

Statement on the strategic importance of R&I in agriculture and food for the EU's competitiveness, resilience and strategic autonomy

Brussels, 12 May 2026,

Five European Technology Platforms (ETPs), alongside 24 signatories¹ from the agri-food sector, call on the European Parliament and the Council to recognise agriculture, aquaculture, and food systems as strategic sectors within the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) and the 10th Research and Innovation Framework Programme (Horizon Europe).

At a time of increasing geopolitical instability, climate pressure, and economic uncertainty, the European Union must reinforce the foundations of its long-term competitiveness and resilience. Agriculture, bioeconomy and food systems play a central role in these efforts. They ensure food security, support rural economies, contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and are essential to securing and increasing sustainable biomass supply and underpin key manufacturing value chains across Europe.

A forward-looking European competitiveness strategy cannot overlook the agri-food sector. Sustainable and innovative agricultural and aquatic food systems drive productivity, reduce strategic dependencies, and strengthen the EU's capacity to respond to external shocks. Investment in research and innovation in this sector is therefore not only a matter of sustainability, but of economic resilience and global leadership.

Despite its strategic importance, agriculture, aquaculture and food systems risk being underrepresented in emerging competitiveness instruments. We therefore urge the Members of the European Parliament and Member States to:

- **Explicitly include agriculture, bioeconomy and food in the title of Policy Window 2** of the European Competitiveness Fund and Horizon Europe, to reflect their strategic relevance and ensure appropriate prioritisation alongside other key sectors;
- **Ensure sufficient and dedicated funding for agri-food research and innovation under ECF and Horizon Europe**, commensurate with the sector's contribution to competitiveness, resilience, sustainability, and food security;
- **Guarantee fair and balanced representation of all agri-food stakeholders in priority-setting and programming procedures**, including researchers, farmers, industry, and civil society, to ensure that funding priorities are relevant, inclusive, and responsive to real-world needs.

A coherent and ambitious policy framework that fully integrates agriculture, aquaculture and food systems into the EU's competitiveness agenda will be essential to safeguard Europe's strategic autonomy, economic vitality, and societal well-being, while accelerating innovation across the agri-food value chain.

The signatories stand ready to contribute constructively to this effort and to work with EU institutions to ensure that agriculture and food systems receive the strategic attention they require.

¹ Following a second round of endorsements, this statement was updated on 12 May 2026 to reflect an increase in signatories from 9 to 24 organisations. No changes were made to the substance of the statement.

Signatories (updated on 12 May 2026)

EATIP

European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform



ETP Food for Life



FABRE TP

Farm Animal Breeding and Reproductive European Technology Platform



Plants for the Future ETP



TP Organics



Aarhus University's Faculty of Technical Sciences



BioForum



BOKU



EFFAB

European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders



ELO

European Landowners' Organization



EURAF

European Agroforestry Federation



Euroseeds



FiBL



FoodDrinkEurope



FQH

International Research Association for Organic Food Quality and Health



GreenSupplyChain DIH



IFOAM Organics Europe



Inagro



INIA

National Institute of Agricultural and Food Research and Technology



INRAE

National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment



ISOFAR

International Society of Organic Agriculture Research



Louis Bolk Instituut



LUKE

Natural Resources Institute Finland



NOFIMA

Norwegian food research institute



S2AQUA

Collaborative Laboratory, Association for a Sustainable and Smart Aquaculture



SEAE

Spanish Society for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology



SUA

Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra



Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore



University of Padova

