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REPORT

on the implementation of the school scheme for fruit, vegetables, milk and dairy products under the Common Market Organisation Regulation (2021/2205(INI))

Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

Rapporteur: Carmen Avram

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EXPLANATORY STATEMENT - SUMMARY OF FACTS AND FINDINGS

This report addresses the implementation of EU legislation on school Schemes. It focuses on Regulation (EU) 2016/791 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 and (EU) No 1306/2013 as regards the aid Scheme for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in educational establishments, the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/39 of 03 November 2016 on rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to Union aid for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in educational establishments, and the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/40 of 3 November 2016 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to Union aid for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in educational establishments and amending Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 907/2014. The report draws on the conclusions of the EPRS's research paper "Implementation of the EU School's Scheme for fruit, vegetables and milk products".

Key findings

The Scheme had a positive response from public authorities, who have described it as a valuable experience that allows for broad outreach and free of charge access to healthy and sustainable nutrition for all children, irrespective of their socio-economic status. They have proven especially appreciative of the objectives to reconnect children with agriculture and teach about healthy eating habits. The Scheme present a remarkable opportunity to align with ambitious targets in Green Deal, Farm2Fork, Beating Cancer, EU Child Guarantee and the Organic Action Plan. However, the Scheme's potential is undermined by its budget, coverage, the definition of eligible products and distribution and implementation methods. Stakeholders unanimously confirmed that Member States alone could not have achieved what has been achieved by the ongoing EU School Schemes.

1. Implementation of the legislation from 2017 to 2022

1.1 Number of participants

Data shows that the Scheme fail to reach a significant portion of schoolchildren (i.e. in the 2019/2020 school year, only 19.1 million out of 76.2 million EU pupils participated in the Scheme). This problem is directly linked to the limited budget allocated to schools.

The COVID-19 pandemic aggravated the problem as the number of children involved decreased substantially in the 2020/2021 school year. The monitoring reports presented on January 31st, 2021, show that school closures and distance learning caused a significant reduction in the number of participating children, estimated to be 16 million, an amount inferior to previous school years in the EU-27. The decline in the number of participants is significant even considering that for the first time, the United Kingdom has not partaken in the Scheme and that Greece was not able to implement the Scheme due to public procurement issues. The decreasing trend is common in all Member States.

1.2. Quantity and variety of products distributed

The pandemic had serious repercussions on the global food supply chain, including the products involved in the Scheme (fruit, vegetables, and milk). The intermittency of distribution due to school closures put pressure on the contracts with suppliers. There has been a reduction in the quantities of products distributed to schools and adjustments in the distribution modalities (i.e. the use of single portions packaging was preferred to more eco-friendly solutions to allow social distancing). The reduction of the distribution period also caused a reduction in the range of products available for distribution (only a limited variety of fresh fruits and vegetables were on hand during the implementation periods).

Overall, there has been a reduction in the expenditure linked to distribution both at the Union and national level (in contributing countries).

1.3 Educational activities

Educational measures have proven to be one of the most successful parts of the Scheme. Indeed, while it is hard to measure the impact of this EU policy instrument alone on children and their dietary patterns, studies suggest that students participating in the educational measures were more aware of healthy nutrition habits than those not exposed to the measures. The pandemic hindered the possibility of carrying out some educational measures included in the Scheme, like farm visits, or cooking and tasting classes. Still, most Member States managed to adapt the educational activities provided in the Scheme to distance learning. Despite the efforts, there has been a decrease in the number of children involved and expenditures linked to educational activities.

2. Budget

The decrease in expenditure should not be interpreted as a lack of popularity of the Scheme; on the contrary, in some Member States, the demand to participate by educational institutions each year exceeds the financial attributions available. Indeed, while the input costs of the Scheme (in regards to EU aid) do contribute somewhat towards the achievement of the Scheme's goals, the budget is generally considered insufficient to be far-reaching and make a significant impact. Currently, substantial shares of national funds are needed to top up the Scheme, signifying that EU funds alone are insufficient to meet national targets. At the same time, implementation has not been homogeneous among the Member States, and some did not make full use of the budget. While some distinction is on point, the general trend among the Member States shows that there is a need for a more robust budget to reach a stable number of children and ensure regularity in product distribution, while an increase in the number of beneficiaries will require a steep increase in funding. Recent concerns regard inflation and rising costs of food prices, which would potentially reduce the scope and impact of the Scheme. Moreover, the Commission has recently published a regulation allowing for an internal redistribution of the EU aid under the EU school scheme to cater for displaced Ukrainian children enrolled in EU schools.

