

AREPO analysis on the “Vision for Agriculture and Food”

March 2025 | Brussels



The Association of European Regions for Products of Origin

The European network of regions and producer associations
that deals with products of quality and origin

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Attention! *This document does not express an AREPO political position.
It simply is a technical analysis realised by AREPO services.*

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Part 1 | Introduction

On 19 February 2025 the European Commission published the [Vision for Agriculture and Food](#). It was proposed as a **priority initiative for the first 100 days** of this Commission's mandate, led by Executive Vice-President Fitto and Commissioner for Agriculture Hansen, under the guidance of President von der Leyen.



This Communication builds on multiple strategic inputs, including notably [the Strategic Dialogue on the future of EU agriculture](#), [the Draghi Report on the future of European competitiveness](#), [the Letta report on the future of the Single Market](#), and [the Niinistö Report on how to enhance Europe's civilian and defence preparedness and readiness](#).

It sets out a **vision for Europe's agri-food system for 2040 and beyond to secure its long-term competitiveness, attractiveness and sustainability**. The document provides for broad guidelines and ambitions without specifying how they will be implemented, but listing a series of forthcoming strategic or legislative texts that will clarify this aspect.

It also emphasizes a new way of working based on **trust and dialogue across the agri-food system**, both in the EU and globally. The Commission aims to deepen engagement with farmers, food chain operators, and civil society at local and regional levels. Existing stakeholder consultation mechanisms, including the Civil Dialogue Groups, will be revised to ensure more meaningful participation in policy design. The [European Board on Agriculture and Food](#) will provide strategic advice, while the [EU CAP Network and Annual Youth Policy Dialogues](#) will foster exchanges and youth inclusion. Additionally, the Commission will maintain **continuous dialogue with EU institutions and key international organisations and partners**. To ensure effective monitoring of the implementation of this Vision, the **Commission will report regularly to all EU institutions** on the progress regarding the successful delivery of the various initiatives.

Part 2 | Four priority areas

The Vision aims to build an agri-food system that is attractive, competitive, sustainable and fair for current and future generations.

Attractiveness

Competitiveness

Future-proofing

Connection

I. Attractiveness

Making farming a viable and appealing career by :

- ensuring sufficient **incomes** to thrive and attract future generations;
- continuing producing food that is **affordable** for everyone and meets consumer demands;

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- ▶ supporting entrepreneurial opportunities through innovation and the green transition;
- ▶ properly rewarding ecosystem services that benefit the environment;
- ▶ fair redistributing the costs and responsibilities of the transition across all actors along the chain.

II. Competitiveness

Strengthening the sector's position in global markets through:

- ▶ diversifying trade relations, by creating new export opportunities and thus reducing critical dependencies;
- ▶ simplifying policies, to alleviate the burden of bureaucracy;
- ▶ enhancing resilience through effective risk and crisis management, to withstand and recover from shocks but also to adapt and transform.

III. Future-proofing

Embracing innovation and sustainability for long-term resilience:

- ▶ to support the EU's climate objectives, while preserving healthy soils, clean water and air, and protecting and restoring Europe's biodiversity;
- ▶ Stakeholders along the food chain contribute jointly to delivering these results and share transition risks;
- ▶ All segments of the agri-food system operate in line with a [One Health approach](#).

IV. Connection

Valuing food and fostering fair living and working conditions in rural areas (right to stay):

- ▶ by reconnecting food with territory, seasonality, and traditions;
- ▶ by continuing efforts to reduce food loss and food waste;
- ▶ with well-connected rural and coastal areas, including outermost regions;
- ▶ by attracting more women and young people to the profession;
- ▶ protecting workers' rights on farms and along the food value chain, including mental health as part of the social support system;
- ▶ supporting agri-food SMEs.

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Part 3 | Actions planned for each priority

