Viewpoint: Who is behind reactionary European movement to hobble lab grown meat revolution?

Vienna, Paris and Rome, along with nine other EU countries, are set to argue that meat grown in a laboratory is a threat to “genuine food production methods”, a claim a diplomatic source told Euractiv is “exaggerated and premature”.

Lab-grown meat “does not constitute a sustainable alternative to primary farm-based production”, and raises ethical, economic, social and public health questions that “are essential for the future society”, the note to the Council of Ministers [argues].

“These practices represent a threat to primary farm-based approaches and genuine food production methods that are at the very heart of the European farming model,” the document reads.

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The note is authored by the Austrian, French and Italian delegations and supported by those from the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Slovakia.

The stance of the 12 countries could open a rift in the Council.

“Identifying lab-grown meat as a threat seems highly exaggerated and premature,” one diplomat told Euractiv.

“It’s a sector that does not yet exist, at this point it’s about innovation in a lab. Suppressing this now only hinders the kind of innovation that is precisely necessary for sustainability,” they continued.

Currently, there is no cell-based meat marketed in Europe, and the authorisation could come only after the assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), according to the provisions of the so-called Novel Food Regulation.

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