



*Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development*

2020/2260(INI)

17.12.2020

DRAFT REPORT

on a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly
food system
(2020/2260(INI))

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

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(Joint committee meetings – Rule 58 of the Rules of Procedure)

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system (2020/2260(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and in particular Article 192(1) thereof,
- having regard to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
- having regard to the Paris Agreement reached at the 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21),
- having regard to the Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992 and the associated Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety of 2000 and Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization of 2010,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 on a Farm to Fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system (COM(2020)0381),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640),
- having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled ‘EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – Bringing nature back into our lives’ (COM(2020)0380),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 17 September 2020 entitled ‘Stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition: Investing in a climate-neutral future for the benefit of our people’ (COM(2020)0562),
- having regard to Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes²,
- having regard to Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides³,

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0005.

² OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23.

³ OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 71.

- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety⁴ (General Food Law),
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 October 2004 on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food and repealing Directives 80/590/EEC and 89/109/EEC⁵,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market and repealing Council Directives 79/117/EEC and 91/414/EEC⁶,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004⁷,
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 1 June 2018 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council 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) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (COM(2018)0392),
- having regard to its resolution of 23 October 2020 on the common agricultural policy - support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States and financed by the EAGF and by the EAFRD⁸,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2020/XXX establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (the ‘European Climate Law’),
- having regard to its resolution of 8 June 2016 on endocrine disruptors: state of play following the judgment of the General Court of the European Union of 16 December 2015⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 October 2016 on the implementation of the Food

⁴ OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1.

⁵ OJ L 338, 13.11.2004, p. 4.

⁶ OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 1.

⁷ OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

⁸ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0287.

⁹ OJ C 86, 6.3.2018, p. 105.

Contact Materials Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004¹⁰,

- having regard to its resolution of 4 April 2017 on palm oil and deforestation of rainforests¹¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2018 on a European strategy for the promotion of protein crops – encouraging the production of protein and leguminous plants in the European agriculture sector¹²,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 May 2017 on initiative on resource efficiency: reducing food waste, improving food safety¹³,
- having regard to its resolution of 30 May 2018 on the future of food and farming¹⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2018 on the implementation of the Plant Protection Products Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009¹⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2019 on the Union’s authorisation procedure for pesticides¹⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 February 2019 on the implementation of Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides¹⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 April 2019 on a comprehensive European Union framework on endocrine disruptors¹⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 July 2020 on a Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability¹⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 September 2020 on the EU’s role in protecting and restoring the world’s forests²⁰,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 October 2020 with recommendations to the Commission on an EU legal framework to halt and reverse EU-driven global deforestation²¹,
- having regard to the 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and

¹⁰ OJ C 215, 19.6.2018, p. 57.

¹¹ OJ C 298, 23.8.2018, p. 2.

¹² OJ C 390, 18.11.2019, p. 2.

¹³ OJ C 307, 30.8.2018, p. 25.

¹⁴ OJ C 76, 9.3.2020, p. 62.

¹⁵ OJ C 433, 23.12.2019, p. 183.

¹⁶ OJ C 411, 27.11.2020, p. 48.

¹⁷ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0082.

¹⁸ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0441.

¹⁹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0201.

²⁰ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0212.

²¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0285.

- Ecosystem Services (IPBES), published on 6 May 2019,
- having regard to the special report of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on climate change and land, published on 8 August 2019,
 - having regard to European Court of Auditors (ECA) Special Reports 15/2020 of 9 July 2020 entitled ‘Protection of wild pollinators in the EU – Commission initiatives have not borne fruit’, 13/2020 of 5 June 2020 entitled ‘Biodiversity in farmland: CAP contribution has not halted the decline’, 05/2020 of 5 February 2020 entitled ‘Sustainable use of plant protection products: limited progress in measuring and reducing risks’, 02/2019 of 15 January 2019 entitled ‘Chemical hazards in our food: EU food safety policy protects us but faces challenges’, 31/2018 of 14 November 2018 entitled ‘Animal welfare in the EU: closing the gap between ambitious goals and practical implementation’, and 34/2016 of 17 January 2017 entitled ‘Combating Food Waste: an opportunity for the EU to improve the resource-efficiency of the food supply chain,
 - having regard to the report of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES Food) of February 2019 entitled ‘Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union’,
 - having regard to the Commission staff working document entitled ‘Analysis of links between the CAP Reform and Green Deal’ (SWD(2020)0093),
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 19 October 2020 on the farm to fork strategy,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Development, the Committee on International Trade, the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumers and the Committee on Fisheries,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (A9-0000/2020),
- A. whereas the Commission communication on a Farm to Fork Strategy sets out a holistic approach of the European food system, with agriculture, as a provider of food, fibre and fuel, at the centre, while recognising the interconnectedness of all actors throughout the whole supply chain;
- B. whereas Europe’s food system should deliver food and nutrition security in a way that contributes to social well-being and maintains and restores ecosystem health; whereas currently, the food system is responsible for a range of impacts on human and animal health and on the environment, the climate and biodiversity; whereas the way in which we produce and consume food needs to transform in order to ensure coherence with the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and EU policies, particularly in the areas of sustainability, the environment, climate, public health, animal welfare, food and economic sustainability for farmers;

