

TP Organics Briefing

Horizon Europe – The next EU research & innovation framework programme (2021-2027)

Table of contents

Introduction.....	1
Structure and timeline.....	1
Missions.....	4
Partnership Candidates	5
Assessment of Horizon Europe by TP Organics.....	5
Funding research for organics and agroecology to enable and accelerate the transition.....	5
Key concerns regarding Horizon Europe	6
Engagement of civil society	7
Sources	9

Introduction

[Horizon Europe](#), the EU's 9th Framework Programme for research and innovation (R&I), will provide a proposed budget of 100 billion EUR for the period 2021-2027 to:

- Strengthen the EU's scientific and technological bases and the European Research Area (ERA).
- Boost Europe's innovation capacity, competitiveness and jobs.
- Deliver on citizens' priorities and sustain socio-economic models and values.

In terms of novelties, Horizon Europe will adopt a mission-oriented approach to boost impact and visibility (also see section on Missions), simplify the architecture of European Partnerships (see section on Partnership Candidates) and have clear goals with defined targets and timeframes.

This briefing aims to provide an overview of the Horizon Europe programme (structure and content) and policy process (including the expected timeline). In line with TP Organics' work priorities, the focus will be on Cluster 6, "Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment". In addition, TP Organics' point of view and evaluation of the programme will be set forth.

Structure and timeline

Horizon Europe is based on 2 legislative texts:

- the [Regulation](#) setting the general framework and rules of participation
- the [Decision on the Specific Programme](#) defining the content in broad lines¹

¹ Council of the European Union, 2019a,b

The European Parliament and the Council of the EU reached in March and April 2019 a provisional agreement on Horizon Europe. Following this agreement, the Commission has begun the preparation of the first Strategic Plan, referred to as the strategic planning process. This process focuses on pillar II and its six thematic clusters and is expected to continue until early 2020. The Strategic Plan will facilitate the implementation of Horizon Europe by acting as a bridge between the Specific Programme and the future, multi-annual work programmes that will contain the calls and topics to which interested parties can apply. Besides setting out key strategic orientations for R&I, including targeted impacts, cross-cluster issues and intervention areas, the Strategic Plan will identify Missions and European Partnerships. The Strategic Plan will serve to prepare the content of the work programmes and calls for proposals for the first four years of Horizon Europe. The first work programme is expected by autumn 2020 (European Commission, 2019b). Figure 1 shows the expected structure of the programme.

