

## **New Horizon Europe funded project CREDIT Vibes - Twinning GREEN-EDITING VIBES FOR FØØD**

*18-19 January 2023, Belgrade, Serbia*

**Under a new Horizon Europe CREDIT Vibes project worth €1.5 million, the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia will support the Serbian Maize Research Institute "Zemun polje" in setting up a project and technology transfer offices, strengthening human resources and developing maize and soybean genotypes for organic farming.**

The Maize Research Institute "Zemun Polje" is coordinating the CREDIT Vibes Horizon Europe project, which will run for three years from 1 January 2023, under the mentorship of the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece. All project activities will be supported by a budget of EUR 1.5 million, approved under the Twinning Western Balkans call, which aims to strengthen the capacity of domestic research institutions and network them with similar institutions from Europe. The CREDIT Vibes project consortium met in Belgrade, Serbia, between 18 and 19 January 2023, for a kick-off meeting to discuss the objectives and the various activities to be carried out under the project.

The kick-off meeting was preceded by a stakeholder engagement event and press conference held on 18 January. The Deputy Director of the Maize Research Institute "Zemun Polje", Dr Milena Simić, emphasised at the press conference that the project "is about strengthening the capacity in human resources, research and administration so that we can become competitive and apply for new calls for more serious projects with greater value." In addition to capacity building in the form of establishing a project office and training administrative and research staff, the project focuses on the development and selection of maize and soybean genotypes under the conditions of organic cultivation with the aim of protecting the environment. Dr Kristina Petrović, the Assistant Director for International Cooperation of the Maize Research Institute "Zemun Polje" and coordinator of the project CREDIT Vibes, said, "For us, this is the first project of this kind with such a large budget, which is invested in the training and improvement of research staff, but also administrative staff, since one of the goals of the project is the digitalization of the economy."

The head of commercial affairs at the Greek Embassy in Belgrade, Antonis Katepodis, expressed his satisfaction with the project to support scientific cooperation between Greece, Serbia and Slovenia, noting that scientific cooperation between our countries, which is very important, is not sufficiently promoted. "It is especially important in the field of agriculture, sustainable and organic or environmentally oriented agriculture," he said.

According to the director of the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia, Prof Andrej Simončič, one of the goals of this project is for researchers to pursue their core tasks, scientific research, and to be supported by project offices and technology transfer offices. "We have cooperated and have good relations with the Maize Research Institute "Zemun Polje", and therefore we are grateful that we have been selected as an organisation that can help them in this transformation process," Prof Simončič emphasised. The CREDIT Vibes project activities at the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia

are coordinated by Dr Vladimir Meglič from the Crop Science Department who also attended the kick-off meeting in Belgrade.

The director of the SAIGA project at the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation, Dr Viktor Nedović, pointed out that this project coincides with many activities within the framework of a large strategic project supported by the state, which is working on the transformation of our scientific and research institutes with a view to increasing their capacities. "Today we have seen that there are some common goals, and although the Maize Research Institute "Zemun Polje" is not currently one of the institutions participating in this process, which includes 20 institutes, we see on the basis of this project that there are points of cooperation," explained Nedović.

