



Ministry of Agriculture
Republic of Latvia



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF RURAL AFFAIRS



THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
OF THE REPUBLIC
OF LITHUANIA

BALTIC WORKSHOP ON SCAR AND BIOECONOMY STRATEGIES

4-5 April 2019, Riga

Venue: Hotel Mercure Riga Centrum and Latvian Academy of Sciences

Welcome speech delivered by Mr Janis Eglits, head of Cabinet, on behalf of Mr Kaspars Gerhards Minister of Agriculture of Latvia

Dear Ms Rivža!

Dear Ms Bunthof!

Participants of the seminar of the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research,

Welcome in Latvia!

The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia appreciates organisation of this seminar in Latvia. This shows that we – Latvia – are on the right track, and so far what has been done has not only been noticed but also been assessed at international level.

We are delighted and honoured to host the participants of this debate who will share experience and discuss the importance of the bioeconomy, including the role of strategies in Europe.

Latvia participates at the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research since 2004 when we joined the EU. Over the years, we have seen the role of THE SCAR platform in promoting information, thought-sharing and cooperation in order to improve day-to-day processes and to address various challenges. But what's more, it is important to think about future challenges at European level, both individually and collectively, by putting visions, experience, and professionalism together, thus creating more sustainable development solutions.

The Ministry of Agriculture represents and supervises a number of sectors – and the agricultural, forest and fisheries sectors play a key role in Latvia's economic development. In addressing future challenges, it is in these areas that the bioeconomy is expected to play an important role.



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We are therefore proud that Latvia is one of the seven EU Member States which, at the initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture, has developed its own national Bioeconomy strategy. The Latvia Bioeconomy Strategic Research Alliance has been established in Latvia, which combines leading scientific institutes of the sector in order to increase the performance and competitiveness of bio-economy innovation at regional and international level, as well as Latvia's contribution to the overall EU goals.

We believe that key tools to help to take advantage of the bioeconomy potential are related to knowledge and innovation transfer, consulting services, cooperation of research and business, education and science, with particular emphasis on the significance of "Horizon Europe". It should be accentuated that, in our opinion, the involvement of agricultural experts in the "Horizon Europe" debate should become more important.

Considering that the scope of the 7th Cluster is currently extensively expanded, there is reason to fear that the funding planned for agriculture, food and natural resource innovation, as well as for research, may not make a significant contribution to the development of this area, since the section of environmental research is added to this cluster.

Assessing the role of science, innovation and their transfer in the future development of national economy, we see the need for more active involvement and representation of the Ministry of Agriculture in the international cooperation models.

I wish for fruitful discussions and strengthening of cooperation at the regional level of the Baltic States and the EU level, finding new and effective solutions for overcoming future challenges.