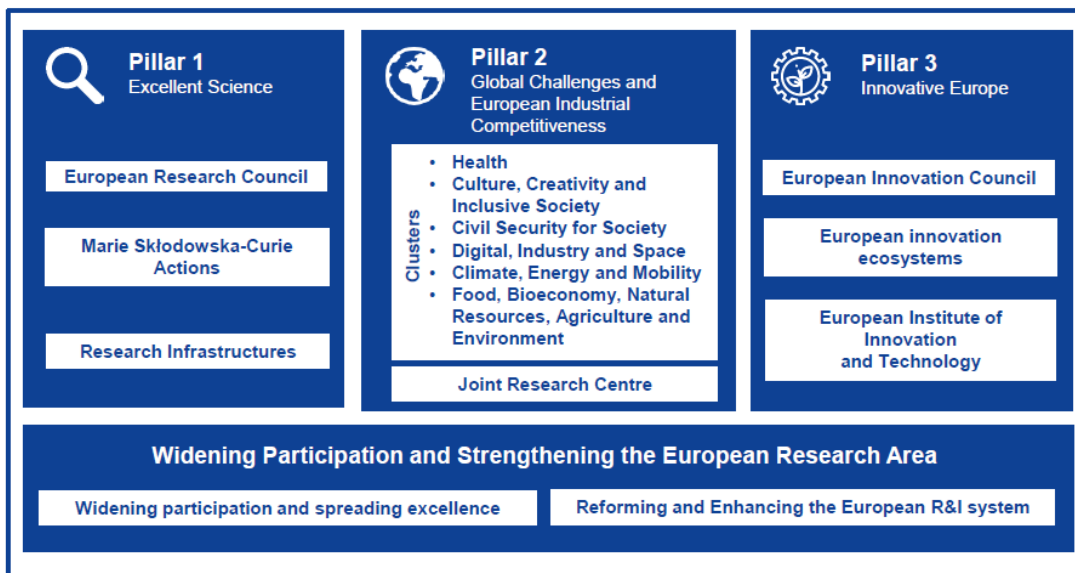


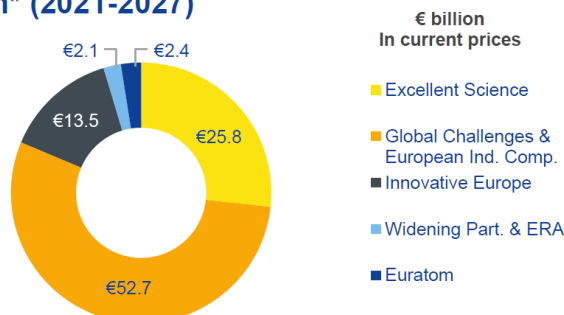
Figure 1: Horizon Europe: expected structure (European Commission, 2019b)

- Pillar I, **Excellent Science** will reinforce EU scientific leadership through the European Research Council (ERC), Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and Research Infrastructures.
- Pillar II, **Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness** will include six broad thematic “clusters” of activities and take forward the societal challenges as well as enabling industrial technologies to better address EU and global policy priorities and accelerate industrial transformation.
- Pillar III, **Innovative Europe** focuses on stimulating, nurturing and deploying disruptive and market-creating innovations, and on enhancing European ecosystems conducive to innovation, including through the new European Innovation Council.

Figure 2 shows the allocation of the proposed budget to the different pillars, ERA and Euratom. 10 billion EUR are to be allocated to Cluster 6 of Horizon Europe, “Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment”, which is part of the second pillar. Responsible for this cluster will be DG AGRI for Agriculture and Rural Development, DG RTD for Food and Bioeconomy and most likely DG ENVI for Environment. The final budget of Horizon Europe and the allocation to the different pillars depends on the agreement on the complete multi-annual financial framework for

2021-2027. The Member States are expected to agree on this at the end of 2019/beginning of 2020. The timeline of the strategic planning process is outlined in Table 1 below.

Commission proposal for budget: €100 billion* (2021-2027)



* This envelope includes EUR 3.5 billion allocated under the InvestEU Fund.



Figure 2: Horizon Europe: European Commission's proposal for the budget (European Commission, 2019c)

Table 1: Timeline strategic planning process

When	What
17 April 2019	Horizon Europe adopted in European Parliament plenary (also see article here)
2/3 May 2019	First meeting of strategic shadow committees. These committees are composed of Member State representatives and comment on the Strategic Plan for the first four years of Horizon Europe, especially in terms of the second pillar on global challenges and industrial competitiveness.
June-September 2019	Online consultation on 1st draft of Strategic R&I Plan (European Commission, 2019a) – TP Organics has submitted a response
September 2019	Hearings for new European Commissioners First public meeting of Mission Boards
24-26 September	EU R&I Days (only stakeholder consultation on the second draft; see TP Organics' event review here)
October 2019	Second version of the Strategic R&I Plan (European Commission, 2019b)
October-November 2019	Second online consultation for umbrella organisations – TP Organics has submitted a response
December 2019	New Commission/Commissioner for Youth and Innovation asked to approve Strategic Plan as implementing act (+ partnerships in December 2019/early 2020)
Early 2020-autumn 2020(?)	Work programme process. First drafts of work programmes expected in March 2020. Official launch of work programmes expected in autumn 2020.

Missions

Horizon Europe will take a mission-oriented approach to policy-making, i.e. setting defined goals with specific targets and working to achieve them in a set time². The Council and European Parliament have agreed on five Mission Areas that will receive 10% of the total funding of Pillar II:

1. Adaptation to Climate Change, including Societal Transformation
2. Cancer
3. Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters
4. Climate-neutral and Smart cities
5. **Soil Health and Food**

The Missions will be defined in two phases by five Mission Boards, each consisting of up to 15 members (find [here](#) the list of Mission Board members). In the first phase, the main task of the Mission Boards will be to advise the Commission on the identification and design of one or more possible specific missions within each Mission Area, with their respective objectives, indicators and timelines. In the second phase, once the Horizon Europe framework programme and budget are formally agreed, the Mission Boards will advise the Commission on the portfolio of R&I activities needed to support the Mission objectives. This will be accompanied by outreach activities to engage Member States and the general public. Mission Assemblies that consist of up to 30 high-level experts will provide an additional pool of ideas, knowledge and expertise.

