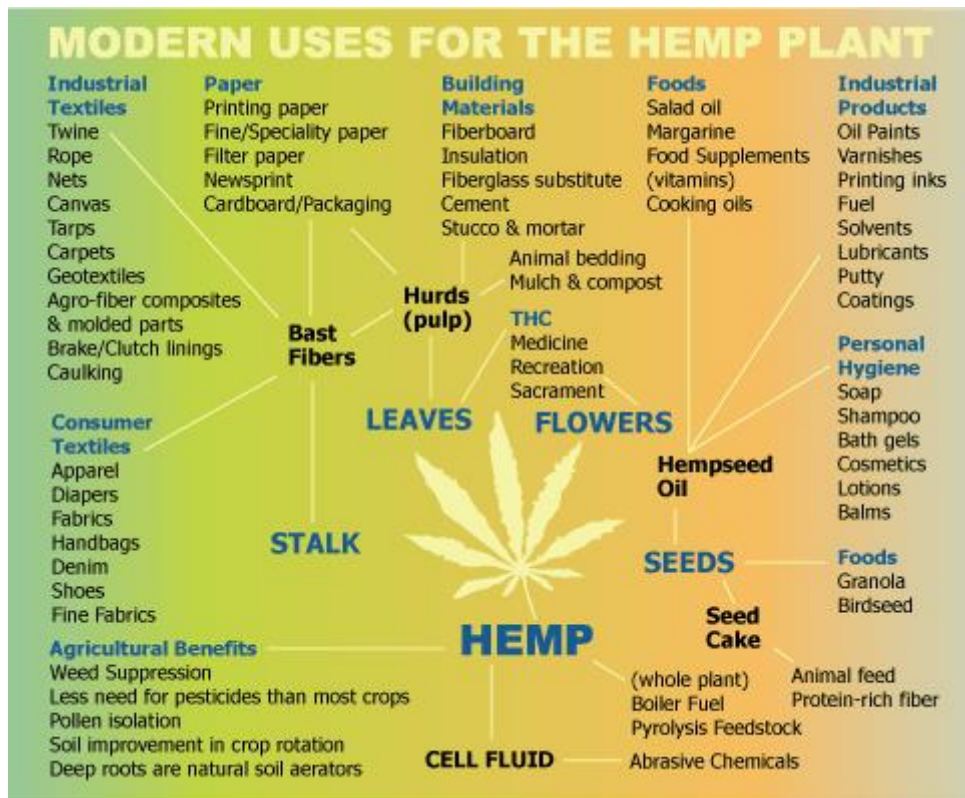


## DanuBioValNet Roadmapping Workshop on Hemp Industry

Prague, Czech Republic

26<sup>th</sup> April 2018

The cultivation and sourcing of biomass will benefit the EU's long-term economic growth and sustainability within the broader context of bioeconomy.<sup>1</sup> Hemp is a unique multipurpose plant that can be effectively grown in the Danube countries. Traditionally cultivated for the fibres, seeds and psychoactive substances, it is now considered an ideal crop for the development of innovative biomaterials.<sup>2</sup> It is one of the fastest growing crops, and it has a huge potential in different spheres of production due to the fact that almost a whole plant can be processed. It can be used in medicine, pharmacy, cosmetics as well as in construction, paper, plastics, textile and other industries. Thus, the hemp-based bioeconomy topic has been included in the DanuBioValNet project with the vision to create and expand the opportunities for the value-added activities associated with the hemp industry.



Source: Health. Marijuana. Canada [online]. Available [here](#).

<sup>1</sup> European Commission. Strategy for "Innovating for sustainable growth: A bioeconomy for Europe", Brussels, 2012

<sup>2</sup> AgriTec. MULTIHEMP - Multipurpose hemp for industrial bioproducts and biomass [online]. 02/2017. Available here: <http://www.agritec.cz/cs/multihemp-multipurpose-hemp-industrial-bioproducts-and-biomass>

**The HEMP Roadmapping Workshop on 26 April 2018** brings together industry, technology and market experts, regulators and policymakers from the Danube Region countries to discuss the future goals, trends and upcoming legislation related to the development of hemp industry. Discussions will also address the gaps in the hemp industry value chain and missing linkages between the Danube Region businesses and R&D.

Within the workshop, the future technological, societal, market trends will be discussed with the aim to identify the best “road” to the desirable goals and inform the policy-makers how to improve conditions that currently hamper competitiveness and exploitation of opportunities along the hemp industry value chains in the region.

### **The cultivation of hemp in Europe**

The growing role of hemp for the transformation of economies has been recognized by many countries and fosters the exploitation of hemp to its full potential. While cannabis sativa indica (medical hemp) contains two kinds of cannabinoids (THC - tetrahydrocannabinol that is psychoactive; and CBD - cannabidiol), the cannabis sativa sativa (industrial hemp) contains only the non-psychoactive CBD with many medical benefits and uses<sup>3</sup>. However, the possibility of hemp cultivation in individual countries is legally limited.

