10), and other world regions (11), with female representation exceeding 50%—a testament to the event’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Designed to promote knowledge exchange and dialogue between science, institutions, industry, and civil society, the congress aims to reinforce a vibrant, connected, and forward-looking scientific community. It will emphasize the pivotal role of research and education in tackling plant diseases and ensuring sustainable food systems—particularly in a world increasingly shaped by climate change, ecosystem degradation, and biodiversity loss.

Across 18 thematic sessions, the Congress will spotlight emerging trends in phytopathology, including early disease detection, integrated management strategies, genetic resistance, cutting-edge technologies, and the impacts of climate change on plant health.

A special session will be dedicated to *Xylella fastidiosa*, one of the most devastating plant pathogens in the Euro-Mediterranean area. Participants will visit ancient olive groves suffering from quick decline, providing a unique opportunity to connect field observation with the latest research and mitigation strategies.

To encourage the participation of young researchers, especially from non-European regions, CIHEAM Bari has taken active steps to make the event accessible. These include reduced registration fees for students, PhD candidates, and early-career scientists, as well as free accommodation.

All accepted abstracts will be published in the Congress Book of Abstracts, included in the open-access journal Phytopathologia Mediterranea. Select outstanding contributions will be featured in a special issue of the journal, offering valuable international exposure.

To recognize scientific excellence, MPU will award prizes for the best oral and poster presentations. The Congress will also host the award ceremony for the fourth edition of the video competition Plant Health TV: Promoting the Importance of Plant Health Research. Organized by EUPHRESCO III, CIHEAM Bari, PBRI, IPPC, and CABI, the contest highlights global efforts in plant health research. The winner will receive a two-week internship in Australia, sponsored by the Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative (PBRI).

Beyond its scientific scope, the Congress serves as a platform to strengthen existing partnerships and forge new collaborations across disciplines and borders.

Affiliated with the International Society of Plant Pathology (ISPP), EUPHRESCO, and CIHEAM Bari, MPU actively supports the advancement of plant health sciences as a core pillar of the One Health approach—recognizing the intrinsic link between human, animal, plant, and environmental health. Although often overlooked, plants are fundamental to global stability, providing essential resources while remaining vulnerable to biological threats that can jeopardise both food security and public health.

The plenary sessions will open with welcoming remarks from Biagio Di Terlizzi, Director of CIHEAM Bari; Dimitri Tsitsigiannis, President of MPU; and, remotely, Ugo Della Marta, Director General of the Directorate for Food Hygiene, Safety and Nutrition (DGISAN) of the Italian Ministry of Health.

Distinguished representatives from IPPC-FAO, FAO-RNE, EUPHRESCO, MASAF, DGISAN, EPPO, EFSA, CNR, the Puglia Region, the European Commission, and numerous universities and research centres will also participate.

For full details and updates, please visit the official website of the [Mediterranean Phytopathological Union](https://www.mpunion.org/).