3. Coverage

The scheme implementation is almost completely limited to primary and secondary schools. Indeed, 70 % of participants are children attending primary school, 20 % are in kindergarten, and only 10 % are in secondary school, with Germany presenting the highest number of participants, followed by Sweden, Romania, and Poland.

4. Simplification of the administrative process

Another critical point for future implementation will be simplifying and streamlining the administrative process. Public schools tend to have high levels of administrative burden; therefore, the Scheme needs to be simple to be appealing to schools. Currently, the administrative measures linked to the Scheme are suboptimal. Possible measures to this objective include the removal of the deadline for the submission of aid applications (left to the Member States), a revision of the system of reduction of payment after deadlines, and increased flexibility in transfers and reallocation of budget. A positive note from the pandemic, in the terms of administrative simplification, has been the adoption of remote checks, a practice that should remain after the “return to normal”.

5. Expand the list of products and improve quality

Future implementation should consider limiting the distribution of products with added sugars, which most school administrations and parents consider to be against the general objectives of the Scheme. Moreover, the future implementation should introduce obligations towards products that conform to health, ethical and environmental criteria.

Conclusions and recommendations

Implementing the rules

The rapporteur is of the view that the following key policy recommendations should be put in place:

- Future implementation should consider gradually increasing the budget of the Scheme;
- Member States should be requested to devote a minimum share of the EU budget to the implementation of educational measures, which should also be more frequent and widespread;
- The products to be featured in the distribution should be unprocessed, organic and originating in the Union; moreover it is recommended to introduce obligations towards products that conform to objective criteria which should include health, environmental and ethical considerations, seasonality, variety, or availability of local produce, and giving priority to short supply chains. In the case of bananas, fair trade products from third countries may be given priority only when equivalent products originating in the Union are not available. Products should reflect as much as possible eating habits and types of crops in the area;
- Products containing added sugar, added fat, added salt and/or added sweeteners should not be allowed in the scheme; the Commission should remove the exceptions allowing for the distribution of these types of products;
- Future implementation should be focused on nurseries, kindergartens and primary schools;
- In order to simplify the administrative process it is recommended to add flexibility to the deadline for the submission of aid applications, review the system of reduction of payment after deadlines, increase flexibility in transfers and reallocation of budget, simplify the public procurement procedure and maintain the adoption of remote checks;

- There should be no predominance of large suppliers to the detriment of smaller farmers participating in the scheme in procurement procedures;
- A forum should be created to encourage the Member States to share best practices as means to identify successful ways of streamlining the implementation of the Scheme.

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the implementation of the school scheme for fruit, vegetables, milk and dairy products under the Common Market Organisation Regulation (2021/2205(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products¹ (Common Market Organisation Regulation), which provides the legal basis for the EU school scheme for fruit, vegetables, milk and dairy products,
- having regard to the European Parliamentary Research Service European implementation assessment of 14 July 2022 entitled ‘Implementation of the EU school scheme for fruit, vegetables and milk products: a mid-term review’,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)²,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2020/2220 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 December 2020 laying down certain transitional provisions for support from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and from the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) in the years 2021 and 2022 and amending Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013, (EU) No 1306/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013 as regards resources and application in the years 2021 and 2022 and Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 as regards resources and the distribution of such support in respect of the years 2021 and 2022³,
- having regard to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/39 of 3 November 2016 on rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to Union aid for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in educational establishments⁴,
- having regard to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/40 of 3 November 2016 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to Union aid for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in educational establishments⁵,
- having regard to Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/1187 of 7 July 2022 amending Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/493 as regards the definitive allocation of

¹ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 671.

² OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, p. 1.

³ OJ L 437, 28.12.2020, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 5, 10.1.2017, p. 1.

⁵ OJ L 5, 10.1.2017, p. 11.

