**Hellenic Republic**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**The Agricultural University of Athens participates in the “MicroSOS” Program, in respect of plants crying for help.**

On Monday 26 and Tuesday 27 February 2024, the kick - off meeting of the MicroSOS Program, entitled “Plants crying for help in a changing world” was held in Málaga in Spain. Indeed, a number of Organizations and Universities participate in the particular Program, such as the Agricultural University of Athens in Greece, the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) in Spain, the University of Tuscia in Italy, the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand, the Leiden University and the Netherlands Institute of Ecology in the Netherlands, as well as the Companies *DeSangosse* and *Akinao* in France and *The Weather Makers* in the Netherlands, wherein the University of the Andalusian Capital acts as the Coordinator.

The specific Program has received funding that amounts to 1,6 million euros, which is a grant awarded by Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions Staff Exchanges, with a duration of four (4) years, commencing in 2024. Seven (7) Academic Partners, three (3) Companies, along with more than thirty (30) Researchers take part in that Program, with a view to promoting research and innovation. The MicroSOS Program shall make effective use of the microbiome towards combating the effects of climate change on Agriculture, by creating the appropriate conditions for knowledge and skills transfer, among Institutions specialized in the Sector of Agriculture.

 Especially, the microbiome, namely, the microbial communities that are inter-related and developed onto and inside plants, may contribute significantly to the adaptation of crops to stressful conditions. This state of the art is the result of the enhancement of the uptake of soil nutrients, in addition to the reduction of the negative impacts of abiotic stress factors, like drought and soil salinity, while the microbiome can activate the immune system of plants against phytopathogenic organisms and insect pests.

Furthermore, the MicroSOS Program provides the Researchers with career prospects by means of the international interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility, whereas it fosters collaborations between European Researchers and Partners in Southeast Asia, thus laying the foundations for future actions and their financing, too. On the part of the Agricultural University of Athens, the Assistant Professor of Phytopathology, namely, Mr. Ioannis Stringlis is the coordinator of the MicroSOS Program, whilst members of the Laboratories of Phytopathology, Plant Physiology and Morphology respectively, inasmuch staff of the Lab of Electron Microscopy of the University will participate in the Program.

All the interested parties may find more information about the MicroSOS Program, on the following link: <https://microsos.org/> and Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MicroSOS_EU>.