Between 1993 and 1996, the cultivation of industrial hemp was legalised in most EU member states. In 2011, the cultivation area decreased to its lowest value of cc 8,000 ha. After a continuous increase in the years 2012 to 2016, the cultivation area counts over 33,000 ha. The industrial hemp covers the largest area since the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Among the main hemp growers there are France, the Netherlands, the Baltic Countries and Romania. In recent years, many new European countries started or expanded their hemp cultivation, mainly to produce more hemp seeds for the health food market. Also, the hemp fibre sector is expanding, covering the increasing demand of other industries, such as automotive. Investments and market growth are especially high in non-psychoactive hemp extracts and for the Cannabinoid CBD, which is used in pharmaceutical applications as well as in the food supplement industry. Here, a patchwork of regulations in Europe is a barrier for faster market growth.<sup>4</sup>

### **The potential of the hemp industry in the Danube Region**

The Danube Region’s hemp industry consists of different actors covering the whole value chain from the growing and processing of the industrial and medical hemp in the given country, including the R&D, education and promotion as well as the development of new technologies and innovative applications, up to the manufacturing of final products. Nevertheless, the challenges and opportunities as well as missing links among the Danubian hemp industry stakeholders have not yet been identified properly. So, the role of the DanuBioValNet project partners is to identify the hemp stakeholders and enable them to meet, exchange & share the information, and facilitate them towards the collaboration in the Danubian Hemp Cluster network. The development of the hemp-based industries can be then supported by specific policy measures, such as innovation and R&D grants / programmes.

---

<sup>3</sup> LeafScience.com. THC vs. CBD: What’s The Difference? [online]. 11/2017. Available here: <https://www.leafscience.com/2017/11/22/thc-cbd-difference/>

<sup>4</sup> EIHA. European Industrial Hemp Association. Press Release: Record cultivation of industrial hemp in Europe in 2016 [online]. 05/2017. Available here: <http://eiha.org/document/record-cultivation-of-industrial-hemp-in-europe-in-2016/>

## **The EU regulations**

The cannabis plant is usually legally controlled when it is capable of producing a useable amount of the psychoactive substance delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), but some countries control all strains, even those where the THC content is negligible. In the European Union, it is legal to cultivate and supply cannabis plants for hemp fibre if they have low levels of THC. Anyway, there is no harmonised EU law on the cannabis use. The criminal or administrative response to drug use offences is the responsibility of the EU Member States, not of the European Union. The granting of payments under the Common Agricultural Policy is conditional upon the use of certified seeds of specified hemp varieties; only varieties with a THC content not exceeding 0.2 % may be used (EU Regulation 1307/2013). The imports of hemp are also subject to certain conditions to ensure the above-mentioned THC limit is respected (EU Regulation 1308/2013).<sup>5</sup>

The topic of the EU regulations concerning the hemp use for further industrial / medical purposes is one of the important issues to be tackled by the Roadmapping Workshop participants.

## **The barriers of the hemp industry development**

In February 2018, the meeting of the Czech firms, academia, NGOs and other institutions dealing with the hemp industry was held in Prague, Czech Republic. The meeting served as an opportunity to bring the hemp actors together and discuss the possibility of the Czech Hemp Cluster establishment. Within the meeting, several barriers of the development of the Czech hemp industry were identified:

1. No limit for the safe content of THC in food;
2. Lack of hemp harvesting and processing technologies;
3. Low awareness of the Czech state administration of the hemp industry development and actions at the EU level;
4. Insufficient public awareness and low cooperation with the media on the hemp topics;
5. Disunited legislative view of different types of hemp and their use (technical / medical);
6. No system of quality control of hemp products at the state level and the missing related legislation;
7. No regional infrastructure for processing of technical hemp;
8. Missing standards for the hemp use in industry (e.g. hemp concrete);
9. No national subsidy/grant scheme for growing hemp;
10. Failure in not taking into account the natural factors (weather) influencing the THC content of the hemp grown – “zero tolerance”;
11. Missing education of doctors, pharmacists and state officials in relation to the medical hemp practice;
12. No existing public support for the Czech hemp farmers;
13. The hemp cultivation is not among the strategic priorities of the Czech Ministry of Agriculture;
14. Insufficient consideration of hemp as a strategic feedstock in the ministerial strategies.

The Roadmapping Workshop can make use of these barriers as an inspiration for setting the ways how to overcome these and other obstacles and make the hemp industry a sustainable bioeconomy tool.

---

<sup>5</sup> European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (2017). Cannabis legislation in Europe [online]. Available here: <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/system/files/publications/4135/TD0217210ENN.pdf>