



## *Press release #1*

*February 2021*

# **Agroecology, Europe's new challenge**

**AE4EU: Building a European network on agroecology to accelerate the transition towards sustainable agriculture and food systems.**

**“Europe is now at a turning point regarding the future of European agriculture. Agroecology is a key concept for embracing practice, research, innovation, and education, and being essential to transform our agricultural and food system and tackle the climate and nature emergencies and at the same time providing healthy food based on a strong and living rural environment. I expect the AE4EU project having a key impact in supporting this transition.”**

**Dr Alexander Wezel, Director of Research at ISARA, Lyon, France**

**12 European partners join forces in a coordination and support action to develop a framework for a European network of agroecological living labs, research infrastructure and learning spaces for farmers, research and civil society actors.**

European agriculture and food systems are strongly impacted by a large number of challenges such as soil erosion and degradation, water quality, loss of biodiversity, food insecurity, access to land and other productive resources, indebtedness of farmers, loss of farms, and climate change. Agroecology, as a way to design, develop and promote the transition towards biodiversity-friendly, low environmental impacting, and socially and economically just farming and food systems appear as key approaches to face these challenges.

AE4EU is a three years project, that started in January 2021 and aims to **enable a successful transition to agroecology** through a strong development with ambitious and longer-term joint actions at European level in research, innovation, networks, training and education. Thanks to a European network and the involvement of different actors from diverse horizons and sectors, the project will analyse agroecology through its different pillars: as a science, a set of practices, and a social movement.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No101000478

*H2020 - Agroecology  
for Europe*



# Agroecology for Europe (AE4EU)

## Press release #1

### AE4EU objectives

#### ☉ **Increase connections between relevant actors**

Understanding, mapping and identifying the state of the art of agroecology in European countries as well as the actors involved is the indispensable foundation to connect relevant actors and grasp agroecology at the European level. One goal is **to establish a European Agroecology Exchange Network**.

#### ☉ **Develop skills and methods for developing research infrastructure and living labs**

Living Labs are user-centered, open innovation ecosystems based on a participatory co-creation approach including the user as well as actors from various backgrounds for integrating in real life communities and setting. The establishment of living labs, research infrastructure and agroecology-territories are key to allow a successful transition to agroecology. **AE4EU will develop a framework aiming to favor and to assess past and ongoing agroecological living labs, research infrastructure and agroecology-territories.**

#### ☉ **Prepare funders for increased and complementary funding of agroecology**

AE4EU will identify potential adaptations for **long-term funding schemes** to support enhanced cooperation and coordination of **public and private national or European funders** and develop recommendations for enlarged and complementary funding.

#### ☉ **Improve human and social capital**

A **European Agroecology Exchange Network Hub** that will include a diversity of stakeholders (such as farmers, up- and down-stream businesses, researchers, consumers and citizens) will be set up in order to facilitate knowledge exchanges in the Europe-wide network of agroecology; identify pathways of co-development and co-learning for **strengthened agroecological research and innovation**.

#### ☉ **Improve capacity to tailor policy interventions to specific situations**

AE4EU will identify and analyse policy frameworks that include elements of agroecology. Recommendations for future policies that support and promote the development of agroecology in Europe will be provided, in particular considering the context and aims of the Eco-schemes and the recently approved [European Green Deal](#), Farm to Fork strategy and the CAP.

#### ☉ **Provide a road map and a stakeholder network framework for a European partnership in agroecology**

AE4EU will develop a road map and framework for a European network that includes agroecological living labs, research infrastructure and other relevant actors to build a European partnership. The overall goal is to accelerate the **transition towards sustainable farming and food systems practices** by promoting networking, connectivity and place-based innovation in a co-creative environment.

12 European partners of the project: [ISARA](#) (France), [University of Gastronomic Sciences](#) (Italy), [Agroecology Europe](#) (Belgium), [Coventry University](#) (UK), [Thünen-Institute](#) (Germany), [Wageningen University and Research](#) (The Netherlands), [Agroecologiki](#) (Greece), [European Coordination Via Campesina](#) (Belgium), [Council for Agricultural Research and Economics](#) (Italy), [University of Santiago de Compostela](#) (Spain), [Eco Ruralis](#) (Romania) and [Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences](#) (Sweden).

**Coordinator of the project:** [Alexander Wezel](#) – ISARA, France

**Contact - Baptiste Grard** – ISARA, [bgrard@isara.fr](mailto:bgrard@isara.fr)

