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More than 130 organisations call for EU Action Plan for Plant-based Foods

Brussels

More than 130 groups representing farmers, health professionals, consumers, animal welfare and environmental interests [have written](#) to European Commissioner for Agriculture and Food, Christophe Hansen, urging him to develop an EU Action Plan for Plant-Based Foods by 2026.

The groups, including 30 national organisations, as well as European and International-level bodies, add to the growing consensus coming out of the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture last summer, which already recommended the action plan.

With BEUC, EPHA, Greenpeace, Birdlife, EEB, IFOAM and Freshfel among the signatories, the letter calls for an action plan which strengthens the entire plant-based agri-food chain, from farmer to consumer, with a focus on plant-based foods as part of the solution, and highlights six areas the Action Plan for Plant-Based Foods would help:

- Achieve strategic autonomy in proteins
- Provide new business opportunities for farmers
- Improve health
- Protect the climate and our environment
- Save money
- Strengthen policy coherence

The signatories want the Commissioner to make sure the development of the Plan is included in the Vision for the Future of Agriculture and Food, which is expected in late February.

The Action Plan could be inspired by the Danish Plant-Based Action Plan with the organisations claiming it would put plant-based foods on more of an equal footing with animal farming, providing the potential to strengthen Europe's autonomy and support diversification for farmers.

IFOAM Organics Europe deputy director Eric Gall said: "Producing vegetable proteins with organic and agroecological methods of production is the perfect recipe to maximise the health and environmental benefits of plant-based foods. And farmers could also benefit from diversifying their production by introducing new crops, particularly if this transition is accompanied by financial support to reward farmers for the protection of ecosystem services."

Agustín Reyna, Director General at BEUC, The European Consumer Organisation, added: "By changing what they eat, consumers can be key agents of change in the transition to sustainable food systems. For this to happen, healthy plant-based foods must become more attractive, affordable and available to be a real option for consumers."

“The Commission’s upcoming Vision for the Future of Agriculture and Food needs to be bold on the demand side and pave the ground for an EU Action Plan for Plant-Based Foods. It is the missing puzzle piece to make progress towards diets that will benefit people and the planet.”

The groups also point out the land use and environmental benefits of an Action Plan for Plant-based Foods. 71% of all farmland in the EU is dedicated to producing animal products.

Plant-based foods use about four times less land, so increasing uptake of such foods would increase food production, return space to nature and give Europe more autonomy, as two-thirds of high protein animal feed is currently imported from abroad. Increased consumption of plant-based foods would drastically reduce pressure on the world’s forests, benefit the climate and contribute to cleaner soils, air and waterways.

And Niklas Oppenrieder from PAN, an association of medical doctors signing the letter, concluded: “Poor nutrition is a major contributor to the disease burden in the EU and a huge drain on national health budgets. An Action Plan for Plant-based Foods would be a great preventive measure, helping to rebalance our diets to address the underconsumption of legumes, fruits and vegetables.”

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