- C. whereas the European model of a multifunctional agricultural sector, driven by family farms, continues to ensure quality food production, local supply chains, good agriculture practices, high environmental standards and vibrant rural areas throughout the EU;
 - D. whereas it is important that consumers are informed and enabled to take responsibility for the consequences of their choice of food stuffs on the whole food system, from production to processing and distribution; whereas this requires a healthy and sound food environment which ensures that the healthy and sustainable choice is also the easy and affordable choice, and fosters and encourages consumption patterns that support human health while ensuring the sustainable use of natural and human resources and animal welfare;
 - E. whereas the European food system has played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating its resilience with farmers, processors and retailers working together under difficult conditions, including lockdowns, to ensure that European consumers continue to have access to safe, affordable, and high quality products without impediment;
- 1. Welcomes the farm to fork strategy as an important step in ensuring a sustainable, fair and resilient food system, which is central to achieving the goals set out in the European Green Deal and in the SDGs; emphasises the inextricable links between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet, encourages the Commission to translate the strategy into concrete legislative and non-legislative action as soon as possible;

Need for action

- 2. Welcomes the announcement of an impact-assessed proposal for a legislative framework for sustainable food systems; invites the Commission to use this proposal to set out a holistic common food policy aimed at reducing the environmental and climate footprint of the EU food system in order to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 and strengthen its resilience to ensure food security in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss, leading a global transition towards sustainability from farm to fork, based on the principle of a multifunctional agricultural sector while ensuring consistency between policies by taking into account the existing legislation in order to enable all actors in the European food system to develop long-term plans based on realistic and transparent objectives; suggests that the respective base lines and progress achieved in each Member State be taken into account, while promoting the exchange of know-how and best practices between Member States; stresses the need to include the entire food and beverage chains including processing, marketing, distribution and retail;

Building the food chain that works for consumers, producers, climate and the environment

- 3. Welcomes the decision to revise the directive on the sustainable use of pesticides and the reduction targets for pesticides, fertilisers, and antibiotics; emphasises the importance of pursuing these targets through holistic and circular approaches, such as agroecological practices; insists that each Member State should establish robust quantitative reduction targets, accompanied by well-defined support measures ensuring accountability at all levels to help reach these targets; reiterates its call for the

translation into legislation of the above targets and objectives and calls on the Commission to clarify how it will deal with individual Member States' contributions to Union-wide targets and to clarify the baselines for these targets;

