

The EU Competitiveness agenda and Competitiveness Fund 2028–2034 must put Agriculture and the agri-food chain at their core

Agriculture and Food have always been at the heart of the European project, a pillar of our economy, our security and our way of life. It is a strategic sector of the economy, be it at EU or national level.

Taken together, the entire agrifood value chain generates more than €1 trillion in gross value added to the EU economy, surpassing the economic footprint of other EU industries.

Every day, Europe's farmers and agri-food actors provide citizens with safe, high-quality and nutritious food, alongside feed, fuel and fibre. In doing so, they strengthen Europe's resilience, sustainability and stability in an increasingly uncertain geopolitical environment.

The signing organisations consider the ECF a major opportunity to mobilise investments in agriculture, food and the whole agri-food chain - including its processing and manufacturing activities - within the future Multiannual Financial Framework enabling deployment of key strategic investments for infrastructure, services and skills focusing on strategic actions and reducing the investment gap of the sector.

Achieving this potential requires a coherent framework that goes beyond agricultural policy alone. Agriculture and the agri-food chain have a unique capacity to contribute to all ECF priorities: clean transition and decarbonisation, digital transformation, health, biotechnology, agriculture and bioeconomy, as well as security, defence and space.

This recognition must be **reflected in the design and implementation of the ECF through dedicated sufficient resources, appropriate governance** and effective participation of agricultural and agri-food chain actors.

For this reason, **we are strongly concerned by the approach reflected in the draft ITRE** report, which would replace the European Commission's proposed window on "Health, Biotech, Agriculture and Bioeconomy" with a broader "Sustainable Prosperity" approach, potentially limiting agriculture and food sectors' direct access to ECF support.

At a time when the EU is seeking to strengthen its strategic autonomy, food security and industrial capacity, **reducing the place of agriculture and food sectors within the ECF would send the wrong political signal and undermine one of Europe's key strategic sectors.**

The agri-food chain is not only a beneficiary of competitiveness policies; it is an essential contributor to them. **Excluding agriculture and food from a clear and dedicated place within the ECF would limit the Fund's ability to deliver on its own objectives.**

The **Council's recent Partial General Approach confirms the Commission's original approach with a dedicated Window "Health, Biotech, Agriculture and Bioeconomy"**.

Similarly, the **AGRI Committee Opinion and the more than 100 cross-party amendments tabled to the draft ITRE report aim to improve the Commission proposal and the draft ITRE**

Report by recognising the sector's full potential to contribute to the ECF's strategic objectives – from growth, competitiveness, security – and ensuring that agriculture and food are properly integrated into the Fund.

We ask the European Parliament to support the above approach: **Investing in the EU's agriculture and food sectors across the whole agri food chain means investing in Europe's security, resilience, growth, and its future.**

Europe needs to ensure that agriculture and food sectors receive the recognition they require to continue contributing to Europe's competitiveness and the future of the European project.

Animalhealtheurope



AVEC – European Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade



CEFS - European Association of Sugar Manufacturers



CEEV - Comité Européen des Entreprises Vins



CELCAA - European Liaison Committee for Agricultural and Agri-Food Trade



CEMA –European Agricultural Machinery Association



CEETAR - European Organisation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors



CEJA - European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA)



CEPM



CEPM
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CIBC-IMV-IBC - International Butchers` Confederation



CIBE – International Confederation of European Beet Growers



Clitravi – Liaison Centre for the Meat Processing Industry in the European Union



Coceral - European association of trade in cereals, oilseeds, rice, pulses, olive oil, oils and fats, animal feed and agrosupply



Copa-Cogeca – European Farmers and Agri-Cooperatives



COTANCE



CropLife Europe



EDA - European Dairy Association



EFFAB – European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders



ELO – European Landowners' Organization



Euro Foie Gras



EuroMalt



EUROMONTANA



Europabio



European Flour Millers



European Rabbit Association (ERA)



Euroseeds



European Spice Association



Federation of European Aquaculture Producers.



FEFAC – European Feed Manufacturers' Federation



FEDIOL



EU Association of Specialty Feed Ingredients and their Mixtures



Fédération Européenne pour la Santé Animale et la Sécurité Sanitaire



FoodDrinkEurope



Primary Food Processors



Rural Youth Europe



SpiritisEurope



StarchEurope



UECBV – European Livestock and Meat Trades Union

