

Joint festive declaration of the Ministers of Agriculture of the Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia on the five-year anniversary of the BIOEAST Initiative

Ministers of Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia:

- Having regard to the 2016 common declaration of seven Agriculture Ministers on stronger inclusion of the research potential of the Central and Eastern European countries in the implementation of Horizon 2020 projects in the field of agriculture, including the bioeconomy;
- Having regard to the 2017 common declaration of eight Agriculture Ministers on the enforcement of the Central Eastern European Initiative for Knowledge-based Agriculture, Aquaculture and Forestry in the Bioeconomy (herein after referred to as “BIOEAST Initiative”);
- Having regard to the 2018 common declaration of eleven Agriculture Ministers on the 2030 Vision of the BIOEAST Initiative;
- Having regard to the 2019 common declaration of the twenty-two Agriculture and Research Ministers on the future role of the BIOEAST Initiative in the context of the Horizon Europe programme;
- Having regard to the 2020 BIOEAST Board’s position paper on bioeconomy and green investments as a unique opportunity to address the COVID-19 crisis in the Central and Eastern European countries;
- Having regard to the 2021 position paper of the eleven Agriculture Ministers on the recommendations of the BIOEAST Foresight Report;

ARE PROUD to celebrate the five year anniversary of the Central and Eastern European Initiative for Knowledge-based Agriculture, Aquaculture and Forestry in the Bioeconomy “BIOEAST Initiative”. The Initiative pursues our common interest in line with the objectives of the European Research Area (ERA) by developing a common roadmap, vision and Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), advising ministries on sectoral policies, setting up macro-regional thematic working groups and by helping to make better use of the opportunities of the European framework programme for research and innovation “Horizon Europe”;

ACKNOWLEDGE the recommendations of the BIOEAST Foresight Exercise that a climate-neutral future depends on national bioeconomies and that without the sustainable and circular use of available bioresources, we will not achieve the global goals set for our society;

AIM to better engage national stakeholders in mobilising resources, knowledge and capacity to ensure a smooth transition towards a sustainable future, leaving no one behind in a just and safe transition, to keep our planet healthy for future generations;

HIGHLIGHT the importance of taking actions in developing strategies, including action plans and RECOGNISE that a sustainable and circular bioeconomy impacts on several key priority sectors;

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EMPHASIZE the need to make steps towards a better integration of the bioeconomy into national education, research, innovation and regional development programmes as well as in the Common Agricultural Policy strategic plans.

INVITE all lead ministries to invest in specific national programmes for the bioeconomy;

STRESS the need to promote policy- and research-oriented macro-regional thematic working groups on agroecology and sustainable yields, food systems, forestry value chain, freshwater-based bioeconomy, advanced bio-based chemicals and materials, bioenergy and value added products, as well as on education and skills;

CALL on the EU institutions to further support the BIOEAST Initiative as a strategic network to achieve the objectives set out in the European Green Deal by playing a key role in providing policy support to the BIOEAST countries;

COMMIT to strengthening our lead cooperation in research, innovation and development by involving other countries, such as the Western Balkan countries, in order to collaborate and strengthen the contribution to the development of the ERA in agriculture and other primary production and processing sectors of the bioeconomy;

SUPPORT the deepening of the cooperation under the BIOEAST Initiative through the development of support mechanisms based on a common work programme and the further strengthening of cooperation with other countries and European institutions, in particular under the Horizon Europe Framework Programme.

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry of the
Republic of Bulgaria

Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Croatia

Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic

Ministry of Rural Affairs of the Republic of Estonia

Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary

Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia

Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of
Poland

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of
Romania

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the
Slovak Republic

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the
Republic of Slovenia

15. November 2021.
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