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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

ON THE EUROPEAN INITIATIVE FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT

E I A R D

SUMMARY

The European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD) was presented to the Research Council on 10 March 1995 and 9 June 1995. The Commission announced that it would prepare a Communication on the Initiative in 1996. This Communication sets out the background, the context, the purpose and the role of EIARD, and its organization and management. The EIARD currently encompasses the 15 Member States of the Union, Norway, Switzerland and the European Commission.

In a worldwide context food supplies need to be more than doubled due to a population increase from the present 5.8 to over 8 billion in 2025, which poses enormous challenges for development. Major objectives are ensuring food security and alleviating poverty while conserving the environment. To meet these challenges research and technology in agricultural production and the sustainable management of natural resources have a vital role to play. In this respect the strategic importance of Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) is well recognized. Many actors are involved in ARD, both at the policy and at institutional levels in donor and developing countries and international organizations, all with their own priorities and strategies. There is an urgent need for better coordination and collaboration to enhance complementarity, synergy and costeffectiveness.

Europe has a dual role in the field of ARD. Firstly, as a donor to international agricultural research centres and national agricultural institutions in developing countries. Secondly, as a scientific partner, linking European and developing country institutions. Europe is involved in current discussions to build so-called Regional and Subregional Fora and a Global Forum of agricultural research for development, which is an innovative way of bringing together all the actors at both policy and institutional level on a regional and worldwide scale. However, the European position in the international dialogue is weak now in relation to its contributions and potential, due to a lack of concertation, and needs to be strengthened.

The purpose of EIARD is to improve the impact of investments in Research and Development by more efficient coordination between its 18 Partners, both at policy and operational levels. This would also give Europe a more active role and a better recognition in all international matters concerning ARD. EIARD is an instrument to promote partnerships for collaboration between all the actors involved in ARD. Its role is to promote coordination at various European levels, e.g. information exchange, concertation, exploratory studies for policy development and activities, and to strengthen partnerships between Europe and developing countries. The implementation of an Information System (EARD-Infosys+) is underway. A major exploratory study has recently been carried out. Concertation of research groups is supported as well as coordination

between the European Donors with respect to the international centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

The EIARD is implemented by a European Coordination Group (ECG), representing the 18 partners. It is an informal platform of coordination to discuss both research and development policy, which is not covered by the existing EU committees related to ARD. The national ECG-Members are appointed by their respective governments, and are expected to represent and pro-actively address both policy areas. The ECG is accountable to both individual European Governments (through their representatives) and to the EU Council of Ministers and the European Parliament through the Commission. The ECG is supported by a smaller Working Group (WG), and can be assisted by (groups of) experts. The ECG and WG are assisted by an Executive Secretariat, hosted by the European Commission.

IN CONCLUSION, THE COUNCIL IS ASKED TO:

- Recognise the role of this Initiative in enhancing the coherence with the Union's positions in various international fora in relation to the role of research on agricultural production and natural resources management in the context of food security, sustainable development and poverty alleviation in developing countries.
- Recognise the importance of a pro-active voluntary and flexible coordination mechanism and the consequent implications for the participation of its members at an appropriate level.
- Agree that recommendations arising from this Initiative will be considered in the formulation and implementation of future European Union policies and strategies.
- Endorse the continuation of this Initiative and the Commission's participation representing the EC interest in that matter as a full partner alongside the Member States and other European members.
- Note that the Commission will report to the Council on the work accomplished, if appropriate.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND

2. CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

3. THE ROLE OF EIARD

A. Coordination at various European levels

B. Increased partnerships with Developing Countries:

4. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF EIARD

1. BACKGROUND

[Back to table of contents](#)

At the Research Council of 29 September 1994 a proposal for a European initiative in international agricultural research for development was launched by France. During a Ministerial-Level Meeting of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research-CGIAR, held in Lucerne February 9-10, 1995 the French Presidency of the Union presented a political statement from the Council, and a Memorandum on "Europe and Agricultural Research for Development". The results of the Lucerne meeting were presented at the Research Council of 10 March 1995; the Commission was invited to study a follow-up mechanism for the European Initiative and to make a proposal to the Council. The Development Council of 1 June 1995 underlined the importance of research for development, and indicated as priority areas the management of renewable natural resources, agricultural production and health. The Commission presented a Working Paper to the Research Council of 9 June 1995, which reflected on a mechanism enabling better coordination between the Member States and the Commission and between research and development policies. This paper proposed a European Coordination Group-ECG to implement the Initiative, and to ensure its continuity and announced that the Commission would send a Communication on the Initiative to the Council and Parliament in 1996.

