

**PRESS RELEASE****Circular Economy & Smart Farming: the fertilizer sector has a crucial role to play**

The biannual Forum on Fertilizers and Nutrients for Growth, organized on 7 June 2017 by Fertilizers Europe, observed efforts in circular economy and means of scaling up smart farming in Europe. The two sessions were opened by Chair MEP Julie Girling (ECR, UK) and Vice-Chair MEP Peter Jahr (EPP, DE), while the second session was kindly hosted by MEP Franc Bogovic (EPP, SI).

The first session, titled "Thinking Circular", highlighted the issue of recycling of industrial products. Dr. Antoine Hoxha, Technical Director at Fertilizers Europe, demonstrated the ability that industrial chemistry has on ensuring reuse and recycling practices throughout the production process leading to mineral fertilizers. He called for the inclusion of current practices of the fertilizer sector, already contributing to circular economy, to be included in the new fertilizer Regulation by the co-legislators who are currently negotiating on the Commission proposal in this regard. The concept of responsible waste management is not a new one, but the political focus on it is. The European Commission's efforts towards a more sustainable future for Europe include addressing each industry in detail, and Carlo Pettinelli from the Commission's DG Growth stressed that the example set by the fertilizer industry will play a great role in the future of Europe's evolution towards a circular economy.

The second session, titled "Smart Farming: Data and Tools", was chaired by MEP Franc Bogovic (EPP, SI). A farmer himself, he reminded of the need for investment in farming inputs and technologies to ensure competitiveness of European farmers. Jakob Lave from Seges, the Danish organization for advisory services in agriculture, reaffirmed that investing in smart technology and giving farmers the data they need to grow their business is mandatory for business development. Eugenio Longo from Borealis reminded the Forum of the importance of mineral fertilizers and gave examples of the role of precision nutrition in improving nutrient use efficiency and in facilitating the compliance of European farmers with environmental rules. The discussion with the participants acknowledged the contribution of smart farming in enhanced the productivity and the environmental performance of farming practices. At the same time, it was reminded that digitization and the use of farm management systems only concern a share of the European farmers. In order to scale this up, the first priority for the farming community and decision-makers must be to ensure that all farmers are on a level playing field with regards to having access to digitization, precision nutrition and other tools.

The Forum was concluded by Jacob Hansen, Director-General of Fertilizers Europe, who reminded that the core of fertilizer sector's business is characterized with aspiring towards circular solutions. In light of the New Fertilizer Regulation, he called on the members of the Internal Market Committee of the European Parliament to recognize the industry for its contributions towards sustainability and circular economy, arguing that the need to improve on our current efforts rather than initiating brand new strategies for circular economy. Finally, Hansen emphasized the need for the Common Agricultural Policy post-2020 to provide support to farmers in their investments and in their willingness to benefit from a deeper knowledge transfer.

**Contact:****For inquiries on the New Fertilizer Regulation:**

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**About:**

Fertilizers Europe represents the majority of fertilizer producers in Europe and is recognized as the dedicated industry source of information on mineral fertilizers. The association communicates with a wide variety of institutions, legislators, stakeholders and members of the public who seek information on fertilizer technology and topics relating to today's agricultural, environmental, and economic challenges. The Fertilizers Europe website provides information on subjects of relevance to all those interested in fertilizers' contribution to global food security.

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