



**2020/2260(INI)**

16.4.2021

## **ADVIES**

van de Commissie interne markt en consumentenbescherming

aan de Commissie milieubeheer, volksgezondheid en voedselveiligheid en de  
Commissie landbouw en plattelandontwikkeling

inzake een “van boer tot bord”-strategie voor een eerlijk, gezond en  
milieuvriendelijk voedselsysteem  
(2020/2260(INI))

Rapporteur voor advies: Claude Gruffat

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## SUGGESTIES

De Commissie interne markt en consumentenbescherming verzoekt de bevoegde Commissie milieubeheer, volksgezondheid en voedselveiligheid en de bevoegde Commissie landbouw en plattelandsontwikkeling onderstaande suggesties in hun ontwerpresolutie op te nemen:

1. Welcomes the ambition of the Farm to Fork Strategy and its aim of establishing a sustainable, healthy and resilient food system that should provide food which is affordable and available to all consumers in the EU and that includes all players in the food supply chain, covering the production, transport, distribution, marketing and consumption of food;
2. Stresses that it is crucial to guarantee the environmental, social and economic sustainability of all measures announced in the strategy in order to secure food production capacity, supply levels and the availability of products, as well as to maintain the competitiveness of all actors in the single market and ensure that nobody is left behind in the transition towards a more sustainable food system; notes in this regard that its implementation must take into account the needs of the outermost regions;
3. Points out the economic and social added value of food in the EU, which not only entails providing citizens with a sufficient supply of healthy and affordable food, but also allows for business opportunities, employment and growth;
4. Underlines that the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy should be built on a science-based approach focused on coherent and evidence-based policy instruments;
5. Calls on the Commission to adopt a holistic and comprehensive approach and to carefully assess the global short-term and long-term impact of the Farm to Fork Strategy and its targets on the functioning of the single market, including the consequences for the supply and demand balance, price fluctuations, affordability for consumers, profitability for producers, competitiveness, performance and analysis of the cost-effectiveness of the transition, among others, taking into account the positive and negative externalities of sustainable food production;
6. Shares the view that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of securing a robust, sustainable and resilient food system that functions in all circumstances, and one which is capable of ensuring access to a sufficient supply of affordable and local food for European consumers; stresses the need, in this respect, to preserve the smooth functioning of the single market, and in particular the movement of foodstuffs, including during health crises; stresses, too, that the pandemic should also be seen as an opportunity to build a sustainable and resilient food system and not as an excuse to scale down ambitions, given that sustainability and health are interconnected issues;
7. Considers that promoting healthy and sustainable food consumption calls for changes in food consumption patterns and in the production, processing and distribution of food products, along with the consequences that these changes have for supply and demand, the internal market and the ecological footprint; recalls that the transition towards sustainability will represent a game changer in fostering renewed competitiveness for all

actors involved in the EU food chain;

8. Recalls, at the same time, the importance of a European self-sufficiency that meets the food production needs of EU citizens in terms of quantity and quality;
9. Considers that consumers should not be solely responsible for making this transition, but that there is a need for measures that are coherent from one policy to another (agriculture, trade, environment, health, education, competition, etc.) and for a series of complementary regulatory measures;
10. Stresses that a successful European food system needs to avoid overlaps and discrepancies among existing environmental and food-related EU policies; asks, therefore, that the Commission review overall consistency among the different policy tools on a regular basis;
11. Notes that, in general, Europeans' diets are not in line with the recommendations for healthy eating, which do not preclude any food, provided that it is consumed in the right amount and at the right frequency, and that it is accompanied by adequate physical activity; stresses the need, therefore, for a shift in consumption patterns towards a more balanced diet with fewer ultra-processed products, and less sugar, salt and fat; calls on the Commission to produce European guidelines for sustainable and healthy diets, which bring clarity for consumers and help Member States to prepare and implement their national food plans;
12. Believes that the change in diets should not negatively affect supply and consumer choice; considers that informed consumer choice is key to the transition to a sustainable food system;
13. Considers that the successful promotion of healthy and sustainable food consumption requires financial support, enhanced food and nutrition education, training and information for all European consumers;
14. Notes that the cost of food products for consumers, a lack of knowledge, unclear information and a limited choice of products are some of the obstacles to more sustainable food; approves the strategy's aim of ensuring 'that ultimately the most sustainable food also becomes the most affordable'; suggests, therefore, that prices need to fairly reflect the long-term costs for consumers and producers; calls on governments, the Commission and relevant stakeholders to make consumers aware that having more sustainable food is not necessarily more expensive;
15. Highlights the utmost importance of fostering the engagement and cooperation of all actors in the food supply chain in the assessment, implementation and monitoring of this strategy, to ensure effective collective action towards a just transition; stresses that this process should entail a more equal redistribution of value among all operators in the food supply chain, strengthening farmers' bargaining power and, in particular, improving market relations between small businesses and producers and wholesale and retail companies;
16. Stresses that the Farm to Fork Strategy must take a stronger regional approach, taking into account the specificities of production in those Member States where there is a risk

of food production moving to third countries; calls on the Commission to monitor the delocalisation of production to third countries closely and to step up its support for small producers, regional food systems and, where possible, short supply chains, which can be a source of fresh, sustainable, affordable and high-quality products for consumers;

