

ARCH: European Agricultural Research towards greater impact on global CHallenges

Joint EIARD-SCAR Strategic Working Group

ARCH response to the discussion paper: “The Role of Research I Global Food and Nutrition Security”

Dear Mr Fischler,

ARCH is a Strategic Working Group under SCAR and EIARD, aiming at improved synergy between AR and ARD in Europe in the domain of global challenges such as food security, climate change and the sustainable use of natural resources. Member states and the EC (DG Agri, DG Research, and DG Devco) are represented in ARCH. Please refer to the ARCH sub-site of the so-called Portal of Portals at <http://www.ard-europe.org/>.

ARCH appreciates the opportunity to comment on the discussion paper, commissioned to provide inputs to the consultation process which is a forward-looking debate with stakeholders to encourage dynamic and evidence-based policy making on the role that research has to play in tackling the challenges associated with ensuring food and nutrition security. ARCH comments focus on the areas of common interest for Agricultural Research and for Agricultural Research for Development, which typically encompass global challenges such as Food and Nutrition Security.

General comments

In general ARCH members feel that this paper is well-written and welcomes the linking of food security *with* nutrition security. However, global food security is addressed in a rather traditional way, by separating food and nutrition in Europe from that in developing countries, as in the section on Theme G “Increase equity in the food system”. There is a need to address nutrition in Europe and in developing countries through linkages including being connected to European policies.

ARCH feels that there is a need to describe the implications of this document – how will it influence the work programmes of Horizon 2020? This discussion paper could point to possibilities of strengthening the international dimension of H2020 i.e. move from “what” to “how”, supporting European employment as well as food security but also economic development of low and middle income countries outside Europe.

Research themes

In general this is a good chapter with a useful way of listing relevant research topics although the global focus of the various topics is too briefly described.

The section “Improve public health through nutrition: healthy and sustainable consumption” should describe aspects such as consumer behaviour and changing diets as needing interdisciplinary approaches and should include a more global focus. Poor nutrition is a concern not limited to Europe. Changing our diets towards a lower social and ecological footprint is a challenge with a global range.

ARCH appreciates and agrees with the increased focus on waste and losses throughout the food chain, although there is a tendency towards technology driven solutions. Organisational

and policy aspects are also important. Adaptation to the local setting should also be further emphasised.

Cross-cutting issues

There are many very valid and relevant points in the cross-cutting chapter which ARCH supports.

The paper could be strengthened by considering other studies such as the 4th SCAR Foresight Study and making reference to GFAR and to G20 MACS with a view to improved orchestration of AR and ARD investments. Europe can play a leading role in bringing together the various attempts at improving coordination and alignment of research priorities and programmes, from local to global, while at the same time encouraging adaptation to national and regional needs.

For instance, global orchestration of AR and ARD could be addressed and experience from whole of government or cross government approaches from various member states could be used as inspiration for the whole EU. ARCH would be pleased to provide examples of good practices of several member states with you. Global orchestration could also benefit from EU experience in joint programming (Horizon2020, ERA Nets and Article 185) between European countries and third countries.

The sections on “Transferring Research Knowledge into Innovation and Practice” and “Education and Communication to the Public” are relatively limited and could be extended. The document could, for example, refer to studies by the SCAR AKIS group and the joint ARCH AKIS Policy brief (see <http://www.ard-europe.org/index.php?id=703>) or projects such as JOLISAA (see <http://www.jolisaa.net/>). Experience from innovation processes in Europe can be transferred to countries outside Europe. The document could reflect on how an EIP may be adapted to other regions. On “Education and Communication to the Public”, the approach should not be “top down” (how scientists “educate” citizens), but a two way approach, engaging with the public, listening and exchanging ideas and researchers must improve their communication to and with the broader public.

Added value

Whilst Europe is in a unique position in terms of human capital and experience in inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research approaches, attention should be paid to the decline of European expertise on global issues. Europe may be better off by mobilising the excellent actors that have contacts with developing countries. The issue of an EIP for Africa and the need for better global governance of research deserve more attention.

The High Level Policy Dialogue between the European and African Unions on research cooperation is another opportunity where the European vision on Food and Nutrition Security meets the interests of Africa. Interests could come together at the meeting in October when two Commissioners will attend the final presentation of the expert paper. That will be an excellent opportunity to exchange joint interests.