

**Question for written answer E-000754/2024  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)**

**Subject:** Microbiome-based solutions for healthier and more sustainable food systems

Microbiome-based applications offer significant potential for achieving healthier and more sustainable food systems in line with the Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy. This includes enhancing agricultural productivity, reducing fertiliser and pesticide use, and preventing diseases in livestock through natural feed additives.

Despite these promising applications, several hurdles remain:

- Regulatory Fragmentation: as microbiomes are a nascent topic, both from a scientific and policymaking perspective, regulatory fragmentation across Member States remains high, adversely affecting academic collaboration, interactions with national authorities, and the creation of a harmonised taxonomy.
- Taxonomy: microbiome-based applications may be classified as a probiotic, drug, or feed additive, based on the national legislation, thereby affecting approval and risk assessment procedures.
- Collaboration: regulatory barriers hinder cross-border collaboration between researchers, necessitating improved structures for data exchange, sample acquisition, and permitting procedures.
- Awareness: limited awareness among policymakers and national authorities widens the gaps between research needs and industry requirements, leading to funding shortages and exacerbating regulatory fragmentation.

In view of the above:

1. What measures does the Commission envisage to address these hurdles and promote a pan-European approach that leverages the potential of microbiome-based applications for healthier and more sustainable food systems?
2. Could the Commission consider proposing a microbiome framework directive?

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