17. Stresses that the different actors in the food production chain have to be supported in order to increase the availability and affordability of healthy and sustainable food options; takes the view that legislation on European public food procurement should foster local, high-quality food supply systems for public institutions, which would also be very positive for consumers, farmers and rural areas; suggests integrating into green and sustainable public procurement more flexible criteria for the introduction of local and regional products, including organic products, traditional specialities guaranteed (TSGs), products with a protected designation of origin (AOP) and products with a protected geographical indication (PGI), particularly by adopting the zero-kilometre principle in school canteens; recommends further support to national and local innovative public food procurement policies;
18. Urges the Commission to encourage partnerships between operators in the food supply chain, notably among farmers; stresses the need to promote sustainable production methods and circular business models, such as packaging-free shops, based on social innovation and the social economy, for example mono- or multi-stakeholder cooperative schemes acting in the interests of producers and consumers, and to ensure that they can function and grow in all Member States; highlights equally the importance of promoting producer organisations, inter-branch networks and business networks in the food processing and retail sector, including specifically for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, in order to involve them in this transition and reduce the negative impacts for those who commit to this approach;
19. Calls on the Commission to make an assessment of the changes in consumer behaviour, such as in the online purchasing of food products;
20. Recalls that the EU food sector is characterised by a very high presence of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which despite their efforts face many barriers to improving their sustainability performance, such as a lack of information, access to financial resources and technical skills; stresses the need to conduct consultations and impact analyses on the measures envisaged for SMEs and cooperative systems; calls on the Commission, therefore, to ensure that all actions under the Farm to Fork Strategy enable a transition that creates real opportunities and a level playing field, provides enough flexibility, and further reduces and simplifies unnecessary administrative burdens for micro and small food businesses, as well as for social economy enterprises; stresses, in this regard, the utmost importance of providing concrete measures for the just transition, such as further support in the management of EU funding, improving capacity building and delivering significant resources for the effective use of innovative and digital solutions, in order to strengthen the competitive position of such businesses in the EU food system;
21. Calls on the Commission to make it easier for quality products from micro-enterprises to access local markets;

22. Supports the establishment of a governance framework and a clear code of conduct for food and retail businesses as regards responsible business and marketing practices, in order to raise awareness among businesses of the importance of sustainability, health and the fight against food waste and ensure that they are held accountable, given their influence on consumer choice; considers that an evaluation of the rules is necessary to reduce the marketing and advertising to children of foods and beverages that are high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS);
23. Insists that the code of conduct must be accompanied by a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism; calls for a fair distribution of added value in the food supply chain;
24. Stresses that the framework should take account of the environmental, economic and social sustainability of all players in the supply chain and urges the Commission, in this regard, to ensure the effective implementation of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (Directive 2005/29/EC)<sup>1</sup> and Directive 2019/633/EC<sup>2</sup>;
25. Considers that these initiatives should be sufficiently and properly defined and adjusted to the size and type of the businesses concerned, and should recognise existing best practices and the commitments already achieved by European companies; welcomes the steps taken by the Commission to lend particular support to the implementation of sustainable business practices by SMEs and to develop both initiatives with all relevant stakeholders;
26. Welcomes the Commission's initiative to promote healthier and more balanced diets by introducing nutritional profiles, accompanied by mandatory and harmonised labelling of the nutritional value of foods on the front of packaging, which are based on sound, independent and the most up-to-date scientific research, which facilitate consumers' understanding and enable them to be correctly informed, and at the same time which contribute to the reduction of a population's diseases and ensure a healthy generation; stresses the importance of informing consumers and making information clearer, notably by using a tool that is easy to understand, as well as taking into consideration the needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities and the elderly;
27. Points out there are several front-of-pack nutritional labelling schemes in use in Member States, while underlining the benefits of harmonised labelling for the functioning of the internal market and for the information and understanding of consumers;
28. Stresses that, given its negative effects on health, the obesity phenomenon affecting nearly half of all adults in the EU requires more decisive action towards more balanced diets; recognises that nutritional labelling on the front of pre-packed foods has been identified by international health experts, particularly those from the World Health Organization, as one of the tools in helping consumers to make informed and healthier food choices, by enabling them to compare the nutritional value of products so that they can make informed purchasing decisions;

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 111, 25.4.2019, p. 59.

