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New Agri-Food Chain Coalition calls for stronger EU policy focus on innovation, jobs, sustainability

Groups to present bold vision to MEPs at reception in European Parliament on 23 September

(Brussels, 23 September 2014) A broad coalition of associations representing Europe's agriculture and food sectors¹ is calling for the EU to boost innovation and jobs with "ambitious policies that unlock the great potential of the European agri-food chain and maintain its place as a world leader."

The group of 11 leading EU-level associations will present their joint declaration, entitled: *Food for Thought: A Vision for unlocking the potential of agriculture and food industries in the EU*, at a reception on 23 September in the European Parliament hosted by influential MEPs from across the political spectrum. Specifically, the joint vision calls for:

- Fostering agricultural and food chain research to sustain innovation;
- Promoting the creation and protection of jobs in the agri-food sector;
- Taking into account the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainability in every EU policy measure; and,
- Supporting the role of Chief Scientific Adviser both at EU and national level.

The European Parliament reception will be hosted by **Ian Duncan MEP**, a member of the Parliament's Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee, and will include remarks from the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee Chair **Czesław Adam Siekierski**, the S&D Group coordinator on the same committee **Paolo de Castro** and also the Industry and Research Committee MEP **Philippe De Backer**.

A spokesperson for the Coalition, **Mella Frewen of FoodDrinkEurope**, said *“Our Vision has identified the numerous challenges faced by the agri-food chain and devised a clear set of policy recommendations to meet them. We sincerely hope that policymakers at EU and national level will give serious consideration to these recommendations and thus help ensure that we can continue to meet the ever changing needs of consumers, grow sustainably, innovate and create jobs.”*

Speaking in advance of the reception, **Paolo De Castro MEP** said: *“Innovation and agriculture have to go hand-in-hand if Europe wishes to accomplish sustainable growth. Unlocking the potential of EU agriculture will give an opportunity to translate ambitious policy objectives into reality”*

Philippe De Backer MEP commented: *“Innovation is at the heart of EU agriculture. European policymakers should create a science-based framework that allows us to bring these innovations to the Single Market. This will benefit research, our agriculture and economy, and consumers”.*

The coalition’s joint declaration was presented earlier this year to EU agriculture ministers in Athens by the 11 associations, who have since established themselves as the ‘Agri-Food Chain Coalition’.

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Note to editor:

The **Agri-Food Chain Coalition** includes representatives of agricultural input industries such as suppliers of machinery, seeds, fertilizers, crop protection, animal health, feed and biotechnology-based products, the agricultural trade, EU farmers and the European food and drink manufacturing sector. Together, these industries account for about **30 million jobs** and **3.5% of the EU's gross value added**.

For further information:

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ⁱ CELCAA (European Liaison Committee for the Agricultural and Agri-Food Trade), CEMA (European Agricultural Machinery), COCERAL (European Association of cereals, rice, feedstuffs, oilseeds, olive oil, oils and fats and agro supply trade), Copa-Cogeca (European Farmers and Agri-Cooperatives), ECPA (European Crop Protection Association), ESA (European Seed Association), EuropaBio (European Association for BioIndustries), FEFAC (European Feed Manufacturers Federation), Fertilizers Europe (European Fertilizers Association), FoodDrinkEurope (European Food and Drink Industry), IFAH Europe (European Animal Health Industry)