The planned **Mission Area for Soil Health and Food** aims at systemic, transformative solutions, and explicitly addresses ecology and agroecology as well as the delivery of public goods³.

Table 2: Timeline steps towards Strategic Plan & Missions in the work programme

When	What
Summer 2019	Establishment of Mission Boards
Early July 2019	Announcement of Mission Board chairs
End of July 2019	Announcement of full membership of Mission Boards
24-26 September 2019	European R&I Days – stakeholder consultation on Missions
October 2019	Announcement of Mission Assembly members
Autumn-winter 2019-2020	Exchanges with European Parliament; establishment of new Commission; drafting of Strategic Plan, including identification of Missions by proposal of Mission Boards
January 2020	Confirmation of proposed Missions
From January 2020	Advice on preparation of calls on Missions for the first work programme; drafting of first work programme based on the Strategic Plan, including Mission calls
By the end of 2020	Report with Mission Board advice, overall recommendations and pending issues to be taken forward
2021	Start of Horizon Europe, including Mission calls

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe-next-research-and-innovation-framework-programme/mission-oriented-policy-horizon-europe_en#what

³ Also see EASAC, 2018 on the importance of soils from recent science (including soil biodiversity and above-ground biodiversity, soils and modern farming, soils, plant health and human health, and soils and climate change) and implications for policy

Partnership Candidates

In Horizon Europe, the structure of ERA-Nets, JPIs and all other public-public and public-private partnerships will be simplified. ERA-Nets (including ERA-Net CORE Organic) and JPIs will stop in their current format⁴.

There are eight partnerships planned in cluster 6 (European Commission, 2019b):

- **Accelerating farming systems transition: agro-ecology living labs and research infrastructures** (*to be Co-funded*)
- Animal health: Fighting infectious diseases (*Co-programmed, Co-funded*)
- Environmental Observations for sustainable EU agriculture (*Co-funded*)
- Rescuing biodiversity to safeguard life on Earth (*Co-funded*)
- A climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy (*Co-programmed or Co-funded*)
- **Safe and sustainable food systems for people, planet and climate** (*Co-funded or Co-programmed*)
- Circular bio-based Europe: Sustainable, inclusive and circular bio-based solutions (*Art. 187 or Co-programmed*)
- Water4All: Water security for the planet (*Co-programmed or Co-funded*)

The planned partnership for Accelerating farming systems transition is intended to “support implementation and upscaling of agro-ecological approaches in primary production, including **organic** and mixed farming or agroforestry. R&I outputs will improve conservation, management and use of plant and animal genetic resources, thereby preserving and enhancing agrobiodiversity.”⁵

The first European Partnerships under Horizon Europe are expected to be launched in early 2021. The launch of the Agroecology Partnership is anticipated for 2023.

Assessment of Horizon Europe by TP Organics

Funding research for organics and agroecology to enable and accelerate the transition

TP Organics believes that ambitious R&I programmes are needed to study, strengthen and scale up **organic and agroecological approaches**. TP Organics successfully lobbied for the inclusion of both agroecology and support to organic farming in Horizon Europe. The Specific Programme states that Horizon Europe should support research into: “*The use and delivery of ecosystem services in agriculture and forestry systems applying ecological approaches and testing nature-based solutions from farm to landscape levels for an environmentally friendly agriculture; support to organic farming;*” and “*Agricultural and forestry systems from farm to landscape levels; the use and delivery of ecosystem services in primary production, e.g. through **agro-ecology** or through enhancing the role of forests in the prevention of floods and soil erosion;*”⁶

Cluster 6 should aim at building knowledge and developing innovative solutions that will accelerate the transition to sustainable food and farming systems. Priority should be given to organic and agroecological approaches that use natural resources efficiently and sustainably, create circular

⁴ <https://www.era-learn.eu/partnerships-in-a-nutshell/r-i-partnerships/transition-to-horizon-europe>

⁵ European Commission, 2019a,b

⁶ Council of the European Union, 2019a

systems and reduce soil erosion and pollution of the environment. The potential of organic farming for climate change mitigation and adaptation should be leveraged. By drawing down carbon from the atmosphere into the soil, organic and agroecological approaches reduce greenhouse gas emissions⁷. They contribute to halting the ongoing, rapid biodiversity loss and to restoring ecosystems and their services. TP Organics therefore expects that the Specific Programme's provisions to support organic farming and agroecology are duly implemented in the work programmes.

