



Union Européenne du Commerce des Pommes de Terre
European Union of the Potato Trade
Europäische Union des Kartoffelhandels

New York, Thursday, October 18 2007.

Dear potato friends,

On behalf of Europatat, the European Union of the Potato Trade, we want to express our warmest sympathy towards the initiative of the International Year of the Potato and all the partners participating in it, as well official bodies, authorities as NGO's and companies.

Europatat is representing the seed and ware potato trade in 18 European countries, also non members of the European Union, since more that 50 years. Our organisation has been active in a number of activities related to potatoes and potato trade, and we believe that apart from the economical importance, our association and its members – also make a contribution on a larger world scale in exchange of knowledge, quality and innovation on the level of the food industry. This also results in an indirect impact on social level.

Europatat is also responsible for the RUCIP trade rules, which include an expert assessment and arbitration system for seed and ware potato trade, and is representing the sector in a number of International and European bodies, such as the UN economical commission for Europe in Geneva, the FAO in Rome and the European Commission in Brussels.

That is the reason why our Union of the European Potato Trade has from the beginning been enthusiastic concerning this initiative of the International Year of the Potato.

During our yearly congress in Bratislava (Slovakia) in June 2007 we have been discussing the contents and opportunities for the European potato sector during a session on the IYP and we are happy to announce you that a number of our members (which are the national potato trade associations in the European countries) have already informed us that their sector, in collaboration with the national or regional authorities, will start actions or/and support financially the action plan of FAO.

Europatat has also subscribed to the position by FAO not to spend too much efforts in organising numerous internal seminars, workshops or congresses on the potato during 2008.

We strongly believe that it is necessary to inform the others about our wonderful product, and not ourselves.

This is why Europatat and its national members will try to be active on two levels :

- 1) the “developing countries” : by supporting the FAO or Centro internacional de la Papa (CIP) budget or by taking the initiative to develop local initiatives based upon the potato culture in developing countries all over the world.
- 2) the “developed countries” : by providing information on the nutritional value of the potato for the western consumer (a literature study focusing on the glycemic index and satiety by the Ghent University has been made upon request of Europatat) supporting actions and campaigns to popularise this information as well on the level of adults and children.

Europatat hopes also to convince the European retail sector to step into a project to collect a budget via the sales of potatoes and potato products which could be used for FAO and other projects within the framework of the goals of the project of the IYP.

Europatat wishes to congratulate the FAO and United Nations for the opportunity to put the spotlight of the world in 2008 on the ‘humble potato’ and hope that over 15 months we can come together to look back on a successful IYP 2008 with numerous initiatives on all levels.

Romain COOLS
Secretary General