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Answer given by Mr Wojciechowski
on behalf of the European Commission
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Circularity and sustainability are key elements of the European Green Deal and of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) as reflected in the CAP Strategic Plans Regulation (EU) 2021/2115¹. With its specific objectives in Article 6(1) point(e) ‘to foster sustainable development and efficient management of natural resources such as water, soil and air, including by reducing chemical dependency’ and (h) ‘... including the circular bio-economy’, this regulation addresses key areas of support towards a more circular and sustainable agriculture.

The EU Bioeconomy Strategy² (2018) recognizes that ‘a sustainable bioeconomy is the renewable segment of the circular economy’. The Commission is planning to update the Bioeconomy Strategy in 2025. This can offer concrete perspectives to agriculture and forestry and strengthen the competitiveness of rural areas.

Concrete support for circular agriculture can be offered through e.g. rural development investment support (Articles 73 and 74 of Regulation 2021/2115) which could address measures to reduce waste, transform organic manure into organic fertilizer, provide efficient irrigation and water re-use facilities or investments in agricultural biogas or biomass facilities. The CAP – networks (Article 126) and European Innovation Partnerships (Article 127) also provide essential support for EU wide cooperation and knowledge exchange for innovation which is an important driver towards more circularity in agriculture and forestry.

In its latest amendment to the CAP strategic plan, Austria has, amongst other incentives, introduced a support premium for circular economy activities for organic farmers from 2025 onwards.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2115/oj>

² https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/environment/bioeconomy/bioeconomy-strategy_en