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Session 6: “Policies/Perspectives for sustainable agrifood systems in the EU, Greece and the Balkans”
Modern agriculture - problems, challenges and solutions

- More than a third of the world's workers are employed in agriculture
- Modern agriculture is characterized by an increase in yields
- At the same time, the environmental impact is increasing
  - depletion of water resources
  - deforestation
  - erosion and reduced soil fertility
  - carbon emissions and global warming, etc.
- Solutions:
  - give value to ecosystems
  - recognition of environmental and livelihoods
  - balancing the rights of different users and interests
- Technological advances are helping farmers to provide the tools and resources to make agriculture more sustainable
Modern agriculture - problems, challenges and solutions

• Agriculture and the food sector face many challenges:
  - Population growth to over 9.6 billion in 2050
  - Depletion of resources such as water and productive arable land
  - Rapid urbanization and more

• Digital innovation and technology are part of the solution
  - The "digital divide" between economies and sectors and between those with different capacities to adopt new technologies must be avoided

• Strategy for Digitization of Agriculture and Rural Areas of the Republic of Bulgaria, approved by the Council of Ministers on 02 May 2019:
  - Green light to build the necessary infrastructure for digital transformation of agriculture
  - Anticipating specific measures for this transformation
  - The accelerated development of digital technologies and the creation of new business models in agriculture contribute to attracting younger generations in the sector
  - Reducing rural depopulation
  - Improving life in rural areas, etc.

• The successful implementation of digital technologies provides sustainable solutions to the current and future challenges facing Bulgaria, the Balkans, Europe and the world:
  - Urbanization and increased consumption
  - Losses from pests and diseases
  - Logistical difficulties
  - Soil erosion
  - Reduction of arable land
  - Environmental pollution
  - Climate change, etc.
Agriculture in EU

• Strategic importance of the EU agricultural sector;

• Agriculture can and should make a positive contribution to Europe's future

• Transformation in both production and consumption of agricultural commodities

• The challenge of long-term generation renewal:
  - limited high quality land
  - price vulnerability
  - difficult access to finance
  - difficult access to training, etc.
Agriculture in EU

• The post-2020 CAP legislative proposals aim at raising the level of an ambitious environmental policy and present themselves as a tool to assist the transition to a fully sustainable agricultural sector through a new performance-focused implementation model
• Moving to a results-oriented system
• Need to put innovation at the heart of the future CAP and rural development policy
• Tackling challenges:
  - population growth
  - migration
  - resource efficiency
  - increasing pressure on the environment
  - striving to raise the standard of living of people in rural areas, etc.
• Impacts on agricultural policy making:
  - by consumers
  - by agribusiness
  - by commercial lobbies and other groups
Agriculture in the Republic of Bulgaria

- The place of agriculture in the socio-economic life of the Balkans, and in particular of Bulgaria
- Agriculture in the Republic of Bulgaria:
  - about 7% of the population is employed in agriculture
  - the sector generates about 5% of the country's GVA
  - agricultural activities are and will remain an important source of income
  - an extremely strong grain sector
  - well-developed production and processing of fruits and vegetables
  - Bulgarian wines are of high quality and competitive
  - producer of high quality honey and bee products
  - long-standing traditions in the production of rose and lavender oil, which, due to their exceptional qualities, are among the most preferred by the world industries and make Bulgaria one of the first places in the world for production and export
  - guaranteed quality and safety of Bulgarian agricultural products and food
  - strict implementation of European policy, including rigorous food controls and chain-wide monitoring
  - the agricultural sector has traditionally formed a positive foreign trade balance
  - a viable sector that contributes to accelerating economic growth and achieving significant social and economic goals
The CAP after 2020

- The new CAP after 2020
- The CAP after 2020 intends to pay greater attention to new strategic priorities, such as the development of innovation through the creation of a knowledge and innovation system
- Research and innovation play an essential role in promoting smart and sustainable growth and job creation, which in turn leads to higher productivity, competitiveness and prosperity
- Bulgaria's post-2020 policy should focus on the modernization of agricultural technologies, the introduction of innovation and the exchange of experience and knowledge, reflecting the importance of the viability and competitiveness of agricultural holdings, the effective use of natural resources
- Consumer demand is driving an ever-expanding market for organic produce and local initiatives to buy food directly from producers
- Cross-sectoral and cross-border challenges in agricultural systems can only be met by the transition to sustainability

Figure: European Commission
Agrifood systems’ sustainability

- Six criteria for agrifood systems’ sustainability assessment:
  1. Health
  2. Ecological
  3. Economic
  4. Social
  5. Ethical
  6. Resilience

- Strategy for agrifood system policy with assessment of direct and indirect links between dimensions including synergies, trade-offs, conflicts of interest and ethical dilemmas
Cooperation for sustainable development - key to a better future

- Dimensions of cooperation:
  - horizontal and vertical
  - bilateral and multilateral
  - regionally and globally
- A key feature is to be productive, interdisciplinary and result oriented
- Dynamic changes in geopolitical, economic, social and environmental aspects
- Our mission - global cooperation, partnerships, support, enhancing the competitiveness of each country and continuing dialogue between statesmen, entrepreneurs, the public and representatives of academia and academia
- Agriculture and Rural Development:
  - important and priority sectors for many countries
  - key to ensuring food security and combating poverty, hunger and malnutrition globally
- Main objectives:
  - maintaining a competitive and sustainable industry with a balance between environmental protection, economic growth and social responsibility
  - overcoming challenges and accepting differences
  - a readiness for support, solidarity and mutual assistance
  - deepening regional, inter-state and global links
  - sharing of experience and good practices
  - bringing together the interests of a more prosperous humanity
  - cooperation between equal actors, driven by common interests and mutual tolerance
Basic prerequisites for ensuring sustainable agrifood systems

• favourable political environment
• cross-sector cooperation
• dialogue between governments, between governments and business, academia and civil society
• mobilizing capacity and access to information, technology and financial and production resources
• using the potential of the private sector
• involvement of entrepreneurs, producer organizations, cooperatives, small and medium-sized enterprises and international corporations
• provision of financial resources
• technology development and transfer of knowledge and innovation
Cooperation and mutual assistance

• Sharing the valuable experience each country has gained over the years

• The Bulgarian Government supports and encourages all initiatives that are in the interest of deepening and enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation

• Using the best of the national characteristics and bring them to a global level for a more peaceful, better and more sustainable future

Thank you for your attention!

Figure: Greencarrier