

POLICY BRIEF

Keeping Agriculture and the Bioeconomy as seen from broad context at the Heart of Policy Window II

Agriculture, and the bioeconomy are foundational to Europe's strategic autonomy, food security, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services and rural vitality. As an alliance uniting Europe's leading universities in the fields of bioeconomy, the European Bioeconomy University (EBU) are urging the retention of their explicit prominence in FP10 Policy Window II ('Health, Biotechnology, Agriculture and Bioeconomy') amid proposals to reframe it under broader competitiveness goals such as *Sustainable Prosperity*. Changing it to "Biotechnology, Health, and Sustainable Prosperity" risks hiding them as vague subtopics, weakening alignment with the Competitiveness Compass.

Risks of removing explicit mentions

The problem: A title change signals that agriculture and the bioeconomy drop from top priorities to background topics. This is simply because *sustainable prosperity* allows for flexibility in interpretation and makes reallocation of funds easy.

Why it matters:

- These sectors secure Europe's food supply, independence and crisis readiness through targeted research
- These sectors contribute to biodiversity protection and climate mitigation
- Without clear naming, their funding gets lost to health and biotech priorities

True value overlooked: Agriculture, and bioeconomy deliver lasting benefits that short-term revenue-focussed tech sectors (AI, semiconductors, quantum technology, biotechnology, energy and space technology, and health technology) often ignore or are unable to deliver:

- Food sovereignty and thus overall EU sovereignty
- Protected and sustainably managed forests
- Clean water supply
- Climate change mitigation
- Healthy ecosystems
- Nature restoration and biodiversity protection
- Strong rural economies

Key messages

- While recognizing the Competitiveness Compass's growth foundation, we fear short-term goals sacrifice long-term achievements in the EU's transition to true sustainability.
- Retaining "Health, Biotechnology, Agriculture and Bioeconomy" signals priority for collaborative R&I and a future valuing revenues beyond short-term KPIs.
- EBU universities are a leaders in agriculture, forestry, food systems and the bioeconomy. They are ready to support the Compass's ambition, which requires adequate funding priorities in these thematic areas.

Recommendation

Competitiveness Window II should **retain explicit reference** to agriculture, and the bioeconomy in its title **or** include a **clear operational commitment** ensuring their visibility, prioritization and adequate funding.

More info on the EBU website: <https://www.european-bioeconomy-university.eu/>