Union aid to Member States for school fruit and vegetables and for school milk for the period from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023⁶, which aims to fully maximise the potential of the funds available and address the difficulties in implementing the school scheme as a result of the displacement of children from Ukraine following the military aggression by Russia,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled ‘A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system’ (COM(2020)0381),
- having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2021 on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system⁷,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on organic production and labelling of organic products⁸,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 19 April 2021 on an action plan for the development of organic production (COM(2021)0141),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 February 2021 entitled ‘Europe's Beating Cancer Plan’ (COM(2021)0044),
- having regard to the Court of Auditors Special Report No 10/2011 of 24 October 2011 entitled ‘Are the school milk and school fruit schemes effective?’,
- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals,
- having regard to Decision 5.COM 6.41 of 16 November 2010 of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage approving the inscription of the Mediterranean diet on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 April 2021 on the European Child Guarantee⁹,
- having regard to Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee¹⁰,
- having regard to the 2019 European health interview survey (EHIS wave 3),
- having regard to the World Health Organization European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (WHO COSI) and its first five surveys carried out between 2007 and 2020,
- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure, as well as Article 1(1)(e) of, and Annex 3 to, the decision of the Conference of Presidents of 12 December 2002 on the

⁶ OJ L 184, 11.7.2022, p. 56.

⁷ OJ C 184, 5.5.2022, p. 2.

⁸ OJ L 150, 14.6.2018, p. 1.

⁹ OJ C 506, 15.12.2021, p. 94.

¹⁰ OJ L 223, 22.6.2021, p. 14.

procedure for granting authorisation to draw up own-initiative reports,

- having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (A9-0096/2023),
- A. whereas the promotion of healthy, varied and balanced diets, together with a healthy lifestyle, including regular physical activity, is an increasingly important issue and should become a priority for our society; whereas an integrated and comprehensive approach between nutrition and lifestyle is needed; whereas one in three children in the EU between 6 and 9 years old is overweight or obese¹¹; whereas healthy diets can reduce the risk of certain chronic diseases; whereas the promotion of healthy diets constitutes a preventive measure against disease and an investment in public health;
- B. whereas 53 % of Europeans are considered overweight¹²; whereas there is a clear pattern related to education levels, in which the proportion of overweight people falls as the education level rises;
- C. whereas schools lay the foundation for a sustainable and healthy society;
- D. whereas nutrition education, which promotes a varied, balanced and healthy diet, is crucial in stimulating healthy consumption habits and should therefore be improved across the EU;
- E. whereas all schoolchildren should have equal and fair access to healthy, nutritious and sustainable food products;
- F. whereas it is hugely important to raise awareness and educate children across the EU on matters such as local food chains, seasonality, organic and integrated farming, healthy, varied and balanced diets, food security, climate change, animal welfare and sustainability in food production and food waste;
- G. whereas children can play a key role in informing and raising the awareness of their parents, relatives and peers about a mindful, varied, balanced and sustainable diet and a healthy lifestyle;
- H. whereas studies have shown that consuming fresh fruit and vegetables, as part of a balanced diet, reduces the risk of life-threatening diseases and helps to mitigate the environmental impact of food systems; whereas the level of fruit and vegetable consumption among children and young people is not satisfactory; whereas there is a remarkably large difference in the amount of fruit and vegetables consumed in the various EU Member States;
- I. whereas a 2002 WHO report stated that low fruit and vegetable intake is among the top 10 risk factors contributing to mortality from known causes;

¹¹ World Health Organization, 'WHO European Regional Obesity Report 2022', Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2022.

¹² Eurostat, '[Over half of adults in the EU are overweight](#)', 21 June 2021.

- J. whereas measures designed to educate children and adolescents on the importance of a healthy, varied and balanced diet can have positive repercussions on society as a whole, especially in the long term;
- K. whereas in the EU, an estimated 20 % of the total food produced is lost or wasted, with households generating more than half of total food waste, which has negative social, economic and environmental impacts; whereas age-appropriate educational measures encouraging the introduction of good practices could contribute significantly to reducing food waste in the EU in the long term;
- L. whereas the Mediterranean diet is a way of eating that is based on healthy habits with a dietary pattern that has great health benefits, and is recognised by the scientific community;
- M. whereas measures designed to provide free access to healthy food products to all schoolchildren, irrespective of their socioeconomic background, can have cumulative positive effects on their physical and mental health, as well as their development and social well-being; whereas these measures can lay the foundation for sustainable consumption later in life, and can also have an indirect positive effect on the development of local communities, in particular small and family farms;
- N. whereas food production standards in the EU are the highest and most rigorous in the world, especially in terms of sustainability;
- O. whereas the outermost regions, particularly archipelagos with remote islands, have greater difficulty in ensuring the regular supply of these food products;
- P. whereas the profile of the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme should be raised and the programme better communicated in order for it to reach more participants;
- Q. whereas poorer diets and underlying health issues, such as obesity, are more prevalent among children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds;
- R. whereas monitoring and evaluation are crucial in ensuring the proper functioning of the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme;

