(English version)

Question for written answer E-000134/25
to the Commission
Dimitris Tsiodras (PPE)
(15 January 2025)

Subject: Digital transformation in the agriculture sector as a means of meeting the EU's climate objectives

The digitalisation of the agriculture sector in Europe and its modernisation with cutting-edge technologies have significant potential to reduce the environmental footprint of agriculture and achieve the EU's climate objectives, as well as to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the agriculture sector. However, the implementation of such projects is hampered by implementation costs — especially for small-scale farmers — the lack of resources and skills and imperfect interoperability between different systems.

In view of the above:

1. How does the Commission plan to help address these challenges, with a focus on small-scale farmers?

2. Is it considering drawing on best practices and encouraging their adoption in order to boost productivity and make agricultural production and the agriculture sector in general more sustainable?

Submitted: 15.1.2025

Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(11 March 2025)

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) supports farmers, including small ones, to adopt digital technologies through different interventions as laid down in the CAP Strategic Plans, such as investments, eco-schemes and agri-environment climate commitments. Funds also support rural broadband expansion and advisory services to enhance farmers' digital skills.

Cooperation measures support cost-sharing to enable access for small farms, while EU Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIH) make digital technologies more user-friendly for small farmers.

Horizon Europe supports the development of innovative solutions for the use of digital technologies tailored to the needs of small- and medium-sized farms. Projects like Farmtopia ([1]) and FaST ([2]) support small-scale farmers by making digital services accessible.

The development of the Common European Agricultural Data Space will address interoperability concerns and enable farmers to generate value from their data.

The Commission promotes good practices for digitalisation through the EU CAP Network ([3]) and its website ([4]). The platform hosts the European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) ([5]) and a dedicated good practice database, offering a rich repository of projects that show good practices related to digitalisation.

The network also offers communication activities, workshops, publications and awards, such as the EIP-AGRI Innovation Awards. In addition, the Commission oversees the Broadband Competence Offices Support Facility (BCO-SF) Network ([6]), which plays a crucial role in promoting digital innovation in rural areas.

The Support Facility organises webinars and produces videos and interviews on topics such as precision farming, digital skills, robotics, drones and other digital solutions.

([1]) https://farmtopia.eu/
([2]) https://fastplatform.eu/
([3]) Article 126 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115.
([4]) https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/index_en
([5]) https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/content/EIPAGRIabout.html
([6]) https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/news-events/news/new-european-broadband-network_en.html#:~:text=The%20European%20Broadband%20Competence%20Office%20%28BCO%29%20Support%20Facility,was%20launched%20by%20the%20European%20Commission%20in%202016