

Contribution from : Eurogroup for Animals, 6 rue des Patriotes 1000 Bruxelles
Registered organisation No 680 9935 493 – 49

Eurogroup for Animals agrees that a new set of policies is needed to tackle the challenges that the EU is going to face. We agree that conserving natural resources and raw materials and using them efficiently will be key drivers of the future competitiveness of the EU industries and economies, including agriculture and livestock farming.

However, we are concerned that there seems to be no link between the EU 2020 strategy and the political guidelines for the next Commission, in particular concerning putting people at the heart of the EU, by reinforcing the participation of citizens. Indeed the paper lacks consistency with other objectives for the next 10 years and Commission term, in particular those included in the renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy.

We miss in the EU 2020 consultation document a clear reference to sustainable agriculture in the meaning of agriculture respecting the environment and providing quality products to EU citizens while ensuring the conservation of natural resources and the respect of farm animals. In a time of over-consumption we think that the EU has the responsibility to promote change towards less consumption of better quality products rather than more consumption of low quality cheap products.

However, we question the need to increase productivity, in sectors such as agriculture and livestock farming, as it implies a higher consumption of inputs and an increased pressure on the land and the animals. In an era where there is general recognition that the earth resources are being over-exploited we do not agree that it is necessary to increase productivity to secure jobs and the EU's competitiveness.

We agree with the need to use improved technologies to produce more efficiently but not at all cost. We call on the Commission to guarantee that all new technologies are thoroughly assessed for their impact not only on the competitiveness of the industry but on the environment, and on the welfare of animals and people. EU citizens do not want technological progress which presents potential risks to the environment, humans and animals. We call on the Commission, when preparing its detailed proposals for the EU 2020 strategy, to fully take into account the precautionary principle and the opinion of citizens, as well as Article 13 of the Lisbon Treaty, which requires the Union and the Member States to pay full regard to the requirements of animal welfare when formulating and implementing the Union's agriculture, fisheries, transport, internal market, research and technological development and space policies.

We believe changing methods of production to better respect the environment and animal welfare would allow jobs to be created and the use of new, innovative technologies which integrate harmoniously the principles of sustainability.

We agree that education and research must be supported as tools to reach a more sustainable economy and again research and educational programmes must integrate the principles of environmental and animal welfare protection, as enshrined in the EU renewed Sustainable Development Strategy. Educational programmes in particular are needed to increase EU citizens' awareness on the impact of their consumption habits on the environment and animal welfare, including the relation with climate change.

In conclusion, it is our view that the document is incomplete in presenting how the future EU policies intend to green the EU economy. Indeed, the role of agriculture and livestock farming in the EU economy and their impact on the environment and on climate change are not taken into account. It is however widely recognised that this impact is huge, with for example at least 10% of all EU greenhouse gas emissions coming from agriculture, this share being higher in reality as this figure doesn't take into account all related emissions (such as deforestation for the cultivation of feed imported into the EU for livestock production). This role must be integrated in the future EU political priorities, to be taken into account when the budget review will be discussed.