I. Attractiveness

Attractiveness	
Priority area	Key actions
Fair and Equitable Food Chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Revision of Unfair Trade Practices (UTP) Directive; ▶ Revision of CMO Regulation to strengthen farmers' position in the supply chain; ▶ Support farmer to join cooperatives and producer organizations to improve market access (The CAP is already supporting farmers in this regard); ▶ Increase transparency on costs and margins via the EU Agrifood Chain Observatory (AFCO), that will elaborate and publish indicators related to the formation of prices in the food chain to guide further action.
Fairer and better targeted public support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Future CAP to be simpler, targeted, and incentive-based; ▶ Making more attractive and extending the use of simplified income support tools with a streamlined system of conditions and controls to reduce administrative burdens for small farmers; ▶ Focus support on active farmers, small and medium-sized farms, and strategic agricultural production (particular attention to the farmers in areas with natural constraints, young and new farmers, and mixed farms); ▶ Introduce degressivity and capping measures to ensure fair distribution of CAP funds; ▶ Payments for ecosystem services will be streamlined and simplified, as well as investment support, and crisis and risk management tools.
Leveraging Innovation and New Income Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Promote organic farming, agroecology, and bioeconomy for economic and environmental benefits; ▶ Bioeconomy Strategy, to be presented by the end of 2025; ▶ Develop financing tools like carbon farming and nature credits; ▶ Expand renewable energy production on farms, such as solar, wind, and biogas;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Support digitalization and precision farming to optimize costs and increase profitability.
Investing in the Agri-Food Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Efficiently use public funding and investment and leverage and de-risk private capital; ▶ Strengthen collaboration with the European Investment Bank Group (EIBG); ▶ Explore risk insurance schemes and public-private partnerships to de-risk investments.
Encouraging Generational Renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop a Generational Renewal Strategy (2025) to tackle access to land, investments, and skills; ▶ Improve land mobility schemes and transparency in land transactions; ▶ Launch an EU Observatory on Farmland to monitor land use trends and market behavior.

II. Competitiveness

Competitiveness	
Priority area	Key actions
Reduce dependencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Comprehensive plan to address protein supply challenges; ▶ Diversifying imports;
Fairer global competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reinforcing agri-food diplomacy and pursuing a stronger alignment of production standards (applied to imported products, notably on pesticides and animal welfare); ▶ Task force for control on imports; ▶ Establish a Unity Safety Net to protect the agri-food sector in the face of global challenges; ▶ Launching a workstream on livestock to develop policy pathways for its long-term development.
Preparedness and risk-proofing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ European Climate Adaptation Plan; ▶ Water Resilience Strategy; ▶ Cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB), with banks, insurance and re-insurance companies to improve the availability and affordability of agricultural insurances for farmers.

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Simplification Packages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Integration of satellite technology; ▶ Data-sharing technologies for more streamlined and automated reporting opportunities; ▶ Simplification package of the current agricultural legislative framework (Q2 2025): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) On-farm simplification and streamlining of requirements that better recognise various situations and farming practices (such as organic farming); (ii) Streamlining support for smaller and medium-sized farms by greater use of simplified payments; (iii) Boosting competitiveness through improved and simplified planning and access to financial instruments available under the current MFF; (iv) Giving greater flexibility to the Member States for the management of strategic plans. ▶ Cross-cutting legislative simplification package of measures that deliver meaningful simplification in other policy areas than the CAP that affect farmers, the food and feed businesses and the related administrations (2025).
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III. Future-proofing

Future-proofing	
Priority area	Key actions
Climate-neutral and resilient EU by 2050	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review of the relevant legislation regulating GHG emissions and removals from the agriculture and the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry sectors; ▶ Toolbox of specific measures to reduce livestock emissions, based on the recommendations of the workstream on livestock; ▶ The future CAP will assess how to support farmers best in reducing further greenhouse gas emissions from their farming and livestock activities;

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Incentives for sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Carbon Removal and Carbon Farming (CRCF) certification framework; ▶ On-farm Sustainability Compass: voluntary benchmarking system for on-farm sustainability assessments, developed based on a bottom-up, participatory and ‘customer-driven’ approach; <div style="border: 1px solid #76923c; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="margin: 0;">On-farm Sustainability</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) It should act as a one-stop-shop that streamlines reporting and reduces administrative burdens for farmers, allowing them to monitor and record sustainability data only once. 2) It will support farmers in gradually adopting more sustainable practices and attracting new sources of financing. It will allow them to better measure and benchmark their sustainability performance and demonstrate their provision of ecosystem services through easier data sharing. 3) Improved measurement and reporting can help design public policies in a proportionate way. </div>
Farming and Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ No further ban of pesticides if alternatives are not yet available, unless the pesticide in question represents a threat to human health or to the environment that agriculture relies upon for its viability; ▶ Accelerating access to biopesticides; ▶ Reinforcement of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA); ▶ Incentives and support to farming practices that recover, maintain or improve soil health (organic farming and integrated approaches); ▶ Water Resilience Strategy; ▶ Improving nutrients management at farm level and increasing nutrients circularity: evaluation of the Nitrates Directive (end of 2025).

