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Policy Forum on Advancing Research and Innovation in Central and Eastern Europe within the Framework of Sustainable Natural Resource Management, Food Systems Security, and Biomanufacturing Policy Development

CONCEPT NOTE

The Hungarian EU Presidency, in collaboration with the BIOEAST Initiative, attempts to convene a high-level policy debate focusing on the potential role of Central and Eastern Europe within the overarching framework of European Strategic Autonomy, European Food System Security, and European Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing initiatives.

The primary aim is to engage all European Union member states in a comprehensive dialogue concerning research, innovation, and development priorities specifically tailored to Eastern Europe, encompassing the Western Balkan Countries, Ukraine, and Moldova, with the overarching goal of fostering continent-wide benefits.

The recently issued Europe-wide Stakeholder Manifesto, advocating for the sustainable advancement of supply chains and local bioresource processing in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), underscores the critical importance of involving stakeholders from the CEE region in an aim to form a macro-regional partnership related to research, innovation, and sustainable solutions deployment, thereby facilitating Europe's transition towards a circular and sustainable future. Emphasizing the nexus of soil, freshwater, food systems, and biomanufacturing, the manifesto urges decision-makers to prioritize collective national efforts supported by and building further European cooperation.

The ensuing debate aims to delve into discussions regarding the imperative for a paradigm shift from import reliance to self-sufficiency in local biomass production and processing, while acknowledging the intrinsic value of soil, freshwater, and ecosystem services in Central and Eastern Europe. These resources are deemed essential for securing a sustainable European food system and ensuring Europe's strategic autonomy across various industrial and energy sectors.

The establishment of sustainable and circular bioeconomies within the macro-region holds promise in addressing prevalent European challenges pertaining to energy, climate, water, and food security. Aligning and emphasizing the macro-region's priorities with ongoing EU priorities on research and innovation, including missions on Healthy Soils and the Restoration of our Ocean and Waters, as well as within the EU Biotech and Biomanufacturing initiative, is essential. However, achieving these objectives necessitates robust cooperation among EU member states, substantial and long-term systemic investment in research and

innovation, knowledge dissemination, and the formation of a targeted research funding and partnership framework, alongside active societal engagement in Central and Eastern Europe.

Given the impending Multiannual Financial Framework, the imperative lies in setting pertinent priorities, implementing effective measures, and fostering consensus on the continent's future trajectory. Hence, it is imperative to engage in discussions and co-investment partnerships that promise significant benefits for both Member States and future accession countries. The pivotal role of the European Commission in delineating the framework for bioeconomy-related research, innovation, development, and education cannot be overstated.

A policy discussion forum is envisaged to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of priorities at both Member State and European levels, assess capacities, and provide scientific support for future actions. We cordially invite representatives of EU institutions, diplomatic envoys of Member States and EU candidate countries, policymakers, academia, international organizations, and non-governmental entities based in Brussels to participate. Your contributions will help build on and advance the macro-region's priorities.

Panel Discussions:

1. Member States policy priorities
2. European policy priorities
3. Science-policy discussion about the nexus of soil-freshwater-food system-biomanufacturing in the bioeconomy

Date: July 4, 2024

Venue: Permanent Representation of Hungary to the EU, 92 Rue de Trèves, 1040 Brussels

Documents to consider:

1. [Stakeholders Manifesto](#)
2. [Mission Soil Manifesto](#)
3. [Charter for the Mission on Restore our Ocean and Waters](#)
4. [EU Biotech and Biomanufacturing Initiative](#)
5. [Jahorina Agenda 2024, Agricultural Policy Forum on Western Balkan](#)