

Brussels, 29 September 2023

Dear President of the European Commission, dear Dr von der Leyen,

Having followed your State of the Union with great attention, we carefully noted your announcement of the Commission's initiative on the Strategic Dialogue for the Future of Agriculture, which we would like to understand how we, the European Public Health Alliance, can take part in.

Our remit, as the leading European public health advocacy alliance, is to give a voice to the public health community, and we believe that such voice must be heard in the Dialogue. There cannot be a future in agriculture without taking into account public health interests.

Any serious attempt from the European Commission to break silos and realise a deep and honest debate on food in general and agriculture in particular must include civil society organisations representing health interests and concerns of the communities. Such inclusion of health considerations is of course fully in line with the provisions of the Treaty requiring "Health in All Policies", particularly Article 9.

Nevertheless, such Dialogue must not preclude the Commission's adoption of a proposal on a Framework for Sustainable Food Systems – the Farm to Fork component of the Green Deal included in your published 2023 work programme.

It is vital that all of the Green Deal proposals are published before the end of this mandate, if you are to deliver the priorities outlined to the European Parliament and Council at the start of your mandate. Failing to do so would imply failing the EU citizens of today, but also our future generations.

The European Public Health Alliance therefore urges the European Commission to:

- Include public health representatives in the Dialogue, as well as other civil society stakeholders.
- Encourage an honest and comprehensive debate around food in general, not only agriculture.
- Encourage a science-based debate that supports farmers to be part of the green transition, while respecting human and planetary boundaries.
- Publish the remaining legislations foreseen in your work programme under the Green Deal: mainly, the Framework for Sustainable Food Systems, and the revision for the Food Information to Consumer Regulation.

We understand the size of the challenge, and we commit to supporting you in this process. We remain at your disposal.

With best regards,

Dr Milka Sokolović
Director General, European Public Health Alliance