



Council of the
European Union

026347/EU XXVI. GP
Eingelangt am 14/06/18

Brussels, 14 June 2018
(OR. en)

10121/18

AGRI 294
RECH 289

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

No. prev. doc.: 6743/18

Subject: Commission's reply to the letter sent by the President of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" (AGRIFISH) Council, Mr Rumen Porodzanov, on the Bioeconomy

Delegations will find in Annex the reply by Commissioners Carlos Moedas and Phil Hogan to the letter sent by Minister Rumen PORODZANOV on the exchange of views on the Bioeconomy held at the AGRIFISH Council on 19 February 2018.

CARLOS MOEDAS
Member of the European Commission

PHIL HOGAN
Member of the European Commission

Brussels, **19 AVR. 2018**
Ares S(2018)1561904

Dear Minister,

Thank you for including the bioeconomy on the agenda of the last AGRIFISH meeting and for your letter summarising the key aspects of the Council's exchange of views on the bioeconomy. This allowed for a very fruitful and timely discussion on how to best include farmers, foresters and fish producers into the value chains emerging in the bioeconomy, and on the fair sharing of the benefits. We welcome your conclusions of this discussion, and consider them a valuable input for our work on the revision of the bioeconomy strategy.

Shortly after the Council discussions, the Commission published a roadmap outlining the process for the update of the Bioeconomy Strategy. A number of focused actions are to be considered in the updated strategy. These fully address the recommendations and issues discussed by the Council and addressed in your letter.

In a joint effort, our services are currently working to define the content of the new actions to be included in the new action plan. In this context, one key cross-cutting consideration is the need of primary producers to be appropriately integrated in the new bioeconomy value chains. Promoting business models that would allow a fair share of the benefits across the value chain is a key concern in our work as well.

The Commission also acknowledges the importance of agricultural research and innovation in the development of a knowledge-based and sustainable bioeconomy. Agriculture needs to ensure food security and, at the same time, satisfy an increasing demand of biomass for the emerging bio-based sector. Developing new technologies and production modes that ensure economic, social and environmental sustainability is thus essential.

Involvement of farmers and foresters in the innovation process, and the transfer of knowledge and technology from the labs to the fields is key. To this end, the Commission has promoted in the last years the so-called "multi-actor approach" in agricultural research and innovation, in the framework of the agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI). The Bio-Based Industries Joint Undertaking, and in particular their flagship projects, have also involved farmers and foresters in new value chains with bio-based industries. We will strive to strengthen these approaches and include them into the updated Bioeconomy Strategy.

Mr Rumen Porodzanov
Minister of Agriculture and Food, Republic of Bulgaria
President of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council
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We believe that Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers have a key role in exploiting the opportunities of the bioeconomy in rural and coastal areas of the EU. As a concrete step, our services plan to support the BIOEAST Initiative, which recently presented a common Vision for the development of bioeconomy strategies in most of the Central and Eastern European Member States. The European Commission believes that this initiative will create the framework conditions for the sustainable modernization of primary sectors, the creation of new value chains while protecting and restoring the natural capital and, ultimately, an increased and more focused use of EU funds – thus creating value for the EU as a whole. For this reason, our services foresaw a Coordination and Support Action in the Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 2 and are ready to provide technical support for the development of a strategic research and innovation agenda.

We thank you again for your note and we would be most willing to exchange views with the Council again after the update of the strategy is published in the second half of 2018.

Yours sincerely,



Carlos MOEDAS



Phil HOGAN