Conclusions and recommendations

Budget

1. Regrets the fact that in many cases, the amount of EU funding that the Member States receive is insufficient to reach all target groups in all regions, to motivate all schools to get involved and to generate the desired impact, while successfully and fairly impacting schools at both EU and national level; stresses that, in order to guarantee the continuation of well-functioning programmes, the current distribution of aid should also be taken as a minimal basis for distribution in the future;
2. Deplores the fact that some Member States are not making full use of the budget available, mainly due to the high number of administrative and bureaucratic procedures; calls on the Commission and the Member States to cooperate ahead of the next school scheme revision in order to assess national performances, produce a sound analysis of

the causes behind Member States displaying different absorption rates of the budget available and provide more guidance based on best practices from the Member States;

3. Calls on the Commission to increase the total budget for the school scheme for fruit, vegetables, milk and dairy products and to consider a fair redistribution among the participants of the scheme, so as to reallocate amounts not used by some Member States to others that demonstrate their willingness and capability to use more than their indicative allocations; emphasises that increasing the budget for the scheme would make it possible to increase the frequency of distribution each week and the duration of distribution throughout the school year;
4. Calls on the Commission to take account of the situation of children with severe food allergies, intolerances and other dietary restrictions and to allocate additional funding for the procurement of alternative diversified products, within the scope of the scheme in order to ensure its inclusivity;
5. Calls on the Commission to assess the possibility of synergies between the school scheme and existing healthy breakfast initiatives and programmes for the distribution of regular school meals, as well as other sources of funding, in order to reach a higher number of children, in line with the European Child Guarantee objectives;
6. Recommends that, while aid provided for distribution should continue to be variable, other costs associated with accompanying measures and the monitoring and evaluation of the scheme should be fixed in order to improve consistency and planning by the Member States;
7. Urges the Commission to take steps to ensure that the Member States guarantee a minimum quality level of the products covered by the scheme, which could factor into the take-up of the budget and the achievement of national participation targets;
8. Calls on the Commission to periodically assess the possibility of gradually increasing the scheme's budget, given its benefits to society as a whole;
9. Underlines that products that do not meet quality requirements have a negative impact on the implementation of the scheme by leading to a lack of interest in consuming the products and thus contributing to food waste; considers that surpluses of fruit and vegetables, including the 'ugly' ones that are in perfect condition, should also be deemed eligible; calls further on the Commission and the Member States to evaluate the amount of food waste generated by the school scheme and to identify potential causes, clarify the issue of unused products and provide guidance on curbing food waste associated with the scheme, in line with EU food loss and waste reduction targets, while avoiding placing administrative burdens on the Member States, schools and suppliers;

Educational measures

10. Acknowledges the importance of educational measures in raising awareness about the nutritional value of fruit and vegetables, especially fresh, seasonal, local and regional products, as well as milk and dairy products, in the context of achieving the scheme's objectives; notes the need to align the educational measures with the objectives of the Farm to Fork strategy and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan; points out that farm visits are a critical tool to enable children and adolescents to reconnect with agriculture, to

familiarise themselves with sustainable farming practices and to get to know and experience first-hand the vital role that EU agriculture plays in ensuring access to safe and nutritious food and the contribution it makes to the protection of the environment, the landscape and biodiversity; calls on the Commission and the Member States to increase the uptake of digital tools and digital learning materials, building on the learnings following the COVID-19 pandemic, with the purpose of complementing, when necessary, in-person educational activities;

11. Calls on the Member States to ensure that at least 10 % of the funding allocated to the school scheme every year from EU and national aid combined is earmarked for educational measures in order to increase their frequency and expand their reach, as the mere distribution of products is not sufficient to instil healthy lifestyle habits;
12. Calls on the Commission to provide more guidance on the content of the educational measures, drawing on best practices from the Member States and easing the administrative and financial burden on schools; stresses that educational measures should focus on aspects such as healthy, sustainable, varied and balanced eating habits, nutrition and culinary skills, food allergens and alternatives, agriculture in general and sustainable agriculture in particular, including organic farming, integrated production methods, animal welfare, food security, climate change and the prevention and reduction of food waste; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the appropriate involvement of national authorities responsible for health and nutrition, the environment, agriculture and education in developing appropriate and interactive accompanying measures, taking into account age groups and local specificities in terms of diet, cultural habits and farming practices;
13. Underlines the need to better involve teachers and other school staff, relevant competent authorities in the educational measures and to promote the participation of other stakeholders in the educational measures, better including parents, local producers, and civil society organisations; emphasises that the programme shall be implemented by qualified personnel, with adequate training for teachers, canteen operators, chefs and dieticians involved; underlines that selecting local producers close to the school would facilitate the implementation of educational measures;

