



Implementing the EU Bioeconomy Strategy

Wim HAENTJENS, Head of Sector
Bioeconomy & Food Systems Unit (RTD.B2)
European Commission, DG Research & Innovation

Annual BIOEAST Bioeconomy Conference – 22 April 2026

Agenda

1. The EU Bioeconomy Strategy: state of play
2. The Bioeconomy & BIOEAST: potential and challenges
3. Joining forces between EC, Member States, regions and stakeholders

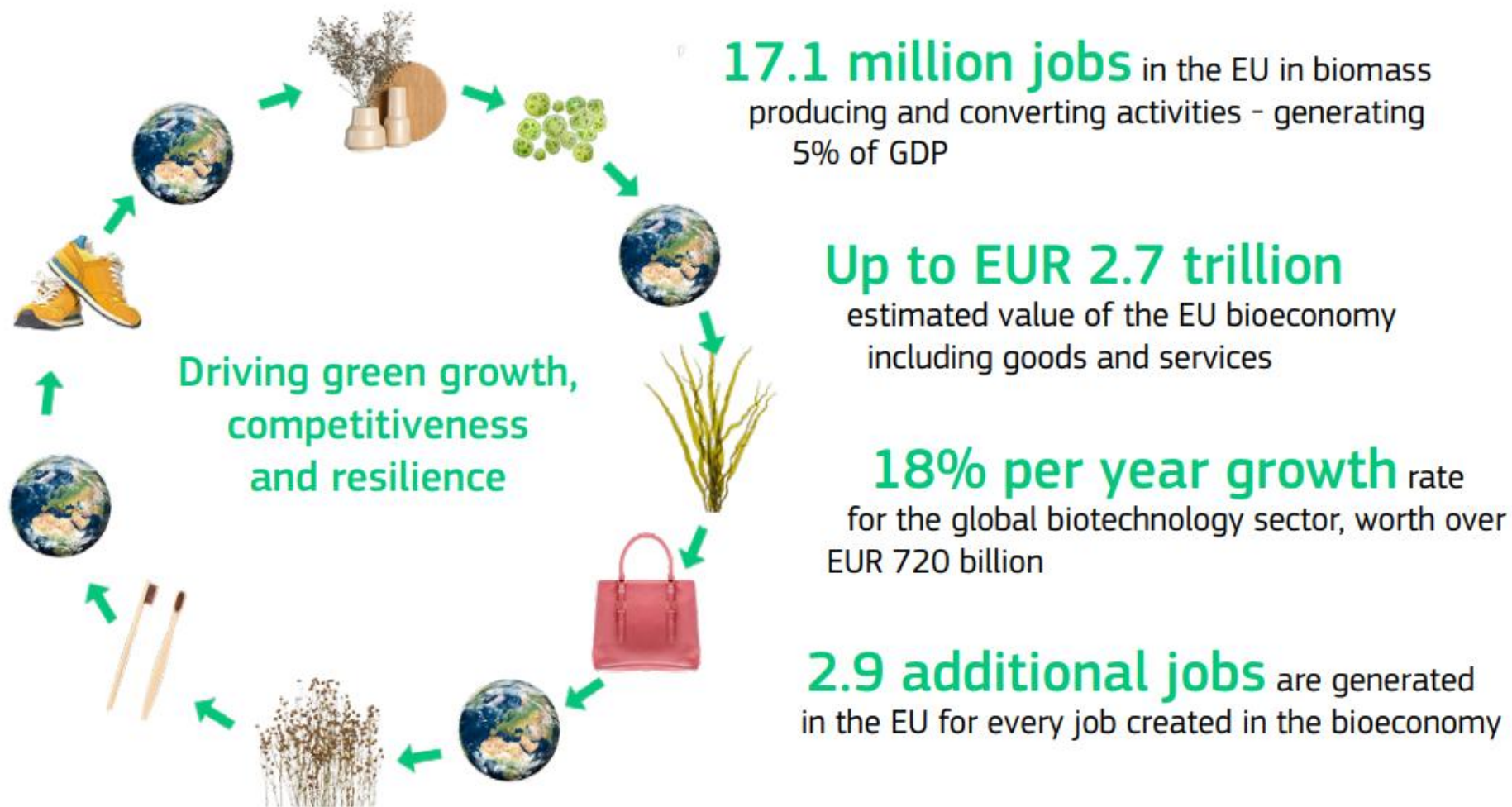
The bioeconomy is defined as the activities that deliver sustainable solutions based on biological resources to create added value.

