



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on the European Innovation Partnership “Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability”

*3176th AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES Council meeting
Luxembourg, 18 June 2012*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING

- the European Council Conclusions of 17 June 2010 on “Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”;
- the Council Conclusions of 26 November 2010 entitled “Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative “Innovation Union”: Accelerating the transformation of Europe through innovation in a fast changing world”;
- the European Council Conclusions of 4 February 2011 calling for synergies between the EU and Member States to ensure that innovations with a societal benefit get to the market quicker;
- the Council Conclusions of 6 December 2011 on “Partnering in research and innovation”;
- the Council Conclusions of 19 December 2011 on “Roadmap to a resource-efficient Europe”;
- the Council Conclusions on European Innovation Partnerships of the Council (“Competitiveness”) of 30-31 May 2012;
- the Communication from the Commission on “Innovating for Sustainable Growth: A Bioeconomy for Europe” and the Copenhagen Declaration for a bio-economy in action March 2012;
- the Communication from the Commission on “Horizon 2020 - The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation”;

P R E S S

1. WELCOMES the Commission's Communication on the European Innovation Partnership “Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability”, aimed at fostering a competitive and sustainable agriculture and forestry;
2. IS AWARE OF the challenges and possibilities within an increased global demand for agricultural products, and hence an increased agricultural output; AS WELL AS of the challenge of improving sustainability and resource efficiency while addressing environmental issues in relation to agricultural production in general;
3. STRESSES the potential of the European agri-food and forestry sector to actively contribute to solutions to these challenges, and the potential of new earnings for European farmers in the growing bio-economy;
4. UNDERLINES the necessity to unlock the potential in the European agri-food sector and up- and down-stream sectors by fostering innovation in products, processes and services throughout the whole food supply chain and thereby creating an environment in which ideas can be turned into commercial successes more easily and thus strengthening the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and enabling farmers to get new earnings;
5. EMPHASISES the need to bridge the existing gap between research and innovation and its practical applications in agriculture, resulting in sustainably increased production with a more sustainable use of resources, and;
6. AGREES with the aim of the EIP to accelerate the speed of knowledge exchange and technological transfer from science to farming practice, as well as to provide a more systematic feedback about practice needs from farming to science, and thereby provide a working interface between agriculture, bio-economy, science, and others at Union, national, regional and local level;
7. ACKNOWLEDGES that an important way to reach the aim of the EIP is to bring together all relevant actors at Union, national, regional and local levels, and to give new ideas to Member States on how to streamline, simplify and better coordinate existing instruments and initiatives;
8. EMPHASISES that innovation has different meanings in different Member States, and that innovation may be technological, non technological, or social, and may be based on new or traditional practices and therefore innovative actions should take these differences into account;
9. RECOGNISES the added value of the bottom-up approach envisioned by the Commission, based on operational groups and relying on an effective streamlining of existing Union policies and involvement of Member States and stakeholders;

10. EMPHASISES the fact that the EIP will rely mainly on already established mechanisms, and thereby avoid creating new structures, but will strengthen the efficiency of existing ones for Rural Development Policy and for the EU Research and Innovation Framework, thus avoiding any undue administrative burdens and REITERATES that the implementation of the EIP must be addressed through the proper political and administrative channels including the Programme Committees;
 11. NOTES that the high level steering board, consisting of transparently selected representatives from Member States and stakeholders, will provide strategic advice and give orientations to the EIP by establishing a strategic implementation plan, AND ACKNOWLEDGES the experience of the pilot EIP on “Active and Healthy Ageing” mentioned in the Communication hence that the governance of the EIP should remain light;
 12. INVITES the Commission to undertake concrete steps toward having a strategic implementation plan of the EIP prepared with the aim of involving all stakeholders in delivering specific results and innovation in the agri-food sector, and LOOKS FORWARD to endorsing the “Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability” strategic Implementation Plan, which will give strategic advice to the EIP."
-