

## The EU 'farm to fork' strategy

On 20 May 2020, the European Commission adopted a communication on 'A farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system'. Following lively parliamentary debate, informed by Members' different views on how to build sustainable food systems, a joint committee own-initiative report on the strategy is scheduled for a plenary vote during the October II session.

### Background

In 2019, committed to tackling climate and environment-related challenges, the European Union (EU) launched the European Green Deal, a plan to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. Current patterns of food production, processing, transport, and consumption contribute to climate change and to the degradation of ecosystems, putting at threat food production itself. To address this issue, as well as to promote healthier food, the Green Deal envisaged a roadmap for sustainability in the food system.

### European Commission proposal

The Commission's [communication](#) on the 'farm to fork' strategy aims to address priorities and challenges in the food system by bringing sustainability to the heart of each step of the food chain. In line with the objectives and targets of the Green Deal, the strategy outlines the way forward for all food-related sectors through a number of legislative and non-legislative [measures](#), which have a timespan running until 2024.

While [some actions have kicked off](#) in recent months, EU institutions and bodies have engaged in the debate on how to make food chains more sustainable. In late 2020, the [Council](#), the [European Economic and Social Committee](#), and the [Committee of the Regions](#) all welcomed the strategy. Consensus exists on the need to change the way the EU and the rest of the world produce and consume food, to maximise the benefits to nature and health-positive impacts. Views diverge on how to reach this goal.

### European Parliament position

During the October II plenary session, Parliament is set to debate an [own-initiative report](#) on the 'farm to fork' strategy adopted jointly by the Committees on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) – rapporteurs Anja Hazekamp (The Left, the Netherlands) and Herbert Dorfmann (EPP, Italy). The report – adopted by the joint committee on 10 September by 94 votes in favour, 20 against, and 10 abstentions – is the result of intense parliamentary work, which saw over 2 000 amendments and four committees' opinions condensed into [48](#) compromise amendments.

The report welcomes the ambitions and goals of the strategy, but points to the need for action to support the transition to sustainability, and to balance sustainable practices and economic opportunities. The text stresses the role of impact assessments on environmental, economic and social sustainability, and on the cost of non-action. It supports the idea of reducing the environmental impact of food chains and improving the food environment to promote healthy food. The report calls on the Commission to take action in a number of key fields – from farming and animal husbandry to [food labelling](#) and [food waste](#) – and it advocates consistent EU food-related policies, including a strong global dimension. The report deems the [strategic plans](#) EU Member States must draw up for the [post 2022 common agricultural policy](#) to be key tools for the strategy's success in areas such as reducing the use of agrochemicals and support for sustainable farming.

Own-initiative report: [2020/2260\(INI\)](#); Committees responsible: ENVI, AGRI (Rule 58); Rapporteurs: Anja Hazekamp (The Left, the Netherlands) and Herbert Dorfmann (EPP, Italy). For further information, see the EP Legislative Train Schedule page on the '[farm to fork](#)' strategy.

### EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

Author: Rachele Rossi, Members' Research Service  
PE 698.066 – October 2021



This document is prepared for, and addressed to, the Members and staff of the European Parliament as background material to assist them in their parliamentary work. The content of the document is the sole responsibility of its author(s) and any opinions expressed herein should not be taken to represent an official position of the Parliament. Reproduction and translation for non-commercial purposes are authorised, provided the source is acknowledged and the European Parliament is given prior notice and sent a copy. © European Union, 2021.

[ep@ep.europa.eu](mailto:ep@ep.europa.eu) (contact) <http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu> (intranet) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank> (internet) <http://epthinktank.eu> (blog)