These include

- products, services, science and technologies benefiting sectors ranging from
- agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture
- to value chains based on biomass processing, biomanufacturing and biotechnologies such as
- in **food, health, energy, industry, ecosystem and other services.**

Biological resources include genetic resources, as well as primary and secondary biomass, such as by-products and residues, and biogenic carbon captured through innovative technologies.

The Bioeconomy as a Strategic Opportunity



Bioeconomy Strategy (*): Strategic pillars

**Scaling up
Innovation and
Investments: from
Lab to Deployment**



**Developing Lead
Markets for Materials
and Technologies**



**Securing Long-Term
Prospects for the
Bioeconomy:
Sustainably Sourced
Biomass**



**Harnessing Global
Partnerships and
Opportunities**



**Markets: plastics, fibres, textiles, chemicals, fertilisers, plant protection products, construction materials,
Technologies: biorefineries, advanced fermentation and permanent storage of biogenic carbon**

CROSS-CUTTING PILLAR

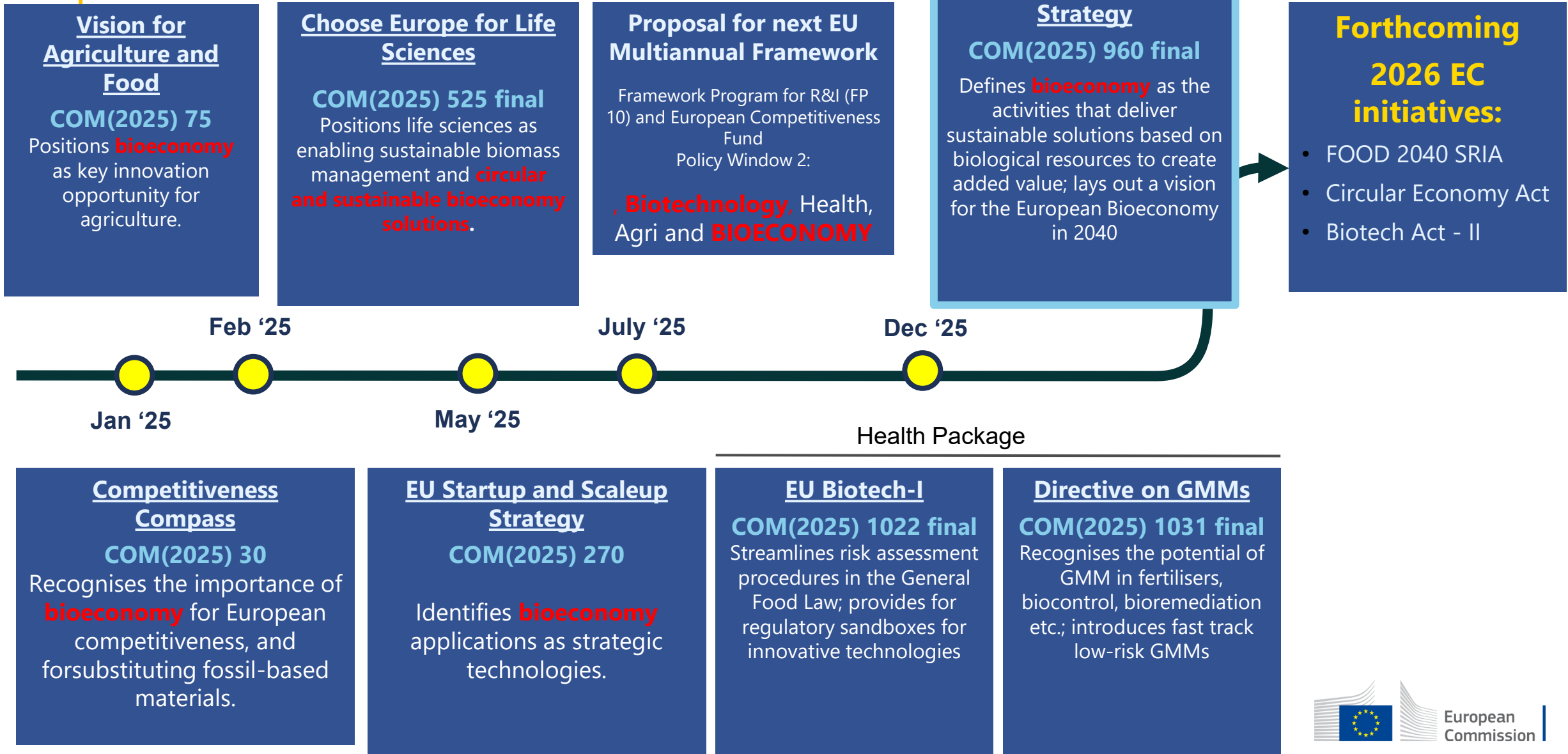
Joining forces with Member States, local and regional actors, private and public stakeholders

