



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Director-General

Brussels
AGRI.DDG1.B.2.001 Art. 4389360
4 1(b)

Dear Art. 4.1(b) Privacy,

I would like to thank you very much for sharing with us the updated set of common research and innovation (R&I) priorities jointly developed by Copa-Cogeca and the European Technology Platform (ETP) 'Food for Life'.

The European Green Deal priorities, notably the Farm to Fork Strategy, represent the ambition of the EU to lead the transition to fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly agri-food systems. I share your view that R&I is crucial for the European agri-food systems to address the global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, as well as food and nutrition security. Therefore, in the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Commission has recognised R&I as key enablers for addressing the challenges and accelerating the transition. Also, the cross-cutting objective of fostering knowledge exchange, innovation and digitalisation in the future CAP highlights their pertinent role in the transition to sustainable agriculture and food systems.

In our [long-term strategic approach to EU agricultural research and innovation](#), R&I priorities are aligned to the European Green Deal priorities in general, and the Farm to Fork Strategy in particular. We have successfully put this strategy into action by implementing it through two European policies, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Research and Innovation Framework Programme (Horizon), working in close synergy under the common umbrella of the European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' ([EIP-AGRI](#)).

Against this background, I would like to point out that the Commission is already supporting relevant R&I for achieving the ambitious targets and objectives of the Green Deal initiatives, notably the Farm to Fork Strategy, throughout Horizon 2020. Furthermore, under Horizon Europe, the next R&I framework programme for 2021-2027, around EUR 9 billion will be dedicated to R&I in Cluster 6 related to food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment.

Art. 4.1(b) Privacy

Art. 4.1(b) Privacy Art. 4.1(b) Privacy

Art. 4.1(b) Privacy @copa-cogeca.eu; Art. 4.1(b) Privacy @confagricoltura.it

Art. 4.1(b) Privacy

Art. 4.1(b) Privacy 'Food for Life'

Art. 4.1(b) Privacy @nestle.com; Art. 4.1(b) Privacy @fooddrinkeurope.eu

We are pleased to read that the European Green Deal, and in particular the Farm to Fork Strategy, has also inspired you to update your strategic R&I priorities. We have found commonalities between the views of Copa-Cogeca, the ETP ‘Food for Life’ and the Commission on key R&I priorities that deserve attention when devising the EU R&I actions via Horizon Europe and EIP-AGRI, and how these can contribute to the policy priorities of the EU.

We agree that collaboration between relevant actors from across the agri-food systems should be encouraged to co-create knowledge and diverse innovative solutions that respond to the needs of farmers, food business and society, and enhance sustainability and resilience of the systems. Hence, under Horizon Europe, the Commission has strengthened and streamlined the so called ‘multi-actor approach’ to bring research and practice closer together and speed up innovation that responds to real needs of practitioners on the ground.

As regards the R&I priorities, climate change is one of the most pressing challenges of our times. Agriculture and food systems have a significant role to play to reduce and mitigate GHG emissions. They also need to strengthen their capacity to adapt to climate change and its resilience. We are in accord that substantial R&I efforts under Horizon Europe are critical to foster climate mitigation and adaptation in the agri-food sector.

Indeed, the circular bio-based economy has a largely untapped potential for the primary production sector and rural communities. To unlock this potential, the Commission will support relevant R&I activities, including through the partnership Circular Bio-based Europe (CBE). The CBE will be an important instrument to support the development of innovative value chains in the bioeconomy, in which primary producers are better integrated.

We fully recognise the essential role of vibrant rural areas for sustainable agriculture and food systems. Similarly to you, we are convinced that R&I is essential to foster a sustainable, balanced and inclusive development of rural areas in line with the forthcoming Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas.

Like you, we endorse the need to support the tailored development of new technologies, in particular digital and data technologies, as enablers for increasing the sustainability and competitiveness of agri-food systems and rural communities. R&I actions in this field are expected – among others – to exploit the potential of AI and earth observation, to accelerate the uptake of innovative digital and data-based solutions, and to facilitate increased cross-sectoral collaboration. Overall, a comprehensive approach to strategic programming at European level of R&I in digital and data technologies is set out with substantial funding and building on synergies between Horizon Europe Clusters 4 and 6 and the Digital Europe Programme.


In addition, under the CAP, the Commission will also work with Member States to reinforce the EIP-AGRI and promote effective Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) fostering knowledge exchange, innovation and advice as key enablers for all actors working in agri-food systems to become sustainable.

We would like to invite you to continue sharing the Copa-Cogeca and ETP 'Food for Life' vision for R&I in agri-food sector, in particular through the debates that will be launched during the third edition of the R&I Days¹ that will take place between 23 and 24 of June. The Farm to Fork 2021 conference on 14 and 15 October 2021 will also offer ample opportunities for stakeholder engagement to shape together the future R&I priorities for sustainable agri-food systems.

Yours sincerely,

In absence of the Director General
Wolfgang BURTSCHER

Art. 4.1(b) Privacy



Mihail DUMITRU
Deputy Director General

¹ [European Research and Innovation Days | Research and Innovation \(europa.eu\)](https://european-research-and-innovation-days.eu)