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It is a great pleasure to open this session. This initiative plays a crucial role in fostering dialogue between scientists, policymakers, and stakeholders who share the same mission: ensuring that every European citizen has access to safe, high-quality, and sustainably produced food.

At the National Research Council of Italy, and particularly within the Department of BioAgriFood Sciences, we adopt a deeply multidisciplinary approach. Our research spans agricultural sciences, biotechnology, microbiology, chemistry, environmental sciences, and digital technologies. This broad capability allows us to contribute to evidence-based policies and robust risk assessment, supporting the European Union in maintaining high standards of consumer and environmental protection.

We work along the entire food chain: from primary production to processing technologies, from the study of environmental drivers to the analysis of consumer behaviour. Our goal is to understand how safety, quality, and sustainability are interconnected, and to generate knowledge and tools that help manage risks while fostering resilience and competitiveness in the agri-food sector.

In this perspective, the EU Food Safety Platform is essential. It aligns expertise from different institutions and Member States, helps identify emerging challenges, and facilitates the harmonisation of scientific methods and monitoring strategies. Because food safety is a cross-border issue—pathogens, contaminants, and supply chains do not stop at national boundaries—Europe must continue to invest in shared data infrastructures, coordinated research, and transparent communication.

Allow me to highlight a few areas where collaboration is particularly crucial.

First, integrating environmental and climatic information into risk assessment. As climate change reshapes agricultural and ecological conditions, we need stronger links between environmental research and food safety science to anticipate risks more effectively.

Second, strengthening digital tools and data platforms. Artificial intelligence, big data, and digital agriculture offer unprecedented opportunities for early detection, real-time monitoring, and predictive modelling.

Third, ensuring that emerging technologies and biotechnologies evolve alongside rigorous, transparent safety assessments. Whether we speak about novel foods, precision fermentation, genome editing, or sustainable packaging, innovation must be accompanied by clear evidence and communication to citizens.

Europe has the knowledge, infrastructure, and collaborative mindset needed to lead globally in food safety. But leadership requires sustained commitment—to research, to open data, to coordinated action, and to training future generations. The work of this Platform is fundamental to advancing these goals.

Thank you, and I look forward to our discussions.

https://foodsafetyplatform.eu/