Since the Research Council of 9 June 1995 the European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development-EIARD has been implemented under the guidance of the European Coordination Group, which held its first meeting in Vienna from 11-13 October 1995, and its second meeting on 10-11 October 1996 in Bonn. The European Coordination Group emerged from an existing informal group of European donors to the CGIAR System by broadening its mandate and including the remaining Member States who have not contributed financially to the CGIAR up to now. This Communication which describes the role and activities of the European Initiative, is made in the context of the current International Cooperation Programme of the 4th Framework Programme for [RTD \(1\)](#) and the Commission Communication of 18 October 1995 on Perspectives for International Cooperation in the field of RTD and the Council Resolution of 25 March 1996, underlining the objective to promote [RTD \(2\)](#) relevant to the needs and priorities of developing countries and promoting greater regional integration to foster their sustainable development.

2. CONTEXT AND PURPOSE.

[Back to table of contents](#)

Worldwide Context

In the next 30 years the world food supplies need to be more than doubled due to an increase of the population from the present 5.8 to over 8 billion by the year 2025, mostly in developing countries. This poses enormous challenges on development which are of global concern. The needed increased food production and the expected more varied demand for food and other agricultural products have to take into account the considerable increased pressure on the environment and scarce natural resources. At the same time there is a need to achieve food security through creating sufficient income to buy food, and through ensuring permanent access to food supply. Major objectives of development therefore are ensuring food security and alleviating poverty while conserving the environment. In recent years these challenges have been recognized at international fora, such as the Rio Conference in 1992 (Agenda 21) (and its forthcoming 5 year review), world trade negotiations, Conventions on Biological Diversity and Desertification, and were again highlighted at the World Food Summit organized by FAO in 1996.

It is also well recognised that since the agricultural sector (including the related use of renewable natural resources) contributes in a substantial way to the overall economies of all developing countries, both in terms

of income and employment, further economic progress of these countries is strongly dependent on continued improvement of this sector.

Due attention should also be given to many changes occurring in different regions of the world, which may have considerable influence on developing countries. These include the globalisation of the information society, emergence of new technologies, the evolution of science and stronger market forces. Such changes may facilitate the integration of developing countries into the global community, but may also lead to a greater diversification between developing countries and geographical and political regions.

Research and technology have a vital role to play in addressing the crucial questions of development. It entails a global and coherent mobilization of scientific competences, more harmony between research activities and development requirements, and the strengthening of ties between the existing scientific and technological capacities. The challenges facing research and technology are huge, especially in addressing food and environment, e.g. in agricultural production and the sustainable management of natural resources. As is stated in the Political Statement of the 1995 Lucerne Ministerial-Level Meeting: "What we require in agriculture is a revolution that is even more productive than the first green revolution, and even greener in terms of conserving natural resources and the environment, what some have termed a <>. Achieving this will require much enhanced complementarity and synergism between research approaches in rich and poor countries. Comparative advantages with regard to agricultural research will need to be better defined and exploited. The cost-effectiveness of various approaches will need to be improved. Tackling the agricultural research challenges of the future is not only a question of more financial resources. It is very much a question of better targeting of existing research capabilities, better programming and planning of research within the framework of a common agenda, and agreeing common objectives." In this respect the strategic role of Agricultural Research for Development ([ARD](#))(3) is well recognized, e.g. in the political declaration and the plan of action for the World Food Summit.

