



## PRESS HANDOUT

### Commissioner Philippe Busquin sets Europe on the technology course

*“The **ABIC 2004** is an excellent chance for Europe to strengthen its worldwide position in the biotech sphere.”*

Cologne, April/23/2004      EU Commissioner Philippe Busquin sees biotechnology as the growth sector of the twenty-first century. Plant biotechnology in particular will greatly help to preserve the environment, ensure more sustainable agriculture and improve the quality of our food, and will therefore become increasingly important.

“For this reason,” as Philippe Busquin said, “our efforts are directed at regaining leadership in responsible use of this technology by 2010, the foundations of which were laid many years ago by the two researchers Marc van Montagu and Jeff Schell with their revolutionary method of DNA transfer. It is up to Europe to play a significant role in this dynamic global development.”

On Monday, 13 September 2004 at 9.30 a.m., **Philippe Busquin, European Research Commissioner**, will open the plenary session *“When will GM Crops Take Root in Europe?”* at **the ABIC 2004 in Cologne** and discuss the importance of plant biotechnology for Europe.

In this year of innovations, Germany will be acting for the first time as host country to one of the world’s major conferences on plant biotechnology, to be held under the motto *“AgBiotech goes Europe”*. Investors, industrial managers, scientists and policy makers from all over the world will come together in 2004 for an intensive exchange of experience with a view to giving new momentum to the development of agricultural biotechnology.

Further sessions will be centred round economic importance, practical coexistence of transgenic cropping with other forms of cultivation, scientific progress in the genetic crop improvement, and new opportunities opened up by the use of plant biotechnology for the energy, medical and food sectors. Objectively based discussions of the chances and risks with the general public during the ABIC 2004 in Cologne will help to spread wider understanding and acceptance of agricultural biotechnology.

The ABIC forum was set up in 1996 to discuss the results of research and development and facilitate joint ventures between research institutes and industrial partners. Until this year the

conference was held once every two years in Canada. Host country for 2006 will be Australia. The organisation of ABIC 2004, for the first time outside Canada, was entrusted to Phytowelt GmbH in Nettetal.

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Further information on ABIC 2004 can be found under: <http://www.abic2004.org>

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