



THE HEMP MANIFESTO

for a



green
recovery



April 2020



The world is standing at an unprecedented crossroads and Europe has the opportunity chance to turn in the right direction.

HEMP CAN LEAD THE WAY!

INTRODUCTION

For centuries humans have been defying the laws of nature, to the point of affecting the healthy state of our own ecosystem. In order to meet an ever-growing demand for food and products, governments have consistently encouraged unsustainable practices.

Today's environmental and health catastrophes are the price the world is paying for the negative externalities deriving from global economic growth based on individualism, greed and disrespect for all other forms of life. Nonetheless, in the face of the most recent events, society appears to acknowledge this and recognise that most of the threats we are now compelled to address are indeed a direct consequence of human intervention. **The change of mindset now needs to be translated into concrete proposals and eventually in decisive actions**, because only a drastic paradigm shift will enable us to deviate from this dangerous trajectory.

In the forthcoming years, Europe will probably experience a period of decline: the economy has been abruptly slowed down and it will take some time to regain cruising speed. Some forms of productions and trade flows will disappear, while other activities will be relocated within the EU in order to reduce the exposure of our current economic system to global disrupting events. As a consequence, unemployment rates may well increase, and many EU citizens will be obliged to train for new jobs. Therefore, a radical and fresh approach to the economy is required.

In this context, as the representative of hemp farmers, producers and traders, EIHA wants to highlight the **huge potential of the European hemp sector in speeding up the transition towards a zero-emission bio-based and sustainable economy**, in line with the European Green Deal. By virtue of its sustainable approach to economy and agriculture and its multiple applications as food and manufactured products, the hemp sector offers a promise of **regeneration of rural areas**. By **repatriating manufacturing processes** (textiles in particular) and **fostering innovative value chains** (construction materials, food production, cannabinoids extraction), the sector could deliver **long-term sustainable growth and create highly skilled jobs** across the EU rural economies. In short, combining locally sourced raw materials with global know-how.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT HEMP

- Hemp varieties, **authorised under the EU Catalogue**, belong to the “*Cannabis sativa* L.” species that have a low, non-narcotic (non-psychoactive) THC content.
- Hemp is an **impressive carbon sink**: while the plant fixes CO₂ in the soil, thanks to its deep root system, its derived biomaterials further increase the overall capture balance of the crop. One hectare of hemp can capture up to 13.4 tons of CO₂, making it as efficient as one hectare of tropical forest.
- Hemp is one of the oldest crops grown by mankind and has been largely cultivated all over Europe **since the very beginning of history**. Want to know more about hemp in history? Check this [video](#).
- All parts of hemp are used. **Nothing goes to waste!** Stalks, roots, leaves, flowers and seeds **can be transformed and used for many different products**: textile, paper, ropes, insulation material, fibre boards, bioplastics, compost, animal bedding, fuel, paint, feed, food, dietary supplements, cosmetics, medicinal preparations.
- Hemp biomass (in particular hempseed) is a **source of high-quality proteins and has a unique essential fatty acid spectrum**¹.
- Used as a catch crop, hemp **improves the yields** of subsequent crops **and restores soil health**: thanks to its root system it has the ability to remove heavy metals from soils².
- Hemp **needs fewer inputs** than most other fibre crops³: water, pesticides and herbicides are used in low doses. Manure and other natural fertilisers represent 50% of the total fertilisers use⁴. Organic is on the rise.

THE POTENTIAL OF HEMP

Considering the above, it is clear that hemp can play a crucial role in a new greener and more sustainable society by providing a concrete solution for ensuring **nutritious food, environmentally friendly non-food products, clean air and soils**. Moreover, it represents an interesting crop from an economic point of view: in a mature hemp value chain, with adapted varieties and the possibility to harvest the whole plant (flowers/seeds, leaves and stalks), the **economic benefits for farmers and the environment** would be undeniable. Consequently, the whole economy of rural areas could be positively impacted.

¹ R.E. Aluko, in [Sustainable Protein Sources](#), 2017

² M.C. Robson, ... A.M. Litterick, in [Advances in Agronomy](#), 2002; Bosca and Karus, in [The Cultivation of Hemp: Botany, Varieties, Cultivation and Harvesting](#), 1998; Michaela Ludvíková, Miroslav Griga, in [Transgenic Plant Technology for Remediation of Toxic Metals and Metalloids](#), 2019

³ Smith-Heisters, S. 2008. [Environmental Costs of Hemp Prohibition in the United States](#). Journal of Industrial Hemp 13(2): 157–170.