Many actors are involved in Agricultural Research for Development (ARD), e.g. national agricultural research organizations in developing countries-NARS, regional organizations in the Third World, the International Agricultural Research Centres-IARCs of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research-CGIAR, and Agricultural Research Organizations-AROs in the industrialized countries, e.g. Western Europe. Together they form an important segment of the Global International Agricultural Research System, which is supported by countries, the European Commission, and other multilateral and international organizations (World Bank, FAO, UNDP, etc.). Also the role of other actors in the Global System has been recognized, e.g. the private sector, farmers organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations-NGOs.

Rapid changes are taking place at the international level. Discussions are currently being held to build a so-called Global Forum of agricultural research for development, involving all the actors in the Global System, both at policy and institutional level. The Global Forum is an innovative way of bringing together all the actors in agricultural research on a world-wide scale. The process for building up the Global Forum started at the Regional and Subregional level in developing countries with Fora being set up that focus on major geographical and political regions involving the NARS and existing regional organizations. Regional and Subregional Fora meetings have been held in West Asia and North Africa (Aleppo December 1995), Caribbean (Port-of-Spain January 1996), Asia (New Delhi February 1996), Sub-Saharan Africa (Kampala February 1996) and Latin America (Bogota February 1996). Representatives of those regions convened for the first time in Jakarta in May 1996 in what was called a Preparatory Meeting for the Global Forum. The first Global Forum meeting took place in Washington D.C. on 30 and 31 October 1996. This not only involved the representatives of the abovementioned regions, but also representatives from the AROs in the donor countries (including the two currently existing networks of AROs NATURA and [ECART](#)(4) in Europe), donor representatives, and the CGIAR. The first Global Forum meeting adopted a Declaration of Global Partnership in Agricultural Research and agreed that a Plan of Action will be further refined into concrete actions. A number of these meetings were co-sponsored by facilitating agencies, including the European Commission on behalf of the European Initiative (EIARD). The European Commission has been asked to continue this role in

future. These new developments illustrate how fast changes occur since the international discussions commenced two years ago, following the Ministerial Level meeting in Lucerne.

All the Fora are platforms for international dialogue on crucial questions, to discuss the research agendas and the formulation of priorities and strategies at the global, regional and subregional levels, and to promote operational partnerships for collaboration. Until now they all focus on agricultural research for development-ARD. With so many actors at different levels, all with their own priorities and strategies, there is an urgent need for coordination to enhance complementarity, synergies and cost-effectiveness.

European Role

On a worldwide scale [Europe\(5\)](#) plays a dual role in the field of agricultural research for development.

Firstly, as a donor both to the CGIAR and to developing country NARS (National Agricultural Research Systems). The CGIAR is supported by about 45 donor countries and organisations, and co-sponsored by the World Bank, FAO, UNDP and UNEP. The budget of the CGIAR is about US\$ 300 M/year. In 1996 the major contributors were Europe (42%), North America (USA, Canada, 15%), Pacific Rim (Japan, Australia, 15%), and the World Bank (15%). However, Europe plays only a relatively minor role due to a lack of coordination and the frequent absence of a concerted European position at CGIAR meetings. This results in a comparatively strong position of some of the other major donors, especially the United States and the World Bank. Europe participates in the dialogue, but its role needs to be further strengthened. Much has been achieved in physical and human capacity building of NARS in developing countries and their involvement in ARD, primarily based on their own efforts, often with assistance from the development funds of donor countries, including Europe and the EC. However, since financial and other constraints very much limit the output of many NARS there is still need for continued assistance to strengthen individual NARS in developing countries. The Subregional and Regional Fora mentioned above, have a vital role to play in strengthening NARS themselves, and these too require renewed European support while they establish themselves fully.

Secondly, as scientific partner, linking European and DC institutions. This is achieved through bilateral and multilateral S&T and development cooperation activities by Member States and/or the EC and, in particular, through encouraging their public and private institutions to be more involved in ARD partnerships.

