

POSITION

European Technology Platform 'Plants for the Future'

May 2012

On Horizon 2020,

The Common Strategic Framework for Research & Innovation 2014-2020

The **European Technology Platform 'Plants for the Future'** (Plant ETP) is a stakeholder forum for the plant sector with members from industry, academia and the farming community. It provides their common views and represents their common interests in an open discussion process, by bringing key issues to the attention of European bodies such as the growing importance of plants and plant sciences to tackle the future challenges for our societies and the crucial support for efforts to give plants an adequate standing and importance in the public view and the political perception.

The contribution that **the EU plant sector** makes to build the bioeconomy, to achieve the challenges of food security and safety, to mitigate climate change and maintain employment in Europe is vital. Agriculture and its European public and private organisations, with a large majority of SMEs, have an annual turnover of €600 billion; they provide 40 million jobs and agriculture occupies 20% of EU lands. The **plant sector is at the forefront of research and innovation**, with companies investing on average 15-20% of their annual turnover on R&D. Faced with rising world food demand and increased risks to food production from climate change and greater market volatility, it is more important than ever for the EU to maintain a sustainable and competitive agriculture.

Plant ETP welcomes the EC's proposals for establishing Horizon 2020 and supports the closer interaction of research and innovation, while ensuring strong support for each component. In particular, **Plant ETP strongly supports** the EC's proposal to have a focus on Food Security and Safety and Sustainable Agriculture, which is a major research challenge that deserves dedicated budget over the coming years. In this framework, Plant ETP considers of utmost importance to fully address the joint issues of **plant science and crop production research**, both in the Industrial Leadership and Societal Challenges pillars of the proposal.

Plant ETP therefore calls for the European Parliament and Council to:

- * **Support plant science and crop production research** under the "Sustainable Agriculture" part of Horizon 2020;
- * Equally take into account **basic science, applied science, knowledge transfer and innovation framework**, as these are interlinked components for the challenge programme and need strong support inside this programme, in addition to the frontier research for individuals in the European Research Council and the leadership support in the Industrial Leadership programme;
- * Ensure that all the **key technologies** of direct relevance to the agricultural and crop production sector will be covered in the scope of Horizon 2020, including classical and green biotechnology for sustainable production of food and non-food products ranging from high volume to high value products;
- * Ensure that **knowledge exchange activities** are specifically tailored to farmers or their representative organisations and incentives are provided to researchers to participate in these activities;
- * Ensure the **involvement of stakeholders** (via European Technology Platforms, European science organisations, etc) in all phases of Horizon 2020 from analysing, strategy development to implementation to increase the support, quality and impact of the programme.

For these reasons, Plant ETP has put forward 18 amendments to the Regulation establishing Horizon 2020 and 22 amendments to the Specific Programme Implementing Horizon 2020.