

## Society „Plant Physiology and Biochemistry“

### President:

**Prof. Katya Georgieva, PhD**

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### Short history

The „Plant Physiology and Biochemistry“ subdivision of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria (USB) was established in June 1992. The founding initiative came from a group of enthusiastic scientists including Acad. Emanuil Karanov, Prof. Ivan Yordanov and Assoc. Prof. Hristo Hristov. At that time the unit consisted of 27 scientists. Assoc. Prof. Hristo Hristov, who was the first chairman and a devoted leader, actively contributed for the unit's establishment and efficient work during the time of his chairmanship from 1992 to 2004. Prof. Snezhana Doncheva (in office until 2013) and Prof. Katya Georgieva, who is the present leader of the unit „Plant Physiology and Biochemistry“, successfully continue to support and develop the organization which in 2020 numbered 28 members. Most of them are researchers from the Institute of Plant Physiology and Genetics of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, but during the last few years the number of scientists from the Plant Physiology Department of the Faculty of Biology, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” who joined the subdivision increased significantly. At present our efforts are focused on attracting new members, particularly targeting early stage researchers.

### Scientific activity

The unit's members are regular participants in national and international conferences and they have been actively involved in a number of scientific and public outreach activities organized by the Institute of Plant Physiology and Genetics. Many of them contribute significantly to the training programs for bachelor, master and PhD students. International mobility is yet another asset which allows the members of the unit to visit partner labs for improvement of their research expertise and present their work at institutional seminars at high profile scientific organizations. The "Plant Physiology and Biochemistry" unit has a collective membership in the International Association of Plant Physiology (IAPP) and the Federation of European Societies of Plant Biology (FESPB). Acad. Karanov was the president of the Executive Bureau of FESPB for the period 1996–1998 r. and he was also the national representative in the organization until 2004. Later this position was held by Prof. Lozanka Popova, Prof. Snezhana Doncheva and Prof. Katya Georgieva who is the present FESPB national representative.

The “Plant Physiology and Biochemistry” unit has always actively supported the participation of its members in FESPB congresses. Additionally, it has assisted the young scientists in application for financial support and FESPB travel grants. .

Over the last decades, the Unit organized the following scientific events:

- International Scientific Workshop “Physiology of Stress and Growth Regulators”, 12–16 September 1995, Varna.
- XI Congress of the Federation of European Societies of Plant Physiology, 7–11 September 1998, Varna.
- International Conference „Responses of Plants to Environmental Stresses“, 13–18 May 2008, Elena.
- XI Jubilee Conference on Plant Physiology with International Participation „Plant Physiology – Traditions and Challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century“, 19–20 November 2009, Sofia.
- Members of the Section actively participated in the organization and holding of the conference „Plant Physiology and Genetics – Achievements and Challenges“, 24–26 September 2014, Sofia.

In 2005 the Unit organized an “Art Photography” competition featuring research photography of scientists from the Institute of Botany. The awards for the best photographs were provided by USB after the active participation of the staff members of the Institute of Plant Physiology in the evaluation process.

In 2005 the Unit also took an active role in the organization of the celebration of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the prominent Bulgarian biologist and diplomat Academician Metodii Popov, the Institute of Plant Physiology has been named after. The annual Rotary award in the name of Acad. M. Popov – plaque, diploma and badge of honor of a Rotary club – Sredets, Sofia for high scientific achievements in the field of plant biology has been also established with the active participation of the “Plant Physiology and Biochemistry” unit.

Holders of the Rotary Award so far are:

- The authors of the monograph „Atlas of Bulgarian endemic plants“ (for 2007)
- Institute of Plant Physiology „Acad. M. Popov” on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary (for 2008)
- Assoc. Prof. Margarita Topashka and Prof. Botyo Botev for the monograph „Tumors as a general biological problem“ (for 2009)
- Assoc. Prof. Vasilii Goltsev for the publication „Simultaneous *in vivo* recording of prompt and delayed fluorescence and 820-nm reflection changes during drying and after rehydration of the resurrection plant *Haberlea rhodopensis*“, published in *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta* (for 2011)
- Prof. Violeta Velikova for the publication „Increased thermostability of thylakoid membranes in isoprene-emitting leaves probed with three biophysical techniques“, published in *Plant Physiology* (for 2012)
- Prof. Ljubomir Stoilov for the publication „Karyotype reconstruction modulates the sensitivity of barley genome to radiation-induced DNA and chromosomal damage“, published in *Mutagenesis* (for 2014)

The Unit actively participated in the organization of the celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Institute of Plant Physiology “Acad. M. Popov” (now Institute of Plant Physiology and Genetics).

It co-organized the Third Seminar on Genetics with International Participation with a Special Session on Plant Physiology and Biochemistry (2–4 October 2019), dedicated to the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria.