

Cherry production, with over 3 million tons worldwide if we consider sweet and sour cherries, is relatively minor as compared to other fruits. However, cherries are extremely appreciated fruits and can be highly profitable for growers. Europe is the major world production area and cherries are found in almost all European countries from Norway and Latvia to Spain or Greece. Nevertheless, cherries are particularly vulnerable face to climate change, high labour costs and emerging phytosanitary problems, such as the fly '*Drosophila suzukii*'.

COST Action FA1104 'Sustainable production of high-quality fruits for the European market' (2012-2016) is a multi-disciplinary network focused on sweet and sour cherries, as well as their rootstocks, dealing with genetics and breeding, crop production, crop protection and socio-economy. This Action enters its last reporting period. The Final Conference will take place at Naoussa, Greece, from the 4th till the 8th April 2016. During this period, many COST participants will actively participate to the production of a final publication, in the form of a reference book on cherries.

During this COST Action, several grants were written in order to seek research funds from the EU. Unfortunately, none was successful. The most important one was a H2020 project named DivCherry: 'Cherry genetic resources for agriculture diversification to face climate, health and food challenges in marginal areas', which was submitted within SFS-7-2014/2015: 'Genetic resources and agricultural diversity for food security, productivity and resilience'. This project involved 15 research institutions from 11 countries as well as 10 SMEs from 9 countries. Despite a good evaluation report (mark of 11,5 out of 15) the project was not funded.

After the COST Action is over, there is high commitment and motivation from numerous participants to maintain networking and grant writing activities. It is important to mention that many participants to this COST Action work on other fruit species and hence could play an active role in trying to integrate cherry species into EU research projects dealing with other major fruit species.

Eufriat will be an excellent instrument and platform to continue cherry networking activities. These will be undertaken within a devoted Working Group that I will have the pleasure to coordinate.

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