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Doc. RN Dr. Martin Kubala, Ph.D
Dean of Faculty of Sciences
Palacký University
Olomouc

Sub: Letter of support for Professor Petr Smykal

Dear Dr Martin Kubala,

I am writing this letter in support of Professor Petr Smykal's application for full professorship at Palacký University, Olomouc.

I am a geneticist with a research experience of more than 20 years in the area of international agriculture. I am currently working as the Director, Global Research Program—Genetic Gains that includes several units viz. Pre-Breeding, Cell, Molecular Biology & Genetic Engineering, Genomics & Trait Discovery, Forward Breeding, Seed Systems and Biotechnology- ESA at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Patancheru, India. I am the Founding Director for Center of Excellence in Genomics at ICRISAT and a Winthrop Research Professor with The University of Western Australia. I have also served and I am also serving ICRISAT in various capacities including Research Program Director- Grain Legumes (2013-2016), Principal Scientist- Applied Genomics (2008- to date), Senior Scientist (2005-2008). I worked with CGIAR Generation Challenge Programme (GCP), hosted at CIMMYT, Mexico as Theme Leader Comparative and Applied Genomics (CAG) from 2007-2013. I have research experience in the area of crop genomics and molecular breeding.

I have known Prof. Petr Smykal for past many years. We have a long research collaboration with Prof. Petr Smýkal. We had an opportunity to meet each other on several occasions: various conferences, meetings, etc and had discussions on various research activities on legume research. I have also invited him to deliver a presentation in one of the conference (NGGIBCI-V), which I have organized and he had made a presentation. Also, we have co-authored few papers.

I am very much aware with his outstanding research the area of legume domestication. Prof. Petr Smykal has a made significant contribution in the area of legumes research. With his expertise in the area of plant tissue culture, pollen embryogenesis, transgenesis-GMO. Genomics, transcriptomics, Prof Smykal has collaborated with several research institutes all the world.

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Prof. Smykal has made a significant research in the area of legume domestication. His research mainly focuses on seed dormancy and pod dehiscence by applying wide range of anatomical, genetic, transcriptomics and analytical chemistry tools. He has an international reputation on Pisum and Fabeae tribe species phylogeny and genetic diversity and has been involved in the establishment of the world pea collection, providing methodology for efficient germplasm assessment. His research also focuses on the use of crop wild relatives, which are being used for the established of introgression lines to broaden the crop genetic diversity.

Prof. Smykal, a prolific author, has published more than 100 scientific papers in high quality journals. He has been honored with various awards and fellowships. Also, Prof. Smykal is serving different editorial boards as an Associate Editor/Editorial Board member. He has been contributing to many significant scientific committees and also being a reviewer for the funding organizations. Prof. Smykal has also been a frequent invited speaker in various conferences.

With his rich experience in research and expertise, I am very much confident about his teaching contributions.

Based on above, I strongly recommend the promotion of Professor Petr Smykal to full Professor.

Please feel free to contact me for any further information.

r Rajeev K Varshney

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