There are many European agricultural research organizations (AROs) directly involved in ARD, either through Member States bilateral S&T and development cooperation programmes, or through concerted programmes at Union level. The European AROs have a long established tradition of agronomic and ecological research, both tropical and temperate, which has resulted in an accumulated wealth of knowledge. They have databases and know-how on the management of information networks for the better dissemination of such knowledge. Their training and research infrastructures in universities or other institutions have long hosted trainees from developing countries, and collaborated with their NARS institutions to help strengthen their capabilities. Research developed in and for Europe has become more relevant for developing countries. The interest of the European scientific community for ARD and global issues has increased considerably. This has also resulted in a closer relationship and stronger involvement between scientists hitherto involved in ARD with other segments of the scientific community, including the private sector. European AROs also have much to offer in a pluridisciplinary approach to research. Their experience is brought to collaborative programmes throughout the world, from localised R&D programmes on single commodities to participating in complex consortia at an ecoregional level.

European AROs contribute to strengthening research capability in NARS through their participation in joint research projects and collaborative networks. Their competences and experience place them, both individually and collectively, in a very strong position to play a major role in global or ecoregional collaborative research programmes, as well as to assist the participating NARS with their priority needs, such as training in research management, administration, improved priority setting, policy analysis, and setting up

improved communication and information networks. Regional organizations and the recently emerging Regional and Subregional Fora mentioned above, led by NARS representatives, increasingly play a role in fostering partnerships for collaboration. The emerging stronger and more equal partnerships and opportunities for constructive dialogue offer new and inspiring challenges for European participation.

Despite the importance of these two roles, until recently, informal coordination at the European level only concerned one aspect - that of donor to the CGIAR, and this was limited to exchange of information. In view of the general lack of concertation in the other aspects of European involvement in ARD, it was considered desirable to broaden the mandate of the concertation group, and to involve all interested Member States and not just the CGIAR donors. This new mechanism builds on the previous one, maintaining the principles of informality, flexibility, subsidiarity and equal status of all the participants. This resulted in the concept of the European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development-EIARD launched two years ago.

3. THE ROLE OF EIARD

[Back to table of contents](#)

Based on the significant contributions Europe provides, EIARD's purpose is to improve the impact of investments in Research and Development by more efficient coordination between its 18 Partners and within the States and the Commission, both at policy and operational levels. This would also give Europe a more active role and a better recognition in all international matters concerning ARD. EIARD is an instrument to promote partnerships for collaboration between all the actors involved in ARD, including European AROs, developing country NARS and their Regional and Subregional Fora, and the international centres (IARCs) of the CGIAR, in order to maximise coherence toward common objectives, and to achieve complementarity, synergy and better cost-effectiveness, as well as optimising operational and political impact.

In order to achieve its purpose the European Initiative will define a European concerted strategy for the 17 States and the Commission. EIARD is a mechanism enabling better coordination between relevant policies mainly those of research and development, and aiming to achieve more coherence between the different activities undertaken by the Commission and the States. Coordination between the relevant Commission services will be further strengthened to enable the Commission to play a more important role in this Initiative. These roles are in full compliance with the articles 130 g and h for Research, and 130 u and v for Development Cooperation of the Treaty of the European Union.

The role of EIARD therefore is to promote:

A. Coordination at various European levels:

[Back to table of contents](#)

1. Information exchange within Europe, e.g. within and between the European Commission and the States. Information exchange between all the actors is of vital importance. Modern information and communication technologies provide many opportunities in facilitating exchange of information in the widest possible sense. EIARD stimulates the exchange of information, including the use of modern tools. This will also help to mobilize European research capability, in establishing linkages with NARS, with Regional and Subregional Fora and with IARCs, thus contributing to strengthening of research capabilities in developing countries.