Bioeconomy Action Plan – selected actions



- Build on the experience of Circular Biobased Europe Joint Undertaking (new MFF)
- Bioeconomy Investment Deployment Group / finance for start-ups, scale-ups
- Support the development of industrial symbiosis valleys and bioeconomy hubs
- Regulators and innovators forum – Biotech Acts
- Launch a R&I initiative to develop and deploy sustainable bioeconomy solutions in regions with high biomass potential
- Monitor and forecast biomass availability
- Bioeconomy Stakeholder Platform

Strategic integration of bioeconomy in key Commission initiatives



Horizon Europe, WP 2026: Overview of the selected calls

Destination: Circular Economy and Bioeconomy Sectors

Topic title	ToA	N. project	Topic Budget
Understanding biomass flows in Europe	RIA	2	€ 6.000.000
Bioeconomy policy support hub for Member States, regions and sectors	CSA	1	€ 3.000.000
Advancing the European bio-based innovation enabled by biotechnology and biomanufacturing concepts	RIA	3	€ 12.000.000
Supporting pre-normative research for standardization of the bio-based products	RIA	2	€ 8.000.000
Balancing food security, bioeconomy, climate and biodiversity objectives while unlocking sustainable value chains	RIA	2	€ 12.000.000
Bio-based innovation in society: supporting the sustainable way of living	RIA	2	€ 8.000.000
Harnessing the unique properties of marine organisms to deliver sustainable blue bio-based products	RIA	2	€ 10.000.000

