



## **Chiara Tonelli**

Chiara Tonelli is Professor of Genetics at the University of Milan, Italy, and leader of the Plant Molecular Genetic Group of the Department of Biomolecular Sciences and Biotechnology at Milan. She is a member of the European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO). Her scientific interests range from fundamental aspects of plant biology to biotechnological applications. The major aim of her studies is to decipher the logic of transcriptional control and gene regulation in plants both during development and in interactions with the environment. She contributed to the identification and molecular characterization of regulatory gene families responsible for the coordinated control of flavonoid and anthocyanin metabolic pathways in plants. She discovered an interaction between duplicated genes, termed REED (reduced expression of endogenous duplications), in which the epigenetic mechanism of DNA methylation of promoter regions silences gene expression. More recently she discovered the first transcription factor specifically regulating stomata movements in plants, a finding that opens up new possibilities for improving crop survival and productivity in water scarcity conditions. Chiara has served on numerous scientific committees and science advisory boards in Italy and elsewhere. Currently she is a member of the Advisory Group for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology of the European Commission, and of the Expert Group for Food and Health Research, a board member of the European Plant Science Organisation (EPSO), and a member of the Research and Technological Transfer Committee of the University of Milan.

She serves as a reviewer for several scientific journals (Molecular Cell, Molecular and Cellular Biology, EMBO Journal, Plant Cell, Plant Journal, Plant Molecular Biology) and grant-awarding agencies (USDA, EMBO, TWAS, Human Frontier).

Since 2005 Chiara has been Secretary General of the World Conference on the Future of Science, a cycle of international conferences that gathers together eminent experts from various disciplines to discuss the implications of scientific progress and increase the awareness of society as a whole, not only of the benefits of science, but also of the problems and dilemmas that continuing scientific advance creates. Each year the Conference considers a different scientific theme of crucial significance to society, and examines the implications and benefits of progress in that area.