<p>The implementation of an Information System (EARD-Infosys+), making optimum use of existing databases and information systems is underway. A pilot study has been carried out to explore the feasibility of such a system. On 23 and 24 September 1996 a Workshop was held in Bonn defining the terms-of-reference for the implementation of the EARD-Infosys+ which will start with a pilot phase.</p>
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2. Concertation with respect to developing countries and international fora, e.g. CGIAR, Global Forum, Regional and Subregional Fora, Agenda 21, at policy and institutional levels; improved European visibility, presence and participation. Concertation mechanisms will be enhanced and strengthened to achieve better synergy with other EU policies, cooperation with the Member States, relevant international organizations and developing countries. In order to implement a coherent and complementary approach there is a need to promote greater concertation among European AROs, with NARS, Regional and Subregional Fora and organizations, and the CGIAR. A continuing and interactive input from all relevant partners is required, in the identification of research priorities and in the allocation of scarce financial resources. These concertation mechanisms will be implemented through consultations among Europeans, and through discussions with the other actors.

Concertation between the European Donors to the CGIAR, both with respect to policy and strategy and the distribution of funds to the IARC's is taking place on an informal and regular basis. Whenever considered appropriate this may lead to joint European positions at meetings of the CGIAR.

3. Coordination of activities, e.g. programmes, policy development and formulation; coordination of various ARD policies within and between the European Commission and the European States; facilitating the elaboration of coordinated positions where feasible, and to voice the views of all partners of EIARD when appropriate; to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of European knowledge and innovation for global and development-oriented issues.

EIARD strongly supports the regional and subregional approach, which is both instrumental in addressing national and local development issues and partnerships and also feeds into global priorities and strategies. EIARD furthermore activates appropriate implementation mechanisms, and is instrumental in strengthening NARS. In the framework of the emerging Global Forum EIARD stimulates the creation of an European Regional Forum, involving European policy makers and AROs in order to strengthen and better coordinate their role in implementing the global agricultural and natural resource management research agenda.

Exploratory studies to orient future research policy and activities have started. A major study has been carried out on "Mechanisms of Regional and Subregional Cooperation in Agricultural Research, Their Operationalisation and Sustainable Financing". This study is already demonstrating a commitment of a coordinated position by the EIARD partners in the international discussions on the establishment of the Global Forum and Regional and Subregional Fora on agricultural research.

4. Formulation of a common European policy for ARD. This aim could follow from the coordination levels described before depending on the willingness of the partners in the light of the experience gained.

B. Increased partnerships with Developing Countries:

[Back to table of contents](#)

1. Direct partnerships between Europe and the DC's (including the area of information exchange)

Activities have been implemented with respect to concertation of research groups, both in Europe (AROs)

and DC's (NARS). Existing European network type organizations for ARD, e.g. NATURA for universities and ECART for research institutions, representing several AROs but not all of them, have been invited to present their views in the international discussions in the Global Forum. Plans are being developed to organize an European Regional Forum involving all European AROs. Three Subregional organizations in Africa, e.g. CORAF (West and Central), ASARECA (East and Central) and SACCAR (Southern), representing the NARS in their regions are supported to organize themselves in Subregional Fora, and to participate in the Global Forum.

2. In the context of the Global Forum, Regional and Subregional Fora and the CGIAR. In the emerging Global Forum all the relevant actors should have their proper place, for which new modalities of partnerships are needed. A major effort of concertation is required on a global scale, that draws upon the resources of all parties involved, based on their comparative advantages. Europe is already involved in supporting the discussions in the Regional and Subregional Fora of the developing countries and their role in the Global Forum. But in this context it should also organize itself in an (regional) European Forum, both at policy and institutional level, as part of the Global Forum. European partnerships in relation to ARD should be promoted by enhancing concertation between the relevant universities and other higher education establishments, research institutes, NGO's and the private sector.

The significance of these points follows from the coordination at the European level, which is instrumental in achieving the purpose of EIARD.

Previous European experience in North-South, North-North and South-South cooperation programmes, projects, studies and networks (bilateral and multilateral) is extremely relevant. EIARD will capitalize on it, bearing in mind that it promotes the direct involvement of the scientific communities in developing countries as well as in Europe.

4. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF EIARD.

[Back to table of contents](#)

During the Research Council of 9 June 1995 the Commission presented a Working Paper which reflected on a mechanism to achieve the goals of EIARD. A **European Coordination Group (ECG)** was proposed to implement the Initiative, and to ensure its continuity.

