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Report Name: EU Strategic Dialogue Charts a Course for the Future of EU
Agriculture

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Report Highlights:

On September 4, 2024, a working group consisting of 29 European stakeholders released its report on the “Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture” following seven months of intensive consultations. The report assesses the challenges and provides guidelines for fostering economically profitable, environmentally sustainable, and socially responsible agriculture, food systems, and rural areas in the EU. Key recommendations include strengthening farmers' positions in the food value chain, enhancing sustainable farming practices, reducing GHG emissions, and promoting sustainability in trade policy. European Commission President von der Leyen announced that the report will inform her new roadmap on the "Vision for Agriculture and Food" which will be delivered within the first 100 days of her second mandate.

Summary

On 4 September 2024, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen received [the final report](#) of the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture. The report presents an assessment of challenges and guidelines, followed by a set of recommendations aimed at fostering economically profitable, environmentally sustainable, and socially responsible agriculture, food systems, and rural areas in the EU. The 14 recommendations include:

- Strengthening farmers' position in the food value chain
- Deploying a new approach to deliver on sustainability
- Preparing a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) fit for purpose
- Financing the transition
- Promoting sustainability and competitiveness in trade policy
- Making the healthy and sustainable choice the easy one
- Enhancing sustainable farming practices
- Reducing GHG emissions in agriculture
- Creating pathways for sustainable animal farming in the EU
- Further action to better preserve and manage farmland, promote water-resilient agriculture, and develop innovative plant breeding approaches
- Promote robust risk and crisis management
- Building an attractive and diverse sector
- Better access to and better use of knowledge and innovation
- Governance change and new culture of cooperation

The vision outlined in the report suggests that by 2035/2040, European agriculture and food systems will be economically profitable, environmentally sustainable, and socially responsible. This vision includes:

- Ensuring food security and high standards of animal welfare.
- Protecting and restoring the natural environment.
- Contributing to global food security and maintaining strategic autonomy.
- Supporting a diverse and resilient agricultural sector.
- Encouraging innovation and investment.
- Making farming an attractive and viable career choice.
- Providing quality jobs and better social rights for agricultural workers.
- Promoting diversified and sustainable farming practices.

The report calls on the European Commission, the European Parliament, Member States, and stakeholders to adopt these recommendations and translate them into "*bold and swift decisions*". European Commission President von der Leyen has already [announced](#) that she will carefully study these recommendations, which should inform her new roadmap on the "Vision for Agriculture and Food" to be delivered within the first 100 days of her second mandate.

However, it is important to note that the Strategic Dialogue represents a new type of forum within EU and the Commission is not required to act on the recommendations.

Background

The Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture was announced by the President of the European Commission in her State of the Union Address on September 13th, 2023. The initiative was officially launched in Brussels on January 25th, 2024, bringing together [29 major stakeholders](#) from the agrifood sector to jointly deliberate on prospects and pathways for the development of EU agriculture policy. Professor Peter Strohschneider, chair of the Federal government of Germany's "Commission for the Future of Agriculture", was tabbed by President von der Leyen to chair the Strategic Dialogue. He solicited input from EU-wide organizations active throughout the agrifood supply chain, specifically focusing on four critical questions to guide the work of the Strategic Dialogue:

1. How can farmers and rural communities be given a better perspective, including a fair standard of living?
2. How can agriculture be supported within the boundaries of our planet and its ecosystem?
3. How can better use be made of the immense opportunities offered by knowledge and technological innovation?
4. How can a bright and thriving future for Europe's food system be promoted in a competitive world?

Trade Related Aspects of the Report

The report on the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture addresses several trade aspects, focusing on promoting sustainability and competitiveness in trade policy, ensuring coherence between trade and sustainability policies, and demonstrating leadership in global trade policy reform. Here are the key trade-related recommendations and considerations:

1. **Promoting sustainability and competitiveness in trade policy:** A comprehensive review of negotiation strategies and economic models for upcoming agreements and those currently under negotiation is necessary.
2. **Promoting the global transition:** The European Commission should demonstrate more leadership and assertiveness in reforming the global trade policy framework at the World Trade Organization (WTO). At the same time, it should promote dialogue and cooperation to drive progress and prevent trade tensions, complementary to its trade agreements and autonomous measures. When the EU adopts import requirements in EU law in ways that are consistent with the WTO rules, it should be done by assessing existing agreements such as equivalence or reciprocity models.
3. **Reassess the EU's trade agreement approach:** EU agrifood stakeholders believe that the Commission should review its method of conducting impact assessments prior to trade

negotiations. Impact assessments should further explain the specific or regional agricultural production circumstances in partner countries and within their own agri-food chain. They should assess, based on scientific criteria, whether there is robust evidence that partners might be able to comply with the highest EU health and environmental standards in agricultural production with differing production methods on a case-by-case scenario.

4. **Coherence between trade and animal welfare standards:** The European Commission should ensure that trade policies and agreements are consistent with the EU's animal welfare standards.
5. **Diversified market access:** The Commission should continue to seek diversified market access opportunities and unlock technical market access challenges with third-country partners to ensure supply chain resilience. This will require solving a set of sustainability challenges associated with the import and export of agri-food, impacting food security and having an impact on biodiversity and social sustainability.

Public Reactions

EU stakeholders

CropLife Europe, a contributing stakeholder representing Europe's crop industry, [recognized](#) the European Commission's Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture as a vital platform for evaluating the agricultural sector's role in enhancing the resilience of the food system. They emphasized the importance of a forward-looking, well-defined, and coordinated EU framework to support a thriving agricultural sector that competes globally while maintaining farmers' living standards, promoting rural areas, and ensuring food security. They appreciated the emphasis on an outcome-based EU regulatory framework, calling for an enabling, predictable, and science-based regulatory framework, which is crucial for providing farmers with the necessary tools and innovations to produce safe, healthy, and affordable food while protecting the environment.

Euroseeds, a contributing stakeholder representing the European seed sector, [welcomed](#) the report while advocating for leveraging new technologies and innovative products to create a competitive and sustainable agri-food sector, calling for concrete policy and regulatory actions in the new Commission term.

Copa and Cogeca, the main EU farm lobby and a participating stakeholder, [welcomed](#) the deliberative approach and comprehensive recommendations of report, emphasizing the strategic importance of agriculture and food security. Copa and Cogeca called for swift, pragmatic actions to tackle challenges like unfair competition, limited income, rising energy costs, generational renewal, and climate change. They supported the proposal to create a European Board on Agri-Food for ongoing dialogue and stressed the need for greater transparency and broader involvement of farmers and agri-cooperatives.

EuroCommerce, a contributing stakeholder representing the retail and wholesale sector, [welcomed](#) how the report addresses challenges such as climate change, geopolitical turmoil, farmers' incomes, and generational renewal. EuroCommerce emphasized the commitment of retailers and wholesalers to

support farmers and help consumers make sustainable choices. Director-General Christel Delberghe urged the European Commission, Parliament, and member states to use the recommendations for future policymaking and maintain the spirit of open dialogue.

Slow Food and Agroecology Europe [welcomed](#) the report's recommendations for greater sustainability and a food systems approach. However, they emphasized the need for concrete actions and political commitment to achieve these goals and align with the Green Deal objectives.

The American Chamber of Commerce to the EU (AmCham EU) [praised](#) the successful outcome of the European Commission's Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture, emphasizing its importance in addressing the critical challenges faced by the agricultural sector in Europe. AmCham EU expressed its readiness to partner with the European Commission and other stakeholders to implement the shared vision from the discussions, ensuring that European agriculture continues to thrive and serve as a cornerstone of the economy and society.

The European Parliament

On September 16, 2024, the European Parliament held a plenary discussion regarding the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture. A Commission representative at the session emphasized the importance of addressing climate change and ensuring fair incomes for farmers, while reducing bureaucracy and promoting sustainability. MEPs expressed diverse views, with some welcoming the dialogue's outcomes and others criticizing the lack of concrete reforms and support for farmers. Key issues discussed included the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), sustainable agriculture, trade agreements, animal welfare, and the need for fair farmer incomes. The debate highlighted the necessity of continued collaboration among stakeholders and EU institutions to effectively implement the recommendations.

Attachments:

No Attachments.