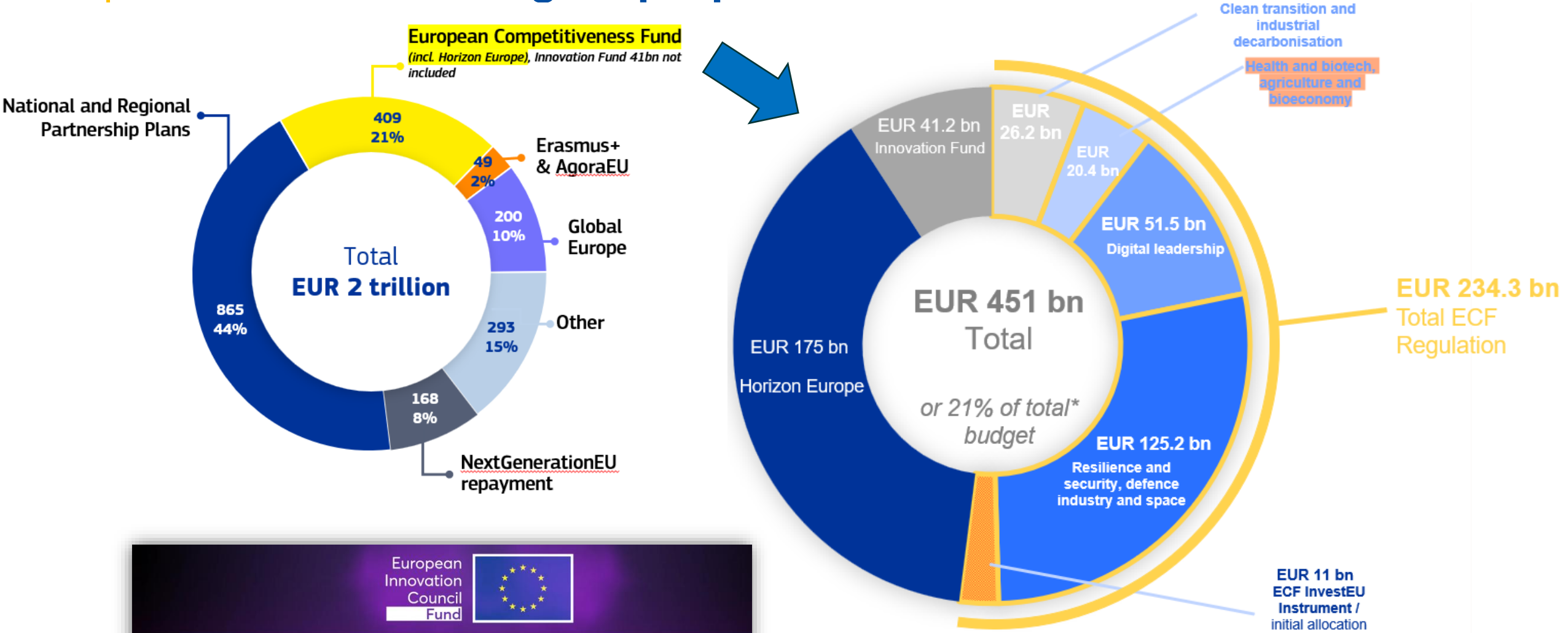
❑ Opening date: **17 April 2026**

❑ Deadline: **17 September 2026**

❑ Budget: **210 million EUR**

❑ Topics: **20**

R&I tools and budgets proposed under new MFF



European Innovation Council Fund

Home > EIC Fund > Scaleup Europe Fund

Scaleup Europe Fund

Unlocking the power of Europe's breakthrough technology champions with growth capital that delivers strong returns and long-term strategic value for Europe

Global Bioeconomy Summit 2026

- The Summit will take place on **20–21 October 2026 in Dublin, Ireland**
- It will bring together bioeconomy experts and high-ranking representatives from politics, science, civil society and the business sector from all hemispheres.
- It will provide a platform to **discuss the global bioeconomy** in an inclusive manner, and it will profile, advance, and recognise the importance of bioeconomy in the regions.
- The Summit will feature plenary sessions on **key themes shaping the future of the bioeconomy**, including:
 - Scaling bio-based innovations
 - Biosolutions for global crises
 - Policy frameworks supporting the bioeconomy
 - European bioeconomies
 - Forward-looking narratives & a vision for 2040



www.gbs2026.org



EU Bioeconomy Youth Ambassadors



- 15 Young bioeconomy enthusiasts based all over Europe
- 2-year programme (2025-27) to make positive change, promote sustainable bioeconomy and engage and represent youth
- Selected and supported by the Commission, acting independently
- Find more about them [here](#)
- If you wish to involve the BYAs in your activities, contact bioeconomyyouthambassadors@gopa.eu

Agenda

1. The EU Bioeconomy Strategy: state of play

2. The Bioeconomy & BIOEAST: potential and challenges

3. Joining forces between EC, Member States, regions and stakeholders

Council conclusions on a potential Europe-wide R&I initiative

- Central and Eastern European countries have a comparative **advantage** in the **bioeconomy** due to its **abundant biomass resources**, which are however largely untapped
- 11 **BIOEAST** countries gathered political support for „**a potential Europe-wide R&I initiative**“
- The **Council conclusions** have been **adopted** in November 2024 in the Competitiveness Council
- The initiative aims towards enhancing competitiveness by advancing sustainable natural resource management, food system security and the deployment of the bioeconomy by **harnessing the potential of CEE Member States, Western Balkans, and candidate countries**, while supporting the potential **accession of Ukraine**
- A dedicated initiative could help making this macro region competitive in bioeconomy, **benefitting whole Europe**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	29 November 2024
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	15304/24 + COR 1
Subject:	A potential Europe-wide R&I initiative on advancing sustainable natural resource management, food systems security and the deployment of the bioeconomy, harnessing the potential of Central and Eastern Europe - Council conclusions (29 November 2024)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on *A potential Europe-wide R&I initiative on advancing sustainable natural resource management, food systems security and the deployment of the bioeconomy, harnessing the potential of Central and Eastern Europe*, approved by the Council at its 4063rd meeting held on 29 November 2024.