As mentioned before, this has emerged from the existing group of European Donors to the CGIAR, which encompasses 13 Member States of the Union, the European Commission, Norway and Switzerland by adding the remaining Member States who are not CGIAR donors. The ECG therefore represents all the 18 partners in the European Initiative. It is an informal platform of coordination to discuss policies of all interested EIARD partners in the fields of research and development, which is not covered by the existing EU committees related to ARD. The ECG mechanism has to operate outside the normal EU "comitology" procedures for community programmes.

The effectiveness of the ECG is ensured through the country representatives and by the endorsement by the Council of the role the Commission should play. At the Vienna meeting it was agreed that the ECG will normally be composed of two representatives of each country (17 States) and representatives of the Commission. The Members of the ECG are appointed by their respective governments and the European Commission. As the EIARD relates to both research policy and development cooperation policy the ECG-Members are expected to act in a proactive way, to represent their countries views in these areas, and to be in charge of the respective files. In most countries this relates to different ministries, which should be represented. The same applies for the different services involved within the European Commission. The ECG is accountable to both individual European Governments (through their representatives) and to the EU

Council of Ministers and the European Parliament through the Commission.

The Commission will report regularly on EIARD's progress to the existing Committees related to ARD, and inform the Council and Parliament, particularly when there are elements likely to be taken into account in European Union policies.

As the ECG has decided to meet in principle only once a year, following the experience with the European Donor group of the CGIAR a smaller Working Group (WG) has been formed, which ensures the continuing activities of the European Initiative and operates as a "Steering Committee". It is fully accountable to the ECG. The WG meets between meetings of the ECG, about four times a year, as far as necessary.

The WG Members are appointed by the ECG for a mandate of two years; its composition will be reviewed every two years. The WG comprises members from 6 partner countries (for the first 2 years France, Germany, United Kingdom, Sweden, Spain and Switzerland) and the Commission. Most of the costs for running the Initiative (travel costs, etc.) are borne by the partners themselves. The Commission houses the Executive Secretariat, the services of which have been provided for an initial period of three years by a Member State (NL) on a secondment basis. Some limited ad hoc support for specific actions has been made under the INCO-DC accompanying measures provisions, eg. joint support with Germany for EIARD InfoSys workshop. When appropriate, additional ad hoc support for specific activities may also be provided from DG VIII managed funds (European Development Fund) in accordance with normal procedures.

Depending on the activities undertaken under the auspices of EIARD, the ECG and WG will be assisted by (groups of) experts in varying compositions. This "Advisory Capacity" will be asked to address questions the ECG/WG would like to be examined, or to prepare opinions on identified subjects.

The ECG and WG are assisted by an Executive Secretariat, which is hosted by the European Commission (DG XII). The Executive Secretary is responsible for the day-to-day management of the European Initiative.

1. Council Decision No 94/807/EC of 23.11.1994, adopting a specific programme of research and technological development, including demonstration, in the field of cooperation with third countries and international organisations (1994-1998) (OJ No L 126, of 18.05.1994, p. 1)

[Back to text](#)

2. COM(95)489

[Back to text](#)

3. Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) refers to research and technology for the benefit of developing countries (including Mediterranean Partner Countries and emerging economies) in all sectors related to agriculture (e.g. crop and animal husbandry, (agro-)forestry, fisheries and aquaculture), as well as sustainable management of renewable natural resources (e.g. agro-biodiversity, soil, water).

[Back to text](#)

4. NATURA: Network of European Agricultural (Tropically and subtropically oriented) Universities and scientific complexes Related with Agricultural development.

ECART: European Consortium for Agricultural Research in the Tropics.

[Back to text](#)

5. Europe: the group of partners active in ARD, namely the 15 Member States of the Union, Norway, Switzerland and the European Commission. This group has evolved from the CGIAR European Donors group (13 Member States, the Commission, Norway and Switzerland).

[Back to text](#)

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DOCUMENTS

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[Back to the Homepage of EIARD](#)