The Commission considers urban agriculture (UA), including controlled environment agriculture (CEA), a part of Europe’s food production landscape with potential for further growth and development. In the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the Commission called on European cities of at least 20,000 inhabitants to develop ambitious Urban Greening Plans by 2021. These should include measures to bring more nature into our cities, such as urban farms. The Commission is working towards improving knowledge and data on the potential benefits and risks of various types of UA, particularly concerning their sustainability (economic, environmental, and social) dimensions.

Under Horizon 2020, building on earlier initiatives, the Commission has already funded more than 30 research and innovation actions on UA and CEA systems that will help inform future research and innovation activities. The EU’s Farm to Fork Strategy has identified urban food systems as a key area for research and innovation as part of the research and innovation programme Horizon Europe (particularly under cluster 6 ‘Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment’). This will support the development of UA including CEA to deliver food alongside social and environmental benefits. In light of the very considerable private sector investments in this area, further synergetic public research and innovation efforts will be important for development of technological and social innovation of UA practices to become integral part of sustainable food systems in the EU.

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3 COST action Urban Agriculture Europe (UAE) http://www.urban-agriculture-europe.org/
5 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system (COM/2020/381 final), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0381
6 https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en