New EU Bioeconomy Strategy

➤ Excerpt from the New EU Bioeconomy Strategy

The EU will launch a research and innovation initiative to develop and deploy sustainable bioeconomy solutions in regions with high biomass potential, including in BIOEAST countries, Moldova, Ukraine and the Western Balkans. This initiative will mobilise capital and strengthen industrial ecosystems beyond EU borders for the benefit of Member States and EU accession countries and ensure that all efforts are underpinned by robust environmental and social safeguards.

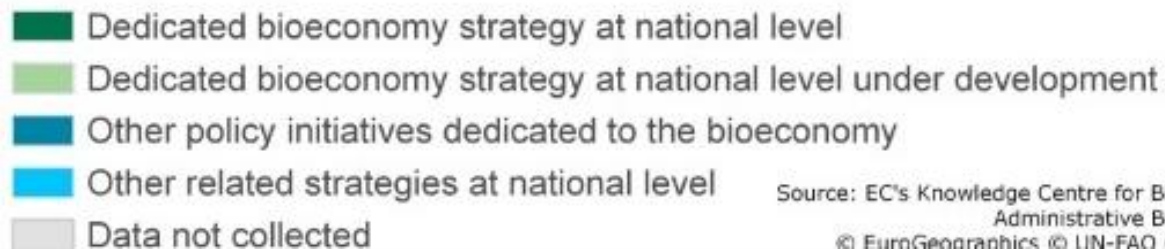
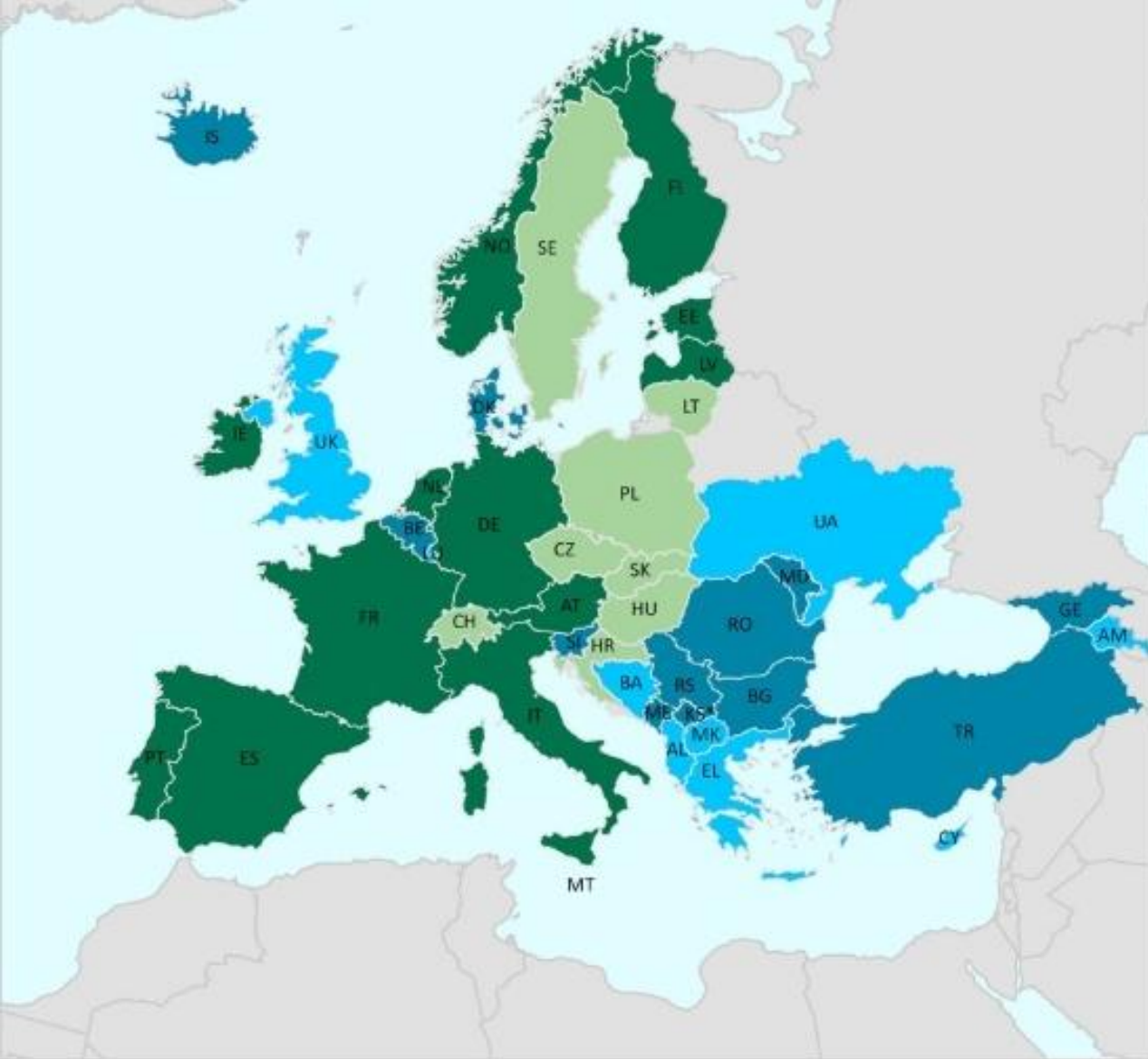


