UEAA Participation in Bulgaria's Day of Agricultural Science

On 5 November 2026, the Agricultural Academy of Bulgaria hosted the 65th Day of Agricultural Science in Sofia. Prof. Dr. Nazim Gruda, the newly elected President of the Union of European Academies for Sciences Applied to Agriculture, Food and Nature (UEAA)*, represented the Union and delivered a keynote address on the role of scientific evidence in European agricultural policy.*

This high-level event served as a national platform to recognize outstanding research achievements, showcase innovations in agrifood systems, and foster international academic cooperation. The Agricultural Academy of Bulgaria comprises 25 scientific institutes and four research centers. The Central Military Club, a landmark of early 20th-century Bulgarian architecture and one of Sofia's earliest monumental buildings, hosted the event. Designed by Czech architect Antonín Kolář in the Neo-Renaissance style and completed in 1907 by Bulgarian architect Nikola Lazarov, the building features a remarkable concert hall. The forum was accompanied by the exhibition "Land and Knowledge," organized by the National Agricultural Museum at the Agricultural Academy. For the first time, the museum exhibited 17 canvases from its collection, including works by Vladimir Dimitrov - the Master, Konstantin Shtarkelov, Decko Uzunov, Luka Perfanov, and other eminent Bulgarian artists.

International Representation and Keynote Addresses

Following an invitation from the Agricultural Academy of Bulgaria, the event strongly highlighted its European dimension through the active participation of leadership from the UEAA and the Gheorghe Ionescu-Șișești Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences (AAFS).

- **Prof. Dr. Nazim Gruda** highlighted the role of Bulgarian agricultural research in the UEAA's European network.
- **Prof. Dr. Ioan Jelev** represented the AAFS, underscoring the strong bilateral and regional scientific ties in Southeast Europe.
- The President of the Bulgarian Academy, **Prof. Dr. Stefan Gandev**, presented the history of the Academy, outlining its foundational milestones and long-standing contributions to the nation's scientific development.

Key Scientific and Policy Focus

Discussions and presentations during the plenary session focused on the urgent need to transform European agriculture.

During the official ceremony, the President of the UEAA delivered a keynote speech on scientific evidence as the foundation of Europe's agricultural future, while also touching on the deep historical and personal connections among Balkan agricultural academic institutions (Figure 1).

In his address, Prof. Dr. Gruda extended a formal invitation to Bulgarian researchers, urging them to actively participate in the UEAA's official working groups. He emphasized that for Europe to effectively address systemic problems, European institutions must listen to the perspectives of all member states. By understanding each country's specific challenges, the UEAA can develop tailored solutions based on concrete local, regional, and national conditions. Furthermore, Prof. Dr. Gruda underscored the significant role that individual agricultural academies play in strengthening the link between science and policy. He stressed that research and science must heavily inform European political decisions. A core focus of the UEAA remains continuously bridging this gap, ensuring that the UEAA delivers

research-backed conclusions, recommendations, and proposals directly to European decision-makers to support and guide political action.



Figure 1. The President of the UEAA, Prof. Dr. Gruda, during his speech.

Prof. Dr. Ioan Jelev, former President of both the AAFS and the UEAA, extended his warmest congratulations and greetings to the organizers and participants of Bulgaria's Day of Agricultural Science. "This prestigious event," he stated, "serves as an essential opportunity for dialogue, innovation, and the exchange of best practices in a field that is vital to our shared future."

Subsequently, the European professors visited the Agricultural Academy (Figure 2), accompanied by its president, the Chief Scientific Secretary, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Denitsa Serbezova, and Mrs. Vyara Stefanova. The delegation learned about the work of the Academy's institutes and research centers in biotechnology, plant breeding, crop production, and food security. The hosts highlighted the sector's severe economic difficulties, most notably the critically low purchase prices for agricultural products, which continue to threaten local producers' financial sustainability and market competitiveness.



Figure 2. The delegation visits the Agricultural Academy of Bulgaria.

Conclusion and Outlook

The participation of the UEAA and neighboring academies, such as the Romanian AAFS, at this national celebration reinforced a collective commitment to cross-border scientific cooperation. The visit gave the UEAA an opportunity to learn about the Bulgarian Academy's research priorities and invite its researchers to join the UEAA working groups. Through these groups, member academies can collaborate on climate change and water issues, explore new breeding technologies, and discuss agricultural policy and sustainability.