Scope

14. Stresses that the products for distribution should originate in the EU and essentially be unprocessed, where applicable organic, locally produced and, if possible, with European quality indications; notes that the market for European quality indication and organic products is unevenly distributed among the Member States and that these products have higher costs; calls on the Commission to introduce requirements to ensure that the products comply with objective criteria, including health, environmental, quality and ethical considerations, animal welfare, seasonality, variety, the availability of local produce, giving priority to short supply chains; stresses that in the case of bananas and other tropical fruits priority should be given to products originating in the EU and its outermost regions; emphasises that products should be diversified, reflect seasonal availability, local healthy eating habits and crop types as far as possible;
15. Encourages the distribution of at least 25 % of organic products within the EU school scheme, through, inter alia, the uptake of green public procurement criteria, which

would play a role in boosting public procurement of organic food, as part of the EU organic action plan, and thereby contributing to the achievement of and the alignment to the Farm to Fork objectives;

16. Insists that products containing added sugars, fats, salt or sweeteners should not be permitted within the scheme; calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States and health and nutrition authorities, to closely analyse the exceptions that allow for the distribution of certain types of products with limited sugar and fat content, in view of their strict limitation or removal, in order to ensure that the scheme remains aligned with its objectives and wider EU policy goals; calls on the Member States to enable close and effective cooperation between health and nutrition, agricultural, environmental and educational authorities in drawing the list of eligible products and educational activities, in full compliance with the school scheme's objectives;
17. Suggests that, in order to promote the consumption of oranges (and therefore increase vitamin C uptake), self-service citrus juicing machines should be made available in schools, so that natural orange juice can be made (without adding water);
18. Suggests that, while the future implementation of the scheme should focus on nurseries, kindergartens and primary schools, as children should acquire healthy and sustainable habits and an inclination for a healthy lifestyle from an early age, attention should also be given to secondary schools;
19. Recalls that access to healthy and sustainable food and proper nutrition education is influenced by one's socioeconomic environment; invites the Commission to consider reviewing the target groups in order to ensure that children at risk of poverty or social exclusion have priority access to healthy and nutritional food and educational measures, in line with the objectives of the Farm to Fork strategy and the European Child Guarantee; calls on the Commission and the Member States to allow for flexible formulas between products and educational measures, based on the actual needs of the target groups;
20. Stresses that, in some Member States, especially in rural schools, the products may not be appealing to the children to consume, since they already have access to them in their own households; considers that, in this situation, an alternative solution would be to redistribute the funds in order to develop local, small-scale economic activities that generate more diversified products;

Streamlining the administrative process

21. Urges the Commission and the Member States to reduce the administrative burden of implementing the scheme, particularly in the context of distribution measures to increase participation rates and the use of national budgets; considers that one way of streamlining the scheme could be to simplify the procurement procedures, to extend running times of the contracts and in doing so to reduce the administrative burden associated with inspections so that schools wishing to participate do not have to shoulder the administrative burden;
22. Recalls that procurement procedures, even simplified ones, should comply with the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) criteria for award; highlights that the pursuit of the lowest price as the sole criterion in the procurement procedure is

detrimental to the goals of the school scheme, as well as to the participation of small-scale farmers; insists that procurement procedures shall ensure that equal access and fair competition are in place so that large suppliers are not unfairly advantaged to the detriment of farmers participating in the scheme; stresses that priority should be given to local products and short supply chains, as well as to products supplied by producer organisations, agricultural cooperatives and farmer's markets; highlights that the use of adequate minimal packaging in the transport and distribution of school scheme products should also be a criterion in purchasing decisions, taking into account the schools' storage and cooling capacities and the need to preserve the quality and safety of products;