This indicates:

- A **targeted approach** to enhancing the bioeconomy in regions with **significant biomass potential**
- **Recognition** of countries with **high biomass potential**
- An **opportunity for these countries** to further develop and **scale** their **bioeconomy solutions**
- Contributing to **sustainable development, economic growth**, and stronger **regional cooperation**

Status of national bioeconomy strategies and related policy initiatives in Europe

- National and regional bioeconomy strategies are becoming more numerous throughout Europe
- Central and Eastern European countries have made significant progress in rolling out bioeconomy initiatives



Source: EC's Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy
 Administrative Boundaries:
 © EuroGeographics © IIN-FAO © Turkstat



Bioeconomy Strategy Development in
 Horizon Europe Associated Countries

Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Montenegro,
 North Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine*

Nelsovi, V., Trifunova, O., Blasen, A., Boracinski,
 M.T., Corina, A.

2025



Source: EC's Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy,
 September 2025



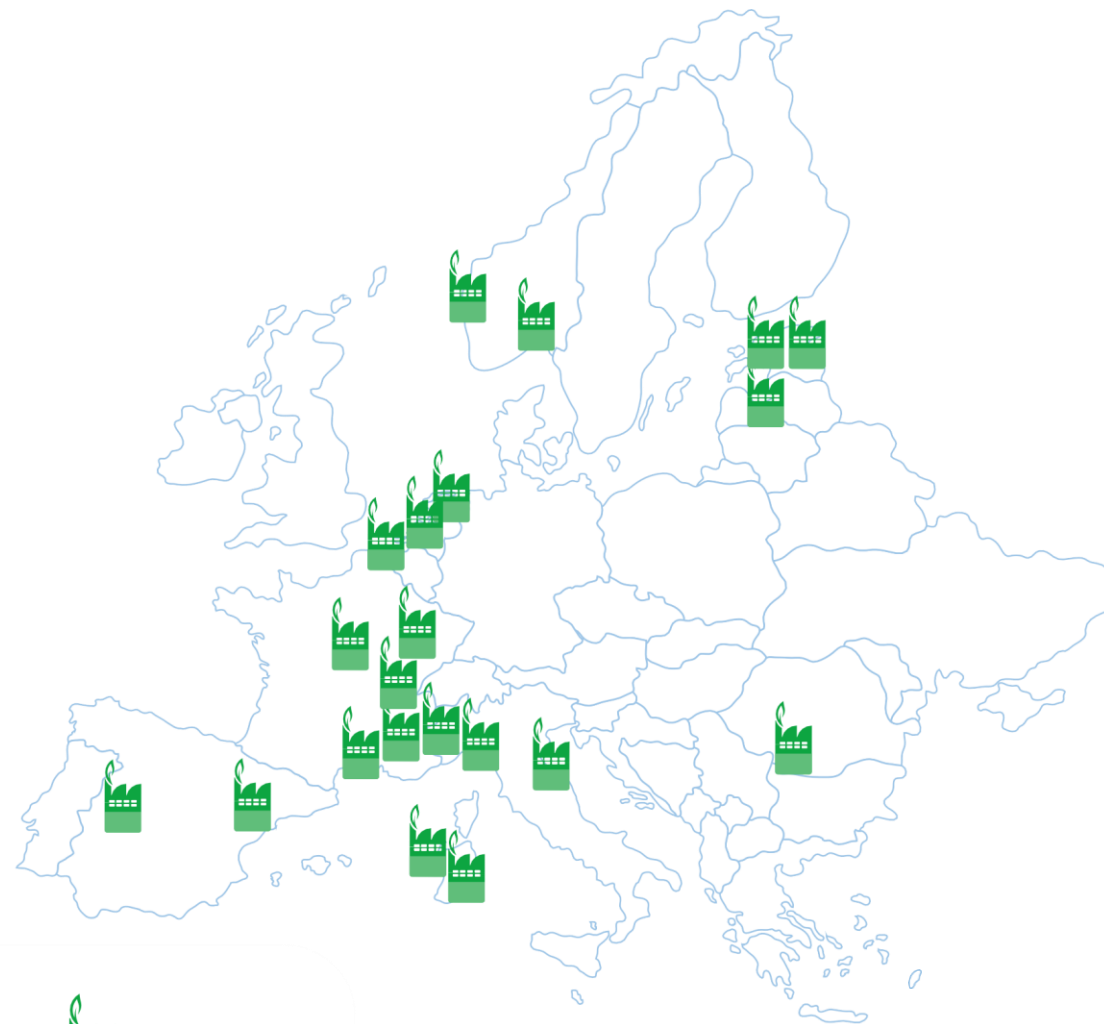
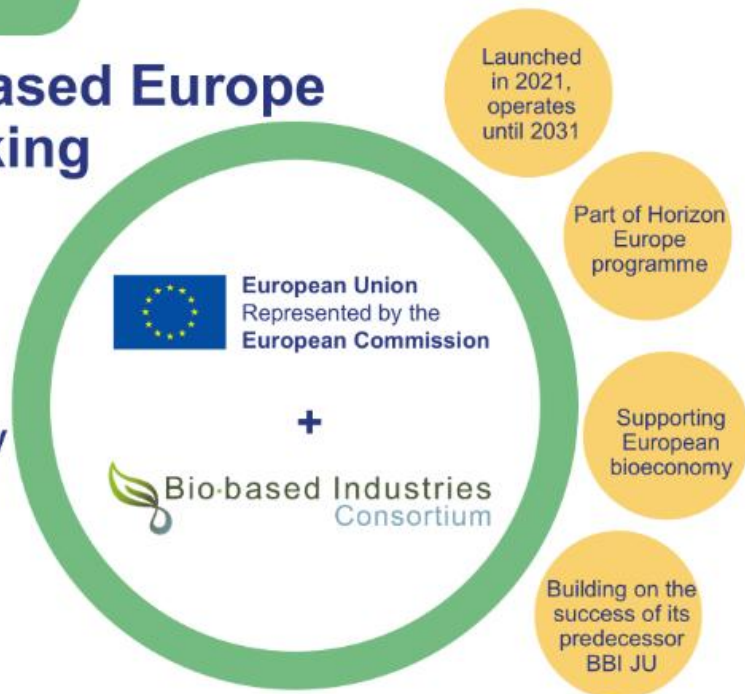
Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking – innovations in deployment



Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking

€2 billion
public-private initiative

advancing a
competitive bioeconomy
for a sustainable future



Flagship
biorefinery



Gaps, needs and potential

- Draft “gap analysis”-report: based on the outcomes of discussions at dedicated SCAR meetings and the Hungarian Presidency event
- Relevant contributions from the Joint Research Centre (JRC), Circular Bio-Based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU), and Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC)

Key outcomes (biomass):

- The Central and Eastern European countries, Western Balkans, and candidate countries have high and untapped potential in terms of biomass
- Despite high resource potential, effective bioeconomy development in these regions remains underexploited

Key insights: Abundant resources, modernisation gap, innovation divide, Need for customised actions, Collaboration and capacity building, Role of R&I, Governance and SMEs

Agenda

1. The EU Bioeconomy Strategy: state of play
2. The Bioeconomy & BIOEAST: potential and challenges
3. Joining forces between EC, Member States, regions and stakeholders

A Strategic Framework for a Competitive and Sustainable EU Bioeconomy - Council conclusions

- In March 2026, the **Council approved conclusions** on the new **EU's Bioeconomy Strategy**
- The **Council conclusions** welcome:
 - The vision for a **competitive and sustainable bioeconomy by 2040**
 - Promote the use of bio-based and circular solutions across all relevant sectors
 - Support **innovation and investments**
- **BIOEAST is acknowledged** in the Council conclusions as a macro-regional initiative supporting the deployment of sustainable bioeconomy solutions in high biomass regions.

36. INVITES the Commission to foster cooperation with candidate countries, neighbouring regions and strategic partners to build resilient bioeconomy hubs; and to **support initiatives of cooperation between Member States**, including at macro-regional level, **such as BIOEAST**, through a potential EU-wide range of comprehensive, ongoing, and dedicated future measures to develop and deploy sustainable bioeconomy solutions in regions with high biomass potential; address obstacles like persistent barriers within the single market, to safeguarding Europe's competitiveness, ensuring that innovation is nurtured and commercialized within the Union, and strengthening the resilience of its markets, while maintaining the Union's ambition on environment and climate action.

Europe-wide value added

Boost biomass valorisation

→ More efficient and sustainable use of biological resources



Advance industrial capacity in rural areas

→ Job creation, local economic growth, and rural depopulation mitigation

Develop a more integrated common market for biomass

→ Enhanced cross-border cooperation and resource flow



Strategic autonomy and food security

→ Leverage also the biomass potential of Ukraine and other candidate countries

Join forces

- To shape the **Europe-wide R&I initiative** and **other actions** planned under the Bioeconomy Strategy
- **Supported by:**
 - Coordination & Support Action (CSA) “**Strengthen the European Research Area by enhancing the bioeconomy research & innovation ecosystem in BIOEAST countries**”
 - Provides advice on the R&I initiative, aligned with the needs identified in the gap analysis
 - **BOOST4BIOEAST**
 - Raises **awareness and visibility** of bioeconomy opportunities
 - Strengthens **coordination and capacity** across BIOEAST countries
 - Supports **alignment of national priorities**
 - Facilitates **stakeholder engagement and knowledge exchange**
 - Reinforces **political commitment and ownership**
 - Helps prepare **concrete plans** across BIOEAST countries



Concluding messages

1. Implementation is ongoing – nearly all actions are relevant for BIOEAST
2. The potential of CEE and candidate countries is recognised, along with the enabling role of the BIOEAST Initiative
3. We need to continue to join forces on delivery at both the EU and MS levels, and the gap analysis is an excellent basis



THE BIOECONOMY
Innovative Solutions
for a Sustainable
Future



- Thank you!
- [Bioeconomy research and innovation](#)
- Wim.HAENTJENS@ec.europa.eu

**CORDIS Results Pack on
microbial
blueprints for
bioeconomy**



**Microbiomes
and holobiomes
as drivers of a
sustainable circular
bioeconomy**




**CORDIS Results Pack on
innovative
bioeconomy
solutions**



**Strengthening the
EU's prosperity
through sustainable
and circular
bioeconomy
innovations**