4. Emphasises the importance of recognising the significant impact of agriculture and especially animal production on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and land use; stresses the need to enhance natural carbon sinks and reduce agricultural emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, in particular in the feed and livestock sectors; calls for regulatory measures and targets to ensure progressive reductions in all GHG emissions in these sectors;
5. Points out that extensive and permanent grassland-based or organic animal husbandry is a feature of the European food system and a defining element of many traditional rural communities, and that it has multiple positive effects for the environment and against climate change, and contributes to a circular economy;
6. Welcomes the notion of rewarding carbon sequestration in soils; stresses, however, that intensive and industrial agriculture and farming models with negative impacts on biodiversity should not receive climate funding or be incentivised; calls for the proposals to be in line with the environmental objectives and the 'do no harm' principle of the Green Deal;
7. Underlines the importance of seed security and diversity, notably of promoting EU-grown plant proteins to deliver locally sourced food and feed stuffs with high nutritional value while granting farmers access to quality seeds for plant varieties adapted to the pressures of climate change, including traditional and locally-adapted varieties, while ensuring access to innovative plant breeding in order to contribute to healthy seeds and protect plants against harmful pests and diseases; raises awareness of the potential negative effects of concentration and monopolisation in the seed sector;
8. Calls for CAP National Strategic Plans to ensure adequate financial support and incentives to promote new ecological 'green' business models for agriculture and artisanal food production, notably through fostering short supply chains and quality food production;
9. Recalls that the European food system delivers a sufficient and varied supply of safe, nutritious, affordable and sustainable food to people at all times and underlines that increasing the economic, environmental and social sustainability of food producers will ultimately increase their resilience; encourages the Commission to consider the food supply chain and its workers as a strategic asset for the safety and well-being of all Europeans;
10. Underlines that robust and reliable legal frameworks for the fisheries and aquaculture sector should provide the basis for better protection measures with subsequent increases in fish populations and more clarity regarding the use of space and licenses in aquaculture, allowing for greater predictability for investments; stresses that good traceability mechanisms and high sustainability standards for all products sold on EU markets are essential to ensure transparency for consumers, the sector and the different administrations, and to achieve the targets of the Green Deal and the SDGs;

11. Expresses its deep concern about the emergence of zoonotic diseases that are transferred from animals to humans (anthroozoonoses), such as Q fever, avian influenza and the new strain of influenza A (H1N1), which is exacerbated by anthropogenic climate change, the destruction of biodiversity, environmental degradation and our current food production systems;
12. Calls for primary producers to be supported in making the transition to greater sustainability through the encouragement of cooperation and collective actions as well as through competition rules and the enhancement of possibilities for cooperation within the common market organisations for agricultural, fishery and aquaculture products, and thus for farmers' and fishers' position in the supply chain to be strengthened in order to enable them to capture a fair share of the added value of sustainable production;
13. Urges the Commission to follow up on Directive (EU) 2019/633 on unfair trading practices²² and the EU code of conduct on responsible business and marketing practices by producing a monitoring framework for the food and retail sectors and providing for legal action if progress in integrating economic, environmental and social sustainability into corporate strategies is insufficient, and in so doing promoting and rewarding the efforts of sustainable agricultural producers while increasing the availability and affordability of healthy, sustainable food options and reducing the overall environmental footprint of the food system; stresses the importance of halting and addressing consolidation and concentration in the grocery retail sector in order to ensure fair prices for farmers;
14. Urges the review of the EU promotion programme for agricultural and food products, including the EU school scheme, with a view to enhancing its contribution to sustainable production and consumption, notably by focusing on educational messages about the importance of healthy nutrition and promoting greater consumption of fruit and vegetables with the aim of reducing obesity rates;
15. Recalls the need to promote effective Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS), enabling all food chain actors to become sustainable by speeding up innovation and accelerating knowledge transfer; recalls, in addition, the need for a farm sustainability data network to set benchmarks for farm performance and document the uptake of sustainable farming practices, while allowing for the precise and tailored application of new production approaches at farm level by providing farmers with access to fast broadband connections;
16. Calls for measures to reduce the burden that highly processed foods with high salt, sugar and fat content place on public health; regrets that the introduction of nutrient profiles is greatly delayed and stresses that a robust set of nutrient profiles must be developed to restrict or prohibit the use of false nutritional claims on foods high in fats, sugars and/or salt; calls for a mandatory EU-wide front-of-pack nutrition labelling system based on independent science;
17. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to revise the EU legislation on food contact materials (FCM); reiterates its call to revise the legislation on FCM in line with the regulation on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals

²² OJ L 111, 25.4.2019, p. 59.

(REACH), as well as classification, labelling and packaging regulations, and to insert, without further delay, specific provisions to substitute endocrine disrupting chemicals;