23. Calls on the Commission to explore the option for schools to have longer-lasting contracts, with the possibility to renegotiate prices, as this would reduce the need for extensive documentation; highlights that this could incentivise more farmers to participate in the scheme, in particular small-scale farmers;
24. Urges the Member States to reduce and simplify the level of documentation required of the beneficiaries of the scheme in order to alleviate the administrative burden they face; calls on the Commission and the Member States to increase the use of digital tools in the management of documentation;
25. Highlights the importance of teachers and other educational/supervisory staff as role models in the consumption of healthy produce and calls for the required budgetary and administrative flexibility to enable such individuals to participate in school schemes and demonstrate healthy eating habits to the children under their care;
26. Proposes streamlining the management, control, monitoring and evaluation requirements, both for the competent authorities of the Member States and the scheme's beneficiaries;
27. Proposes establishing a forum to encourage the Member States to share best practices in order to identify successful ways to streamline the implementation of the scheme; recalls the existence of the civil dialogue group meetings, held by the Commission, which already include regular discussions on the school scheme and recommends building on this forum; calls on the Commission to explore the possibility of the candidate countries participating, as observers, in the forum dedicated to the school scheme;
28. Calls on the Commission to explore the possibility of launching a school scheme for candidate countries, financed through existing instruments such as the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe;

Monitoring and evaluation

29. Calls on the Commission to establish a method for collecting complete, harmonised and comparable data, so as to provide the aggregated data necessary to carry out adequate *ex ante* and *ex post* impact assessments of the scheme across Europe;
30. Asks the Commission to explore the possibility of introducing common indicators to serve as a basis for evaluating the implementation of the scheme beyond 2023; points

out that the databases that could be used to develop these indicators are already available through national strategies and should be incorporated into the scheme in the future; invites the Commission to play a more active role and provide feedback and guidance to the Member States, building on existing best practices, in order to better assist them in implementing and monitoring the scheme;

Communication

31. Calls on the Commission to develop an enhanced communication and publicity strategy in order to boost the take-up of the scheme by schools in the Member States, especially those with low participation rates, and to make its financial contribution and the scheme more recognisable; stresses that EU publicity materials could also be used as a means of further encouraging schools to participate in the scheme;
32. Calls on the Commission to place greater focus on communicating how the products under the scheme are produced and distributed, including particular emphasis on the promotion of regional and local products, by developing and providing more uniform material to the Member States to increase awareness and information relating to the scheme;

◦

◦ ◦

33. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	22.3.2023
Result of final vote	+: 43 -: 2 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Mazaly Aguilar, Clara Aguilera, Álvaro Amaro, Attila Ara-Kovács, Carmen Avram, Adrian-Dragoş Benea, Benoît Biteau, Daniel Buda, Isabel Carvalhais, Dacian Cioloş, Paolo De Castro, Jérémy Decerle, Salvatore De Meo, Herbert Dorfmann, Paola Ghidoni, Francisco Guerreiro, Martin Hlaváček, Krzysztof Jurgiel, Jarosław Kalinowski, Elsi Katainen, Camilla Laureti, Gilles Lebreton, Chris MacManus, Colm Markey, Marlene Mortler, Ulrike Müller, Maria Noichl, Juozas Olekas, Daniela Rondinelli, Bronis Ropė, Anne Sander, Simone Schmiedtbauer, Veronika Vrecionová, Sarah Wiener
Substitutes present for the final vote	Rosanna Conte, Claude Gruffat, Anja Hazekamp, Ladislav Ilčić, Petros Kokkalis, Benoît Lutgen, Gabriel Mato, Alin Mituța, Christine Schneider, Irène Tolleret
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Niclas Herbst

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

43	+
ECR	Mazaly Aguilar, Ladislav Ilčić, Krzysztof Jurgiel, Veronika Vrecionová
ID	Rosanna Conte, Paola Ghidoni, Gilles Lebreton
PPE	Álvaro Amaro, Daniel Buda, Salvatore De Meo, Herbert Dorfmann, Niclas Herbst, Jarosław Kalinowski, Benoît Lutgen, Colm Markey, Gabriel Mato, Marlene Mortler, Anne Sander, Simone Schmiedtbauer, Christine Schneider
Renew	Dacian Cioloș, Jérémy Decerle, Martin Hlaváček, Elsi Katainen, Alin Mituța, Ulrike Müller, Irène Tolleret
S&D	Clara Aguilera, Attila Ara-Kovács, Carmen Avram, Adrian-Dragoș Benea, Isabel Carvalhais, Paolo De Castro, Camilla Laureti, Maria Noichl, Juozas Olekas, Daniela Rondinelli
The Left	Petros Kokkalis, Chris MacManus
Verts/ALE	Benoît Biteau, Claude Gruffat, Bronis Ropė, Sarah Wiener

2	-
The Left	Anja Hazekamp
Verts/ALE	Francisco Guerreiro

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention