



BIOEAST AS A DRIVING FORCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

High-level conference on deploying sustainable and circular bioeconomies in Central and Eastern Europe in the context of food, agriculture, natural resources and bioeconomy related policies

CONCEPT NOTE

The conference aims to provide a high-level political discussion forum for the Central and Eastern European countries' representatives who are part of the BIOEAST Initiative also involving the Commission services and other EU institutions.

The European Commission announced an ambitious roadmap to tackle the challenges ahead of us. The “*European Green Deal*” is designed in such a way as to leave no individual or region behind in the great transformation ahead. In this context the governmental initiative for knowledge-based agriculture, aquaculture and forestry in the bioeconomy (BIOEAST) of 11 Central and Eastern European member states could play a key role in helping to form the necessary partnerships, to join forces to develop the needs, priorities and to work together at the European level to reach the agreed objectives.

The underdeveloped or not modernized primary production and processing sectors could be blamed for causing climate change problems. However, the sustainable development of agriculture, forestry and aquaculture could contribute to solve the emerging problems for the long term. For this reason, it is inevitable to invest in research, innovation and education to modernize the Central and Eastern European countries' economies to be more sustainable and competitive. The biomass potential of the region is enormous, which implicitly predicts that the climate-neutral future of Europe depends very much from unlocking this potential and valorising it in all aspects.

The sustainable and circular bioeconomies from the macro-region could potentially contribute to solving the vast challenges concerning energy, climate and food security. However, to address the respective policy areas, there is a need for structural change/reform, i.e. in the national and local governance and public administration, in the private sector, in education and in the social context, all of which require a systemic approach and additional policy and financial support.

In this context, the participation of the countries in the future Horizon Europe research and innovation framework program is crucial. The involvement of stakeholders and broadly speaking the involvement of the society from the BIOEAST countries is fundamental. The BIOEAST Initiative with its recently started Coordination and Support Action (BIOEASTsUP H2020 project) aims to help the countries to develop national strategies and action plans for engaging national stakeholders and developing a strategic research and innovation agenda to support evidence based policy making.

The Brussels based English language high level conference aims to gather key political figures (state secretary level), ministry officials, policy makers, researchers, academia and other stakeholders involved in different parts of the *BIOEAST environment* to inform them about emerging policy developments and to discuss key priorities at the European level. Moreover, the aim is also to inform the EU institutions and respective officers dealing with the countries from the macro-region about the BIOEAST potential.

The high level conference will be followed on the 2nd day by a parallel meeting of the individual thematic working groups under the BIOEAST Initiative focusing on more technical thematic discussions concerning the ongoing challenges, policies and priority setting. The forum aims to build new links and connections between the institutions' and member states' officers.

