



## **Growth in Donau Soja Membership: from 25 to 270 in Five Years**

**Companies from twenty-one countries share our vision of supplying Europe with regional soya beans**

**Vienna, March 24, 2017 – More and more companies are becoming increasingly aware of the added value of sustainable agriculture and the related significance of sustainably certified soya. By joining the Donau Soja Association companies and organisations involved in the agriculture and environment sectors also join forces to bring soya beans back to Europe. During the course of the last five years, Donau Soja membership has grown so quickly that it is now the largest agricultural initiative in Europe.**

The Donau Soja Association has been linking companies and organisations from across Europe since 2012. The ambitious goal is to meet half of the European soya demand through sustainable, regional cultivation by 2025. In an effort to achieve this goal, the association focuses on linking companies and partners from a wide range of fields that share a common interest in the soya bean. These include processors, traders and marketers of soya–or products with soya components—as well as researchers, breeders, laboratories, institutions and NGOs. Member organisations benefit from the chance the association offers for networking and accessing potential customers or partners from across Europe. During the course of the last five years, the initial membership of 25 has increased tenfold, proving that this national project has in fact become an international initiative. Today, the association counts 270 members, primarily small and medium-sized businesses, from 21 countries.

### **Donau Soja Annual Report: A Successful 2016 Brings Momentum to 2017**

By now a fixture in the network: Donau Soja members traditionally gather at the beginning of each spring to hold the general assembly at the Agricultural Exchange Vienna. Five years ago, that is in April 2013, the association was brought to life as a result of the first general assembly. Since this time, companies and organisations have visited this annual event in order to learn more about the association's recent developments and progress.

The Donau Soja Annual Report evidences that we have met major milestones on the way to a European protein supply.

As of 2016, more than 216 companies have been certified and almost 100,000 tons of Donau Soja have been processed. In the last year alone, membership has increased by 20%, with the greatest portion of new members being medium and smaller-sized companies.

According to Matthias Krön, chairman of the association, "More and more organisations are showing interest in becoming a part of our movement. Our

brand program not only serves consumer demand for regional products, but actively advocates for sustainable agriculture and offers companies an easy and safe quality control system.”

### **Increased Demand for European Soya**

Association activities have resulted in a boom in soya cultivation: production of soya in the Danube region has increased from 2.5 million tons (3.7 million tons including Ukraine production) in 2015, to almost 3 million tons in the last year – and 4.1 million tons including Ukraine production. In the last five years acreage has nearly doubled: whereas in 2011 soya was cultivated on only ca. 632,000 hectares of land (and 939,012 hectares including Ukraine), by 2016 acreage had increased to more than 1 million hectares (totalling 1.6 million hectares including Ukraine). Krön concludes that, “There is great demand for European soya both within and beyond Europe – the full potential has yet to be reached.”

### **Bringing together Stakeholders**

Each year the Dona Soja Association welcomes a larger audience to the general assembly held after the networking event: organisations from the agricultural sector, including seed companies, laboratories, agricultural traders, processors, marketers, certification bodies, and NGOs from all over Europe, make use of the extensive Donau Soja network to foster new and old business contacts and to establish new business partnerships and projects. Strategies and current topics surrounding sustainable soya production and supply in Europe are usually discussed late into the evening. Krön maintains that, “We are experiencing steady growth. Our network is constantly expanding and we are able to support other companies in achieving their goals.”

### **About Donau Soja**

The Donau Soja Association is a non-profit, independent association and constitutes Europe’s major initiative in the agricultural sector. The association unites the civilian , politics, and businesses sectors all along the value chain, ranging from non-GM seed production to food of animal and plant origin. Donau Soja's focus is on the support of non-GM, source identified high-quality soya from the Danube Region. The association has more than 265 members from all over Europe. With six subsidiaries (AT, GER, SRB, RO, UA, MD) and two representatives (IT, POL), Donau Soja is well represented. Fifteen countries have signed the Donau Soja Declaration for the promotion of non-GM soya cultivation in Europe. Donau Soja is supported by the Austrian Development Agency.

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