TP Organics welcomes the planned Mission for Soil Health and Food which explicitly includes ecology and agroecology, the delivery of public goods and systems approaches. Better protection of soils, the basis of food production, is urgently needed. Research must consider how the findings can be implemented in practice.

The new partnership for a Safe and Sustainable Food System will prove essential in the transition to sustainable food systems. 99% of Europe's food sector is made up of SMEs, yet their participation in R&I remains low. The partnership should be open to all actors in the agri-food chain and engage citizens and civil society organisations. This is especially relevant to dietary shift, including reduced consumption of animal products and the reduction of food waste.

The partnership for Accelerating farming systems transition will be a crucial instrument to support the upscaling of organic farming and agroecology. To be successful, the partnership must build on experiences of previous partnerships, in particular ERA-NET [CORE Organic](#) which has already funded research into agroecological processes and organic farming for 15 years. The extensive body of knowledge built by CORE Organic should be integrated in the new partnership. Research into organic farming and agroecology – within and beyond the partnership – should be accompanied by effective advisory services. This requires building closer relationships between advisors and farmers through direct contacts, farm visits and on-farm research.

Key concerns regarding Horizon Europe

1. Horizon Europe will merge societal challenges with industrial leadership into a new “Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness” pillar with a proposed budget of 52.7 billion EUR that will be the focal point of the whole programme. This could lead to the side-lining of societal impact. Therefore, it is critical how the pillar's priorities are set. Efforts to improve European industrial leadership do not always align with sustainable development and the public interest. Worryingly, Horizon Europe does not include any safeguards to prioritise societal impact in cases where economic interests and societal goals conflict⁸.

2. Horizon Europe's second pillar will devote a significant amount of its budget (up to 50%) to major partnerships, the largest part going to **public-private partnerships (PPPs)** – despite several [impact assessments](#) and [reports](#) that have questioned their governance structures and whether they are equipped to deliver societal impact. The priority-setting process for these PPPs risks being driven by

⁷ FAO, 2011

⁸ Global Health Advocates & The European Alliance for Responsible R&D and Affordable Medicines, 2019

industries whose main objective is to enhance competitiveness and advance the interests of the private sector. Significant barriers to CSO and citizen engagement are evident⁹.

3. Innovation support is being scaled up in Horizon Europe. The Innovation Principle that was introduced in the legal basis of Horizon Europe does not define safe or sustainable innovation, nor is it needed to support innovation for society's benefit¹⁰. It set a dangerous precedent for policy-making in the EU. CSOs including TP Organics expressed their concern that it could be used to undermine the Precautionary Principle, and hence social and environmental protections¹¹. Innovation is only useful if it does not harm public and environmental health.

4. Horizon Europe will stop the "Science With and For Society" programme. The funding available for societal engagement and Responsible R&I (RRI) activities within the next programme risks being greatly reduced. While stated efforts to mainstream societal engagement are welcome, the absence of a dedicated focal point and earmarked budget for these activities implies a lack of coherence, resources, or strong leadership. This could result in poor-quality societal engagement.

Engagement of civil society

For innovation to work for the public good, it must be dedicated to upholding human values and advancing society with real investment on the pressing societal challenges (including agriculture, food and nutrition and climate change), and therefore look beyond the quick fixes of a technology to its broader social impact. Organisational, social and knowledge innovations must be promoted along technological ones. Technologies must be open-source and socioeconomically sustainable. To better align the R&I process and its outcomes with the needs, values and expectations of society, EU R&I agenda-setting must involve **civil society organisations (CSOs)** and **EU citizens** themselves. Public R&I funding is a public investment in knowledge production as a public good¹². Specifically, Horizon Europe should support farmer-led research, exchange among farmers and citizens, strong knowledge and innovation systems, social innovations on sustainable food, and an integrated food policy approach for the EU to restore accountability rather than widening the gap between citizens and policies¹³. Across Horizon Europe, transparency and traceability of public funding for R&I and public interest conditions (quality, availability, accessibility and affordability) must be ensured. Civil society must be engaged with transparent methods in shaping the strategic priorities and work programmes as well as in the co-creation of research projects. The evaluation of projects must be improved by developing robust societal impact indicators, creating a system of accountability for beneficiaries and engaging societal actors. Mechanisms to safeguard the public interest in the major **public-private partnerships (PPPs)** must avoid diversion of public funding to private interests¹⁴.

