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Advancing agrifood sustainability, resilience and investment: FAO co-hosts private sector dialogue with EDA

Ahead of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe, the event marked the first FAO policy dialogue co-hosted with private sector organization, in line with the new FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement

The European Dairy Association (EDA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) co-hosted a high-level private sector dialogue in Brussels on the sustainability, resilience and financing of agrifood systems, bringing together around fifty stakeholder representatives from EU agrifood industries, European organizations and EU institutions. The consultation aimed to support the development of coordinated European private sector contributions to the next Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC35), scheduled to take place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from 11 to 15 May 2026. It also served as a key opportunity to present and discuss the FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement 2026–2030 with European stakeholders, highlighting its role in fostering more coherent and impactful partnerships.

It is the first time a FAO policy consultation is officially co-hosted by a private sector organisation, offering a new setup for structured and impact-driven agrifood collaboration.

Mr Alexander Anton, Secretary General of EDA, stated: *“The new FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement sends clear signal for more flexible and market-responsive approach while FAO is staying true to its mission on agrifood sustainability and food security. As EU dairy sector, we are very proud of our long-standing cooperation with FAO, including on projects on the ground, and it is for good reasons that FAO celebrates every year the World Milk Day, even though it has not yet been officialised by the United Nations”.*

In her closing statement, Dr Lauren M. Phillips, Director Partnerships at FAO, underlined the value of multi-sectorial collaboration with the private sector to shape sustainable and scalable solutions that work on the ground.



The discussions shaped the key messages to be brought forward at ERC35, focusing on advancing sustainable agrifood systems through integrated approaches to climate action, biodiversity conservation, land restoration, and the development of the bioeconomy.

The role of innovation, biotechnologies and sustainable financing was recognised as a key driver in enhancing productivity, sustainability, and nutritional outcomes within sustainable agrifood systems.

Showcasing impact

The dialogue highlighted concrete examples of successful FAO-private sector collaboration.

Danone, represented by Ms Hanae Idrissi Ouedrhiri, Sustainability Advocacy Senior Manager, Global Public Affairs, presented its experience in working in partnership with FAO to promote sustainable value chains, demonstrating how private sector engagement translates strategic commitments into measurable impact.

Next steps

The key messages identified during the consultation will be presented at the FAO Regional Conference in May, where the appointed private sector spokespersons, Hanae Idrissi Ouedrhiri from Danone and Tobias Gräs from the Danish Agriculture and Food Council (DAFC), amongst others, will contribute to the discussions.

For the European dairy sector, the dialogue reaffirmed our commitment to contributing to sustainable food systems through innovation, resource-efficient production practices, and active engagement in EU and international policy processes.

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN DAIRY ASSOCIATION

The European Dairy Association is the voice of dairy processors in the European Union. The membership of EDA consists of the associations of dairy processors in EU Member States.

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