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PRESS RELEASE

Preparing the agri-food system for future challenges: EIT Food's CEO calls for strong EU commitment to research and innovation and a greater role for consumers

Speaking at the Bulgarian EU Presidency's conference "Research & Innovation for Food and Nutrition Security: Transforming our Food Systems", EIT Food's CEO Filip Fontaine called on the EU and its Member States to show strong commitment to research and innovation in the agri-food sector in the next EU long-term budget, covering the 2021-2027 period. He also stressed the importance of consumer empowerment.

The event was part of "Food 2030", an EU initiative aiming at identifying research and innovation priorities to help the EU food sector face future challenges such as resource scarcity, environmental degradation and climate change, and meet international commitments such as the UN SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement.

At the conference, Fontaine emphasized the need to promote a deep transformation, not only of how food is produced and consumed, but also of how stakeholders, including farmers, industries and consumers interact to shape and implement new ideas and innovations.

"The complexity and magnitude of the challenges we face is such that only a community of trusted partners who can work together will be able to develop and adopt impactful and disruptive solutions. Building this community and ecosystem is EIT Food's mission."

"To do so – he added – we need to place consumers at the centre of the transformation process and empower them to contribute to it. This is not a small task, and the challenges we face are not small either. To address all challenges, the EU and its Member States need to show strong support to research and innovation in the agri-food sector, also by identifying some bold missions that will help catalyze this transformation. The time for action is now."



On 7th June, the European Commission proposed its new long-term research and innovation funding programme, Horizon Europe, which put future-proofing the agri-food systems among its top priorities and earmarked 10 billion Euros for it.

Filip Fontaine was recently appointed as the head of EIT Food, a consortium of leading international universities, research bodies and industries, created in 2016 under the umbrella of the EIT, with the goal to transform food production and consumption in Europe and globally.

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Background information

EIT Food is Europe's leading food innovation initiative, with the aim to create a sustainable and future-proof food sector.

The initiative is made up of a consortium of key industry players, start-ups, research centres and universities from across Europe. It is one of six Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) established by the European Institute for Innovation & Technology ([EIT](#)), an independent EU body set up in 2008 to promote innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe.

EIT Food aims to collaborate closely with consumers to develop new knowledge and technology-based products and services that will ultimately deliver a healthier lifestyle for all European citizens.

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