Recognising the need to engage citizens, the European Commission announced that Horizon Europe would be co-designed and co-created with society¹⁵. CSOs welcomed this, but noted that a concrete

⁹ Global Health Advocates & The European Alliance for Responsible R&D and Affordable Medicines, 2019

¹⁰ Holland, 2018

¹¹ Corporate Europe Observatory, 2018; Global Health Advocates France, n.d.; Global Health Advocates & The European Alliance for Responsible R&D and Affordable Medicines, 2019; Holland, 2018; TP Organics, 2019

¹² Global Health Advocates & The European Alliance for Responsible R&D and Affordable Medicines, 2019

¹³ HLPE, 2019; IPES-Food, 2019

¹⁴ Global Health Advocates & The European Alliance for Responsible R&D and Affordable Medicines, 2019

¹⁵ European Union, 2018; European Commission, 2019a

roadmap is missing that addresses barriers to societal engagement and [pilots robust and innovative approaches](#). While the Commission assured that the strategic planning process would be the space for co-creation with society, a roadmap or concrete plans are still lacking. Furthermore, while some limited space is foreseen for civil society on the Mission Boards, there seem to be no plans to meaningfully engage citizens in the selection of concrete Missions. The only feedback on the first draft was gathered via an online public consultation¹⁶. Horizon Europe will be the first EU R&I programme to include **societal impact pathways** (see Figure 3), linking it to sustainable development and including corresponding indicators that relate to sustainable development. Unfortunately, though the Horizon Europe legislation does include a general commitment to monitor civil society engagement, civil society is not included in the indicators¹⁷.

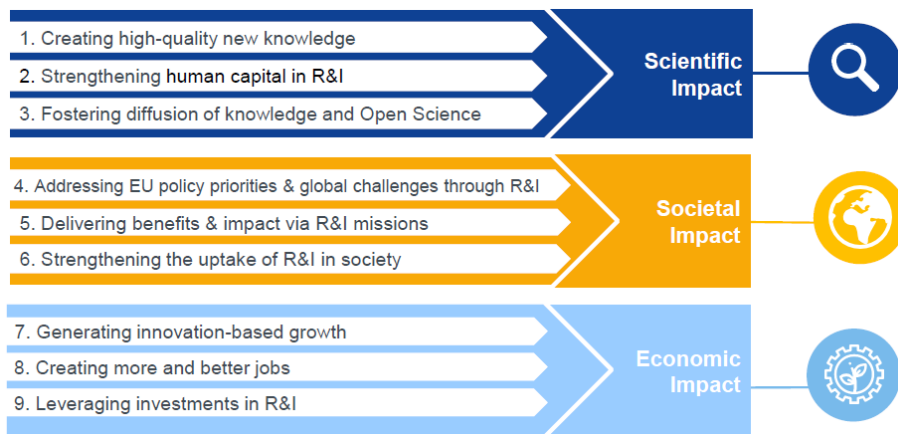


Figure 3: Key impact pathways to track progress (European Commission, 2019c)

The new Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), especially the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), will play a key role in ensuring the EU’s R&I policies deliver real benefits for society and the environment throughout the 2019-2024 legislature. In a [welcome letter to new MEPs](#) that was sent to the members of the ITRE, AGRI and ENVI Committees), TP Organics presented itself and its position on Horizon Europe. The letter also comprised [this guide](#) for new MEPs that was developed by TP Organics, together with 26 other CSOs, and that sets out key opportunities and risks in Horizon Europe.

¹⁶ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gvwOnBRiIBV23u1gB4uCIT_KKIN05Nh5qylwb5MF1bY/edit

¹⁷ Global Health Advocates & The European Alliance for Responsible R&D and Affordable Medicines, 2019

Sources

Corporate Europe Observatory (2018). The ‘innovation principle’ trap. Industries behind risky products push for backdoor to bypass EU safety rules. Brussels: Corporate Europe Observatory. Available online: <https://corporateeurope.org/en/environment/2018/12/innovation-principle-trap>.