18. Welcomes the fact that the strategy rightly recognises the role and influence of the food environment in shaping consumption patterns and the need to make it easier for consumers to choose healthy and sustainable diets; reiterates the importance of promoting sustainable diets by raising consumer awareness of the impacts of consumption patterns and providing information on diets that are better for human health and have a lower environmental footprint; underlines that food prices must send the right signal to consumers; welcomes, therefore, the strategy's objective that the healthy and sustainable choice should become the most affordable one;
19. Reaffirms its belief that policy measures that are dependent solely on consumer choice unduly shift the responsibility to purchase sustainable products to consumers; notes that third-party certification and labelling alone are not effective in ensuring sustainable production and consumption;
20. Highlights the recognition in the strategy that Europeans' diets are not in line with recommendations for healthy eating, and that a population-wide shift in consumption patterns is needed towards more healthy and plant-based foods and less red and processed meat, sugars, salt, and fats, which will also benefit the environment; emphasises that EU-wide guidelines for sustainable and healthy diets would bring clarity to consumers on what constitutes a healthy and sustainable diet and inform Member States' own efforts to integrate sustainability elements in national dietary advice; calls on the Commission to develop such guidelines and specific actions to effectively promote healthy plant-based diets;
21. Considers that the further development of plant protein production and alternative sources of protein in the EU is a way of effectively addressing many of the environmental and climate challenges that EU agriculture is facing, as well as preventing deforestation in countries outside the EU;
22. Calls for a revision of public procurement legislation, including minimum mandatory criteria in schools and other public institutions to encourage organic and local food production and to promote more healthy diets by creating a food environment that enables consumers to make the healthy choice;
23. Reiterates its call to take the measures required to achieve a Union food waste reduction target of 30 % by 2025 and 50 % by 2030 compared to the 2014 baseline; underlines that binding targets are needed to achieve this;
24. Welcomes the proposed revision of EU rules on date marking; stresses that any change to date marking rules should be science based and should improve the use of date marking by actors in the food chain and its understanding by consumers, in particular 'best before' labelling, while at the same time not undermining food safety or quality;

Enabling the transition

25. Underlines the importance EU funding for research and innovation as a key driver in accelerating the transition to a more sustainable, healthy and inclusive European food

system while facilitating investments needed to encourage agro-ecological practices in both social and technological innovation, and the crucial role of farm advisory services in ensuring the transfer of knowledge to the farming community, drawing on the existing specialised training systems for farmers in Member States;

Promoting the global transition

26. Recalls the global responsibility of European food systems and their key role in setting global standards for food safety, environmental protection and animal welfare; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that all food and feed products imported to the EU fully meet relevant EU regulations and standards and to provide development assistance to support primary producers from developing countries in meeting those standards; welcomes the Commission's intention to take the environmental impacts of requested import tolerances into account;

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27. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and Parliaments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

On 20th May 2020, the Commission published the Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system, together with the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 as part of its Green Deal. This included several long awaited evaluations and reports on pesticide and nutrition legislation and a roadmap for a fitness check and revision of the existing animal welfare legislation, including on animal transport and the slaughter of animals, to ensure a higher level of animal welfare. The ENVI and AGRI committees have decided to jointly draw up an own initiative report on the Farm to Food strategy.

The ENVI rapporteur welcomes the Farm to Fork Strategy as a much needed first step towards ensuring healthy food for all and making sure that the way food is produced and consumed in the EU will respect the boundaries of the Earth that sustains us, and stresses that there is much work to be done to achieve that. The way in which money prevails over life and essential values is most evident in the agricultural and food sector, where economies of scale threaten to make life on Earth unbearable or even impossible in the near future.

Over the past decades, many reports have been published with regard to the detrimental impacts of our food system on the environment and public health, and many practical and policy solutions have been put forward¹. The ENVI rapporteur welcomes these much needed analyses and policy suggestions and draws particular inspiration from the IPES-Food report *Towards a Common Food Policy for the EU*².

Industrial livestock production and chemical-intensive monocultures are driving high greenhouse gas emissions, soil degradation, air pollution, water contamination, biodiversity loss and are compromising animal welfare, thereby undermining the critical ecosystems upon which all life on Earth depends. Globally, food and farming systems contribute up to 30% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Agriculture is responsible for some 90% of EU ammonia emissions, which has significant negative effects on the natural environment and is a major contributor to the air pollution that kills 400,000 Europeans each year. Pesticide and fertiliser use continues to seriously threaten biodiversity (including crucial pollinators) and human health and must be drastically reduced.

The EU is increasingly outsourcing the environmental footprint of its food systems. More than 30% of the land required to meet EU food demand is located outside Europe. The EU imports millions of tons of soya-based animal feed every year, including from South American countries where deforestation (responsible for 20% of global CO₂ emissions), evictions, pesticide poisoning and human rights abuses have been alleged in intensive export cropping zones. EU imports have been estimated to account for almost one quarter of the global trade in soy, beef, leather and palm oil resulting from illegal forest clearance in the

¹ Such as: EAT Lancet Commission 2019 report *Food in The Anthropocene: the EAT-Lancet Commission on Healthy Diets From Sustainable Food Systems*; IPCC 2019 *Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems*; the EEA 2017 report *Food in a green light - A systems approach to sustainable food*, ECA's special reports on EU CAP and Biodiversity policies; The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (wrr) 2014 report- *Towards a Food Policy*, and many others

² International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) (2019) *Towards a Common Food Policy for the EU*, http://www.ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/CFP_FullReport.pdf

tropics.

Less than half of EU fish and seafood consumption is met by domestic production, meaning that Europe also has a huge impact on global marine resources. This is exacerbated by the fact that around 20% of the food produced in the EU is lost or wasted, costing €143 billion per year in terms of wasted resources and environmental impact.

Food systems are also driving health impacts through changing diets. Unhealthy diets, high in salt, sugar, fat and animal protein are a leading risk factor for disease and mortality in Europe. They are responsible for almost half of the burden of cardiovascular disease, which is the leading cause of death in the EU. Chronic diseases, which are often diet-related, account for up to 80% of healthcare costs in the EU. Over half of the European population is overweight, more than 20% are obese and these numbers are rising. Antimicrobial resistance and exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) via foods and food packaging, plus the agricultural contamination of water sources also generate major health externalities.

Current responses –from public policies and from the private sector – are failing to address these severe and interconnected challenges in our food systems adequately. Prevailing solutions have failed to reconcile the multiple aspects of sustainability (economic, social, and environmental), and have often traded them off against each other. They have relied on and reinforced a highly specialised, industrialised, capitalised, standardised and export-oriented model of agriculture and food production – a model that systematically generates negative impacts and externalities. Faith has been placed in technology-led, market-led, and industry-led change that is based on the ability of large companies with extensive supply chains to reach large numbers of people. Yet, the current incentives for conserving resources, promoting biodiversity, sequestering carbon and protecting public health are clearly insufficient to redirect innovation pathways. The reliance on self-regulation in many parts of the food chain has proved to be highly ineffective.

The ENVI rapporteur believes it is high time for a holistic approach to tackle the problems in our current food system in an integrated manner. A fundamental change of direction is required in order to put food systems on a more sustainable course. The various policies affecting food systems, including agriculture and trade, must be urgently reformed in order to address climate change, halt biodiversity loss, curb obesity and make farming viable for the next generation. The nature of the challenge requires comprehensive public policy-driven responses.

Moving towards integrated food policies can remedy the democratic deficit in food systems and rebalance power. By shifting the focus from agriculture to food, a wider range of stakeholders can be meaningfully involved in designing and assessing policies. Healthy food environments, from farm to fork, should become a key objective for action at both an EU and national level, in order to look collectively at production, distribution, retail and consumption and to build comprehensive intervention packages. Consumers will play a crucial role in this much-needed transition and ought to be enabled to make healthy and sustainable choices, amongst others by comprehensive, independent and science based consumer information.

Food is a basic need for our existence and a human right. The production of our food therefore deserves our full attention. Healthy, sustainable agriculture is possible if we respect nature, restore nutrient cycles, reduce chemical inputs and pay farmers a fair price for their

products. Citizens also need to understand fully where food comes from, how it is produced and whether the price they pay for it actually covers all the production and environmental costs. We must ensure access to land, clean water and healthy soils and move to a regenerative kind of agriculture, which is climate resilient, agro-ecological and socially just. We should put trade in the service of sustainable development, which requires a rethinking of the way we currently import and export foodstuffs all over the world. We also need to critically reflect on the big corporate interests, which threaten nutritional security. Building fairer, shorter and cleaner supply chains and promoting sufficient, healthy and sustainable diets for all, including building-in the right incentives into food prices, are essential.

According to the ENVI rapporteur, the precautionary and do no harm principles, rectifying problems at the source, extending producer responsibility and true cost accounting should be leading principles in the transition towards a healthy and sustainable food system. The legislative framework that the Commission has announced must set the agenda for a fundamental change in the entire food system. All sectoral legislation and policies should contribute to that goal, and be made to give the right incentives for all actors in the food chain to make the sustainable choices, which are needed to ensure that the way we produce and consume is aligned with the planetary boundaries, guidelines for health and the moral codes we want to live by. Our knives and forks are the most important weapons that we have in the fight against climate change, poverty, hunger, disease, animal suffering and biodiversity loss. It is high time we start using them effectively.