⁴ EIHA, (2020) Agri report of 2018 harvest

EIHA'S PROPOSALS

1. Public policies should **promote** hemp use in food, feed and manufactured products and **finance** the development of sustainable value chains.

- Member States should use the possibility to allocate part of the direct payment envelop for *sectorial interventions* aimed at fostering hemp production and transformation.
- Hemp operators should be allowed to register protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications (*GIs*).

2. The **contribution to the environment** of the hemp plant should be **recognised** and the use of hemp for carbon farming encouraged.

- The EU Legislator should envisage a simplification of the new greening measures (GAEC) for hemp growers, for example *excluding hemp from the obligation of having non-productive areas*.
- Hemp farmers should receive *compensation for the positive environmental externalities*, possibly within the existing or a new emissions trading scheme.
- In order to leverage investments, *incentives* should be granted to companies developing or implementing *clean technologies and products*.

3. Member States should **not apply the drug control legislations** to hemp and its derived products, as long as the limits established for THC content are respected.

- Industrial hemp products are *not drugs* (they do not have the potential to relieve pain and suffering) *nor narcotics* (there can be no misuse, abuse or dependence). Therefore, and reflecting in particular the spirit and objectives set out in the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, hemp and its derivatives should be considered outside the scope of international drug controls.

4. The **maximum THC level allowed on the field** should be **restored to 0.3%**.

- This would allow the sector to *align with international standards* and start breeding *new and more adapted varieties* to satisfy farmers' practices and consumers' trends.

5. Operators should be allowed to harvest, produce from all parts of the plant - including flowers and leaves - and market any kind of product, whilst maintaining compliance with the THC content limits.

- The real added value of hemp is the possibility to use the whole plant; however, some EU countries still forbid the use and marketing of leaves and flowers. Giving operators the possibility to market all parts of the plant would *reduce waste and maximise the profitability of the crop*. This would result in higher incomes for farmers and other operators along the value chain.

6. Hemp and hemp preparations containing a naturally occurring cannabinoid content should not be considered as novel food.

- Historical records show that naturally rich in CBD/cannabinoids hemp, flowers, leaves and hemp extracts were *widely consumed before 1997*. Hemp has always been an integral part of human diet.
- There is *no health risk* and hence no 'health-based' justification for reducing EU consumers access to hemp products.

7. Reasonable guidance values for THC in food and feed should be established.

- The *risk evaluation by the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) and by the German Federal institute for risk assessment (BfR) on THC intake through hemp-containing foods* do not meet scientific standards. The current EFSA recommendation and BfR guidance values for THC in food are outdated, unnecessarily strict and *should be urgently revised based on sound scientific evaluation*. This new evaluation should be based on scientifically developed values from renowned markets (e.g. Canada, USA, Switzerland), and will create fair competitive opportunities for the European hemp industry.
- An EU approach should be established in order to harmonise national limits and align them to the *latest international standards and scientific research studies*.

8. All hemp derived raw materials should be permitted as ingredients for cosmetics.

- The EU Commission considers some hemp derived products used in cosmetics as falling under narcotic control measures. On the basis that *hemp is not a narcotic*, the Cosmetics Ingredients Database should be changed accordingly.
- There is no reason whatsoever to limit natural cannabinoids in cosmetics use while authorising synthetic cannabidiol. Clearly *no health risk* derives from the use of these ingredients, be they natural or synthetic.


9. The EU should value and promote the use of hemp fibres for the production of short and long fibre for textiles and favour the establishment of sustainable value chains.

- In the aftermath of WWII, European countries massively replaced the use of natural fibres with more affordable synthetic carbon-based fibres. Since then, almost all hemp fibre processing *facilities* were shut down. There is an urgent need to rebuild the value chain in Europe and *avoid delocalisation*.
- The first transformation (scutching and carding) of the fibre should be incentivised, through *specific financial aids* and operators should be granted access to *professional training*.
- The explicit objectives of R&D policy should guide the *genetic improvement* for the specific production of hemp for textile fibre, the technical aspect of production lines and yarn quality.

10. The use of hemp-based construction and other materials should be incentivised both in public and private sectors, with clear goals for the total or partial substitution of other less sustainable alternatives.

- The EU should impose stricter requirements in public procurement and set ambitious goals for achieving *zero-emissions in the EU and National Administrations*.
- Consumers and operators should receive clear economic benefits from the use of such commodities, such as *administrative facilitations, purchasing incentives or other*.





The European industrial hemp sector
is more than ready to bring all its
efforts to the table.

are you ready to join the
#hemprevolution
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Contact us!

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