Council of the European Union (2019a). Proposal for a decision of the Council on establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation – Partial General Approach. Council of the European Union. Brussels, 28 March 2019. 7911/19. Available online: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7911-2019-INIT/en/pdf>.

Council of the European Union (2019b). Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon Europe - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination - Common understanding Council of the European Union. Brussels, 27 March 2019. 7942/19. Available online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/38902/st07942-en19.pdf>.

EASAC (2018). Opportunities for soil sustainability in Europe. European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC) policy report 36. German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. Available online: https://easac.eu/fileadmin/PDF_s/reports_statements/EASAC_Soils_complete_Web-ready_210918.pdf.

European Commission (n.d.). Horizon Europe – the next research and innovation framework programme. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/designing-next-research-and-innovation-framework-programme/what-shapes-next-framework-programme_en.

European Commission (2019a). Orientations towards the first Strategic Plan implementing the research and innovation programme Horizon Europe. Co-Design via web open consultation. Summer 2019. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/research/pdf/horizon-europe/ec_rtd_orientations-towards-the-strategic-planning.pdf.

European Commission (2019b). Orientations towards the first Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe. Revised following the co-design process. Revised following the co-design process. Version of 31 October 2019. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/research_and_innovation/strategy_on_research_and_innovation/documents/ec_rtd_he-orientations-towards-strategic-plan_102019.pdf.

European Commission (2019c). Horizon Europe. The next EU Research & Innovation Investment Programme (2021 – 2027). Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/research_and_innovation/strategy_on_research_and_innovation/presentations/horizon_europe_en_investing_to_shape_our_future.pdf.

European Union (2018). A new Horizon for Europe. Impact Assessment of the 9th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Directorate Dir A – Policy Development & Coordination, Unit A.5 – Better Regulation. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/research_and_innovation/contact/documents/horizon_europe_impact_assessment_book_web_version.pdf.

FAO (2011). Organic agriculture and climate change mitigation. A report of the Round Table on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Available online: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/organicag/pdf/11_12_2_RTOACC_23_webfiles.pdf.

FoodDrinkEurope (2016). A Competitive EU Food and Drink Industry for Growth and Jobs. Available online: https://www.fooddrinkeurope.eu/uploads/publications_documents/Competitive_food_industry_growth_jobs_report.pdf.

Global Health Advocates France (n.d.). Last chance to safeguard citizen’s protections by removing “Innovation Principle” from Horizon Europe. Brussels: Global Health Advocates France. Available online: <https://www.ghadvocates.eu/en/last-chance-to-safeguard-citizens-protections-by-removing-innovation-principle-from-horizon-europe/>.

Global Health Advocates, The European Alliance for Responsible R&D and Affordable Medicines (2019). Ensuring Research & Innovation truly benefits EU citizens. European Parliament 2019-2024. Available online: http://www.ghadvocates.eu/wp-content/uploads/MEP_starter_kit_WEB.pdf.

HLPE (2019). Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition. A report by The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. Available online: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5602en/ca5602en.pdf>.

Holland N (2018). The “innovation principle”: Industry’s attack on EU environmental & public health safeguards. Briefing on risks of the “innovation principle”. Available online: https://corporateeurope.org/sites/default/files/attachments/briefing_innovation_principle_final.pdf.

IPES-Food (2019). Towards a Common Food Policy. The policy reform and realignment that is required to build sustainable food systems in Europe. Available online: http://www.ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/CFP_FullReport.pdf.

TP Organics (2017). Research & Innovation for Sustainable Food and Farming. Position paper on the 9th EU Research & Innovation Framework Programme (FP9). Brussels: TP Organics – European Technology Platform for Organic Food and Farming. Available online: https://tporganics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/TPOrganics_FP9_position_paper_final_Nov2017.pdf.

TP Organics (2018). Scientific evidence on how organic food and farming contributes to sustainable food security. TP Organics Research Briefing. Available online: <https://tporganics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/tporganics-briefing-evidence-of-the-performance-of-organic-farming.pdf>.

TP Organics (2019). Last chance to safeguard citizens protections by removing “Innovation Principle” from Horizon Europe. Available online: <https://tporganics.eu/innovation-principle/>.