

[EU Member States join forces on digitalisation for European agriculture and rural areas](#)

26 European countries signed a Declaration of cooperation on "A smart and sustainable digital future for European agriculture and rural areas" to take a number of actions to support a successful digitalisation of agriculture and rural areas in Europe. It recognises the potential of digital technologies to help tackle important and urgent economic, social, climate and environmental challenges facing the EU's agri-food sector and rural areas.



Member States have agreed to work closer together in order to strengthen support for research in areas such as smart farming and food traceability. They will also establish a Europe-wide innovation infrastructure for a smart European agri-food sector and create a European dataspace for smart agri-food applications.

Welcoming the signatures, Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip**, Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, and Phil **Hogan**, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development said:

European agriculture and rural areas have to benefit fully from the ongoing digital transformation of our economies and societies. The Member States recognise the importance and urgency of working together in order to improve the competitiveness of the agriculture sector and the well-being of the citizens living in rural areas. Today's commitment of Member States to cooperate on actions that will bring about this transformation is excellent news. The Commission will support and facilitate such actions.

The EU agricultural sector is one of the world's leading producers of food, guarantor of food security and quality, and provider of millions of jobs for Europeans, but it faces many challenges. Digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, blockchain, High Performance Computing (HPC), Internet of Things (IoT) and 5G have the potential to increase farm efficiency while improving economic and environmental sustainability. Increased use of digital technologies will also

have a positive impact on the quality of life in rural areas, and may attract a younger generation to farming and rural business start-ups. The Declaration is part of the ongoing efforts to facilitate and accelerate the digital transformation in the EU farming sector and rural areas.

Signatory countries of the Declaration

The Declaration of cooperation on smart and sustainable digital future for European agriculture and rural areas was launched at Digital Day 2019 and signed by the following EU countries: Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom.

Other countries have since joined the initiative:

- [Bulgaria](#) signed on 19 June 2019
- [Croatia](#) signed on 30 April 2021

Projects on advanced digital technologies for agriculture funded by the EU

- [Sweeper](#) - sweet pepper harvesting robot (AI and robotics)
- [4D4F](#) - data-driven dairy decision for farmers (IoT)
- [IoF2020](#) - Internet of Food & Farm (IoT)
- [DataBio](#) - data-driven bioeconomy (Big Data)
- [SmartAgriHubs](#) - fostering an agricultural innovation ecosystem
- [Humane AI](#) - creating AI systems that empower people and extend their intelligence (AI and robotics)
- [Pantheon](#) - robots giving a helping hand to hazelnut farmers
- [Flourish](#) - robots for more productive and sustainable agriculture

Background

In its [Communication](#) on the Future of Food and Farming the Commission acknowledged that the [Common Agricultural Policy](#) (CAP) should enable the EU farming sector to address environmental care, biodiversity and natural resources protection, and develop the bioeconomy. It recognised the essential role of the CAP in fully connecting farmers and rural areas to the digital economy. The Commission also identified agriculture as one of the key application areas where targeted investments are needed to achieve those objectives in its [Communication](#) on AI for Europe. Finally, the EU's [Coordinated Plan](#) on AI provides for investments in platforms and large-scale pilots integrating AI and robotics in agriculture.

For more information

[EU Policy on Artificial Intelligence](#)

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