

**EURAGRI work-shop**

12 June 2015, 10.30 – 17.00

Kowi, 98 rue du Trône, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

**The European agro-food model under transition –**

**societal and cultural aspects facing the future of Europe in a global context**

During the last few years there has been a growing interest in the changing societal situation in Europe – not least in relation to sustainability issues. Horizon 2020 is based on three pillars one of which consists of seven pre-defined societal challenges (the two others are research excellence and industrial leadership) where social sciences and humanities (SSH) are considered to be of broad, cross-cutting relevance. Embedding SSH research across H2020 is essential to maximise the returns to society from investment in science and technology by finding solutions to societal problems and facilitating implementation of results and new technologies. This view is also increasingly reflected in European national states research and innovation programmes and voiced in many strategic research papers and future studies. SSH is also an important tool to document and measure interaction between science and society, to foster the evolvement of stakeholders in the definition and conduct of research programmes and to verify the scientific activities and social demand fit together.

In the agro-food domain and the bioeconomy at large strategic thinking around the future of Europe concerns not only the strategic issue around food security in an international context, but also how the agriculture-food sector shall respond to societal concerns as related to regional development, innovation structures and directions, changed consumer behavior and ethical considerations related to strategic choices. All these changes in what life could mean in the not so far future in Europe will be important to scrutinize with the help of those areas of knowledge production that deal with the human dimensions of contemporary challenges. This also includes the changing pressures from environmental conditions including climate change that will radically shift the panorama of threats and opportunities for our societies. In a globalized world these considerations also have to include the international panorama as a frame for a deep strategic scrutiny of European types of solutions as has been voiced frequently during the EURAGRI conference in Montpellier, September 2014.

Therefore we would like to invite you to participate in a one day workshop where we focus our discussions on the contributions from social sciences and humanities in relation to  
the production and use of agricultural and food knowledge in a futures perspective.

The following types of items will thus be addressed in the workshop:

**1. What are the challenges?**

Several, earlier and ongoing, futures studies attempt to draw maps of the (most) pressing societal challenges Europe’s agro-food domain is facing looking from different angles and at different scales in time and space including its embedding in the bioeconomy. Examples are:

* Foresight. The Future of Food and Farming (2011) Final Project Report. The Government Office for Science, London
* Sustainable food and consumption and production in a resource constraint world – SCAR 3rd Foresight Exercise (2011) European Commission
* Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems towards 2020 – an orientation paper on linking innovation and research (2013) European Commission
* How do we feed the world in 2015? Agrimonde foresight study. (2013) CIRAD, INRA
* Tomorrow’s Healthy Society – Research Priorities for Foods and Diets (Final Report) (2014), European Commission

In this session we would like to explore the generally acknowledged, the perceived and non-perceived and also the overlooked challenges and group them according to their importance, to the choices available and the contributions/transitions necessary to tackle them.

**2. What are contributions of social sciences and humanities to address these challenges?**

The agro food domain is historically dominated by mainly natural science and technology based approaches driven by a demand for increased resource efficiency and economies of scale to tackle necessary adaptions and innovations. Though societal challenges ask for changes that go beyond these approaches and also require the closer examination of institutional settings, legal and regulation issues, governance, communication pathways, lifestyle patterns, mind sets and ethics to name a few as factors influencing and possibly hindering necessary changes. Here social sciences and humanities are able to provide most valuable contributions.

Under this heading we would like to exemplify the necessary knowledge, insights and skills that social sciences and humanities will be able to provide, illustrated with the help of selected cases.

**3. What are the effects of globalization?**

The European agro-food sector is highly globalized and this is also an important reason for its success. The connected societal challenges are also global, thus calling for new ways to address the complexity of possible solutions and related choices to be made. Geopolitics, demography, trading patterns, poverty and its mitigation, conflicts, and land grabbing influence the global agro food sector. They all have their origin in social and human conditions. Climate change enforces the severity of the social and human situation and further requires changes in agricultural production systems.

Here we would like to discuss how globalization pressures already today influence European strategic choices – and how this could provide indications about what might happen in Europe in the not so far future. What are European strengths and weaknesses? Could e.g. European diversity be made an asset in future strategies for policy formation, research priorities and innovation venues for the agro-food domain, or is this diversity hampering decisions for progress?

**EURAGRI workshop:**

**The European agro-food model under transition – societal and cultural aspects facing Europe in a global context**

Date: 12 June 2015, 10.30 – 16.30

Venue: KOWI, 98 rue du Trône, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

10.30- 10.45 **Welcome and introduction to the workshop**

Pascal Bergeret, president EURAGRI and Bettina Heimann, secretary general EURAGRI

10.45-13.00 **Session I: What are the most pressing societal challenges from a European perspective**

Introduction: Erik Mathijs

Moderation: Uno Svedin

Several, earlier and ongoing, futures studies attempt to draw maps of the pressing societal challenges Europe’s agro-food domain is facing as seen from different angles and at different scales in time and space. This includes the embedding of these topics in a wider context of sustainability and the formation of a future bio-economy. Several recent and ongoing future studies and research cases will be the basis of the discussions.

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-14.45 **Session II: What are contributions from social sciences and humanities?**

Introduction: Tony Zamparutti

Moderation: Christian Huyghe

What are the necessary knowledge, insights and skills that social sciences and the humanities provide in defining issues and contributing to the analysis of issues - beyond natural sciences and technology based approaches. How can the social science and the humanities traditions better and earlier be integrated in the design, development and applications of knowledge with regard to the agro-food domains, including the implementation of research and new technologies?

15.00-15.45 **Session III:** **What do the contributions from the social sciences and the humanities mean in a global context with regard to the agro-food issues?**

Introduction and moderation: Pascal Bergeret

How do globalization pressures already today influence European strategic choices – and how could this provide indications about what might happen in Europe in the not so far future. What are Europe’s strengths and weaknesses? Geopolitics, demography, trading patterns, poverty and its mitigation, conflicts and land grabbing, all influence the global agro food sector - and have their origin in social and human conditions. In a globalized world these considerations should act as a frame for a strategic scrutiny around European types of solutions.

16.00-16.30 **Discussion and** **Reflections from the day and Summary**

Moderator and closing remarks: Uno Svedin