IV. Connection

Connection	
Priority area	Key actions
Fostering fair living and working conditions in vibrant rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Improve the synergy between the CAP and Cohesion Policy, to foster economic diversification in rural areas through investments in infrastructure, essential services and rural tourism, ensuring a more

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	<p>effective coordination of funding and sectoral strategies for integrated and sustainable development;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Updating the EU Rural Action Plan and Rural Pact; ▶ Further development of the bioeconomy; ▶ Strengthening participatory local development tools, like LEADER/community-led local development and other forms of cooperation like Smart villages
Women's engagement and equal opportunities in the farming sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Establishing a Women in Farming Platform
Preparedness and risk-proofing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ European Climate Adaptation Plan; ▶ Water Resilience Strategy; ▶ Cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB), with banks, insurance and re-insurance companies to improve the availability and affordability of agricultural insurances for farmers.
Valuing food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to enforce EU consumer protection laws to prevent unfair commercial practices; ▶ Yearly Food Dialogue with the food system's actors, including consumers, primary producers, industry, retailers, public authorities and civil society; ▶ Study on the impact of the consumption of the 'ultra-processed foods'; ▶ Legal proposal to strengthen the role of public procurement; ▶ Targeted review of a successful EU school scheme to strengthen its education dimension, adapted to the local and regional needs and traditions; ▶ EU Promotion Policy will remain a strategic priority; ▶ Promoting further uptake of geographical indications; ▶ Updating the EU animal welfare legislation, including its commitment to phase out cages; ▶ The Commission will consider targeted labelling in relation to animal welfare to address societal expectations.

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Promoting further uptake of GIs

It is very encouraging to see that the Commission aims to further promote the uptake of geographical indications. This reaffirms the recognition of GIs as key tools for rural development, as previously highlighted by their inclusion in the long-term vision for rural areas during the last legislature and by the priority given to the revision of the system. The spotlight on the sector remains strong, and **this inclusion in the Vision for Agricultural and Food officially paves the way for the possibility of developing a EU Action Plan for geographical indications.**

Part 4 | Creating an enabling environment for Europe’s agri-food sector

Finally, essential to the delivery of this Vision, Europe’s agri-food system is investing and leveraging the transformative power that research, knowledge, skills and innovation offer. The vision specifically establish the objective to modernize Europe’s agri-food sector by integrating **digitalisation, fostering research and innovation**, enhancing biotechnology, and strengthening knowledge transfer and skills development.

To achieve this, several initiatives will be implemented:

I. Advancing digitalization in agriculture

Despite its potential, digital adoption in agriculture remains low due to high costs, lack of digital skills, limited connectivity, and trust issues. To address these challenges, the EU will launch a **Digital Strategy for Agriculture** to:

- ▶ Improve rural connectivity, particularly in remote areas.
- ▶ Invest in digital skills training and advisory services for farmers.
- ▶ Support the adoption of digital tools to enhance farm performance and sustainability.

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II. Strengthening Research and Innovation

To ensure farmers benefit from scientific advancements, **research and innovation must be widely applied**. Key actions include:

- ▶ **Scaling up initiatives like Horizon Europe Mission Soil** to support sustainable soil management through research, testing, and experimentation, with the goal of achieving healthy soils across the EU by 2050.
- ▶ **Expanding regulatory sandboxes** to test new technologies, business models, and policies before full implementation, removing barriers to adoption.
- ▶ **Establishing local experimentation sites and living labs**, where farmers collaborate with scientists and businesses to accelerate practical applications of innovation
- ▶ **Developing a strategic EU approach to R&I**, aligning investments with scientific progress, and strengthening global partnerships with organizations like FAO, WOA, CGIAR, and OECD.

III. Enhancing biotechnology and plant breeding innovations

A key focus is **on plant breeding innovations, including New Genomic Techniques (NGTs)**. The EU aims to:

- ▶ **Create an enabling regulatory framework** to ensure a level playing field with other countries advancing in biotechnology.
- ▶ **Swiftly implement the NGT legislative proposal** to accelerate the adoption of innovative breeding techniques.

IV. Strengthening Knowledge Transfer and Skills Development

To make knowledge and innovation more accessible to farmers, the EU will reinforce **Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS)**, ensuring they are well-funded and aligned with sustainability goals. Key initiatives include:

- ▶ **Supporting the AGRI European Innovation Partnership (EIP)** under the CAP to drive knowledge transfer and applied research.
- ▶ **Expanding advisory services and lifelong learning programs** to help farmers adapt to evolving technologies and sustainability demands.
- ▶ **Launching the Union of Skills initiative**, promoting high-quality training and making farming a more attractive and rewarding career choice.

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Part 5 | Useful links

- ▶ [EC page dedicated to the Vision for Agriculture and Food](#)
- ▶ [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A Vision for Agriculture and Food](#)
- ▶ [Factsheet: vision for agriculture and food](#)

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