From the perspective of the AGRI Rapporteur, the publication of the Commission's communication "The Farm to Fork strategy" establishes the link between the European Green Deal and the European Food system.

This brings together on one hand the European agriculture and food sector and its extensive legal framework, its significant budget and most of all, the wealth of contributions to the daily well-being of Europa citizens; and on the other hand, climate change, the most urgent challenge humankind is facing across all countries and human activities.

In terms of policy, the EU's most integrated policy (Common Agriculture Policy) and most comprehensive legislation (General Food Law) are called upon to contribute to the most ambitious project of the current European Commission and European Parliament mandate and the most pressing objective of the EU as such: to achieve climate neutrality in Europe by 2050.

The European Food system is of primordial importance for the European economy: More than 47 million persons in more than 15 million holdings produce almost €900 billion turnover annually. All food production actors (agricultural producers and the food processing industry) jointly account for 7.5% of employment and 3.7% of EU's total value added. In detail, this translates into around 12 million farms producing agricultural products for processing by about 300.000 enterprises in the food and drink industry. These food processors sell their products through the 2.8 million mainly Small-and-Medium sized Enterprises (SME) within the food distribution and food service industry, which deliver food to the EU's 500 million consumers.

However, all these average figures mask a great diversity in both production structure as well as consumption patterns: while the average EU farm has 16ha of agricultural land, 66% of

them have less than 5ha and only 7% have more than 50ha of agricultural land. Household expenditure on food and drinks on EU average is 14% while in Romania it is 30% and in Austria 9% of disposable income.

All these differences however come together in one single European Food System, built on two principles:

Multifunctional agriculture driven by family farms, delivering a variety of goods and services, ensuring quality food production, good agriculture practice, high environmental standards and vibrant rural areas throughout the European Union;

Precautionary principle covering both agricultural inputs and outputs, which enables decision-makers to adopt appropriate measures in the face of scientific evidence about an environmental or human health hazard.

Both of these principles developed over time, undergoing political reforms and substantial crises, while reflecting demographic changes and shifting consumption patterns.

The challenge arising from climate change is not the only one the European Food system is facing: decrease in soil quality and organic matter and loss of insect, bird and mammal life in intensive agriculture areas; unbalanced diets due to high energy, processed (sugary) foodstuffs being more easily available than healthy fruit & vegetables; increasing economic pressure due to high land prices and capital-intensive technology as well as market concentration in the up- and downstream sectors.

A key issue in a successful effort to allow the European Food system to contribute its share to achieving climate neutrality is the consistency of laws and policies avoiding contradictions while ensuring stability of rules and procedures and thus long term planning and investments, drawing from a thorough ex-ante assessment of all legislative proposals with the active involvement of stakeholders.

Another element of high importance is to pursue a know-how driven and evidence-based approach throughout the Food system, from specialised training for food business operators to Farm Advisory Services, allowing to bring the results of basic and applied research as both social and technological innovation to real-life use.

A key driver of a transition of the Food system is consumer responsibility and choice, where the supply of sustainable agriculture products and artisanal food production meets the demand of consumers in a food environment, that allows the consumer to make an informed choice for healthy, quality and local products.

While the European Food system continued to deliver safe, affordable, and high quality products throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, this crisis has brought to light the need for more resilience by reducing dependencies in terms of access to (export) markets and (third country) inputs as well as seasonal labour and the flow of goods within the Single market.

Providing support to primary producers and food crafts in the transition is crucial by tailor-made support programmes in CAP National Strategic Plans but also targeted measures in the wider legal framework including competition rules and the fight against unfair trading

practices as well as allowing for flexibility in the food chain rules.

Finally, the future CAP 2022-2027 plays a critical role notably in the design and management of the objectives and measures (Ecoschemes) set in the National Strategic Plans, empowering all actors in the European Food system to embark on new green business models, integrating environmental and social sustainability criteria while ensuring economic viability and freedom of choice.

The AGRI Rapporteur firmly believes that focusing on these core elements in the holistic approach of the Farm to Fork Strategy will allow the European Food system to deliver to the European objective of climate neutrality by 2050.