# A special and successful virtual event for the potato sector

**On 10 June the European potato community virtually gathered for the Europatat Congress 2021. Under the slogan "Stay connected – new strategies for the potato sector", the annual event organised by Europatat, which was this year open to all the potato supply chain, focused on the possibilities and challenges that digitalisation can offer to all-size companies in the sector.**

Opening a two-hour digital event, **Gilles Fontaine**, President of Europatat, emphasised that: "This year virtual edition demonstrates our sector's resilience to unexpected changes and the importance of keeping connected despite the new COVID-19 reality. Nowadays more and more companies from farm to fork are switching to digital, including those in the potato sector. Our annual event is thus an excellent opportunity to explore together how to make the most of digitalisation in the potato sector".

The President's kick off of the Congress was followed by the keynote speech of the Digital Expert **Ömer Atiker**, who gave an energising and inspiring presentation on the potential for business transformation via digitalisation. "The digital transformation can add value to the humble tuber from growing to harvest to logistics and sales: The potato can become quite digital – and

worth a lot more!", he concluded.

The second session consisted in a panel debate organised on how digitalisation is reshaping the potato sector. The debate was organised in four rounds and involved three speakers from different parts of the potato supply chain: **Anthony Atlas**, Head of Product and Growth of ClimateAi, a California based ag-tech company enabling agri-businesses to make weather and climate-smart decisions 1 day – 40 years out; **Lilian Escalon**, Director HZPC Europe, a 300m€ business unit of the Dutch potato breeder HZPC; and **Felipe Medina**, Technical Secretary General of ASEDAS, the Spanish food retailers and wholesalers association which is a member of Eurocommerce, the European Association of retailers and wholesalers.

The speaker line up also included **Liam Glennon**, Chairperson of the Local Organising Committee of the World Potato Congress (WPC) 2022 in Dublin, who gave an overview of the programme and activities planned for this unique potato event that will take place in Dublin (Ireland) from 30 May to 2 June 2022. The next Europatat Congress will be organised in the context of the WPC, on 29 and 30 May 2022. Registrations are already open!

Closing the Europatat Congress 2021, **Berta Redondo Benito**, Secretary General of Europatat, said: "*The Europatat Congress has become a key date for the potato sector in Europe. After today's inspiring presentations we can conclude that the potato sector cannot overlook digitalisation, and digitalisation cannot overlook our sector!*".

With more than 100 participants from more than 25 different European and non-European countries, the Europatat Congress 2021 has received an extremely positive feedback, remarking the high quality of the speakers and their inspiring messages. Please note that the recording of the event will be soon available on the website europatatcongress.eu

Europatat Congress 2021 Public Conference was preceded by the annual meeting of the Europatat General Assembly meeting, which was open to members only. The Europatat's 2020-2021 Activity Report, which provides an overview of the Association's work since June 2020, was presented to the membership and is now publicly available on our website.