29. Notes the view of consumers that the existing regulatory framework does not fully allow for clear and easily understandable information on the nutritional value of products and therefore welcomes the Commission's intention to explore and propose new ways to improve food nutrition labelling;
30. Asks the Commission to explore the need to apply specific conditions to and exemptions for certain food categories or foodstuffs, such as olive oil, for those covered by the PDO, PGI and TSG labels, and for single-ingredient products; highlights the need for suitable and tailored measures to support micro, small, medium-sized and social economy enterprises when implementing such labelling;
31. Considers it essential to respond to the growing and insistent demands of consumers, which have been relayed on numerous occasions by the European Parliament, for better information about the origin of the food products they purchase by considering the introduction of mandatory country-of-origin labelling for certain food products, including honey, seafood and ingredients used in processed products, with full respect for the integrity of the internal market and on the basis of a proper impact assessment; considers, further, that this labelling could be broadened to cover animal welfare, sustainability and pesticide residue levels, without resulting in over-labelling which could confuse consumers; asks the Commission, therefore, to work in close cooperation with the European Food Safety Authority to this end; stresses that imported products which do not meet European environmental or health standards threaten consumer health and create unfair competition for European producers;
32. Welcomes the Commission's intention to develop a new framework for sustainable food labelling; calls on the Commission to define the methodology and specify which dimensions of sustainability would be covered;
33. Stresses that Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011<sup>3</sup> requires that where the origin of a food is given and is different from that of its primary ingredient, the origin of the primary ingredient must also be given or at least indicated as being different to the origin of the food; points out that in practice that means that products whose primary ingredients are not locally or regionally sourced can be marketed as such if the origin of said non-local primary ingredients is indicated in small print; underlines that there is an imbalance between the visibility of marketing practices that use national, regional and local names and symbols for products whose primary ingredients are not nationally, regionally or locally sourced, and EU labelling requirements; considers this to be potentially misleading and detrimental to the right of consumers to be properly informed; calls on the Commission to rectify that imbalance;
34. Welcomes the Commission's announcement that it will revise the food contact materials legislation to improve consumer safety and public health;
35. Welcomes the Commission's intention to propose legally binding targets to reduce food waste in the EU; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to clarify the current EU rules on date marking with regard to 'use by' and 'best before' dates in order to prevent and reduce food waste and food loss and provide more clarity, consistency and understanding among consumers; asks the Commission, in this regard, to promote a

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<sup>3</sup> OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

multi-stakeholder approach to empower consumers and encourage the food industry to implement practical solutions to accelerate the battle against food waste; notes that measures envisaged for this purpose and waste management should not entail disproportionate costs and unnecessary administrative burdens that smaller businesses are unable to comply with; notes that Parliament is eagerly awaiting the reference scenario for reducing food waste throughout the EU;

36. Supports the Commission in its efforts to combat food fraud and counterfeiting, which misleads consumers and distorts competition in the internal market, and considers it essential to make the penalties imposed on fraudsters more dissuasive, to dedicate sufficient resources so that effective and efficient checks on product quality conformity can be stepped up, including during the pandemic, to properly staff competent authorities and customs authorities, and to continue strengthening exchanges of information in the single market; asks for improved enforcement of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011, to be supported by legal definitions at EU level of the concepts of 'food fraud and crime' and 'counterfeiting' as misleading practices which could be considered fraudulent;
37. Reiterates that dual quality in food products is unacceptable and needs to be fully counteracted in order to avoid discriminating against and misleading European consumers; considers, therefore, that the Food to Fork Strategy must include provisions to prevent a double standard in food quality, and to this end calls on the Commission to monitor the situation on the market closely and propose targeted legislation where necessary; stresses, furthermore, the role of consumer organisations in identifying these misleading practices;
38. Stresses that the significant divergences in controls of products from third countries and in customs procedures and sanctions policies at the EU's points of entry into the customs union often result not only in food supply chain distortions, but also in considerable health and safety risks for consumers in the single market; underlines that a coordinated and harmonised approach as regards unfair competition practices and the need for food standards and practices applied equally at all entries of the EU, with due regard for the precautionary principle, is of vital importance with a view to ensuring an uninterrupted flow of supplies of foodstuffs in all Member States, while respecting a high standard of security checks that can detect and prevent sanitary, phytosanitary and biological risks posed by third-country imports;
39. Insists that the Commission ensure that custom controls throughout the EU follow the same standards, by means of harmonised and standardised controls, in coordination with Member States and in full compliance with the principle of subsidiarity; urges the Commission, furthermore, to increase cooperation, at EU and international level, between relevant competent authorities so as to guarantee harmonised and uniform controls at all points of entry into the Union and thus ensure the traceability of all food products;
40. Calls on the Commission to ensure, through a proactive trade and customs policy, that food products imported into the single market comply with strict European food safety regulations in order to protect the competitiveness of European businesses, especially SMEs, and the integrity of the single market;



41. Asks the Member States for more effective implementation of Directive 2005/29/EC, in order to better address the problem of misleading and unsubstantiated environmental claims in food, as well as when concluding distance contracts in online markets, so as to make it easier for consumers to identify environmentally friendly products; suggests that this would not discriminate against enterprises that have made commendable efforts with regard to the environment.

## INFORMATIE OVER DE GOEDKEURING IN DE ADVISERENDE COMMISSIE

<b>Datum goedkeuring</b>	14.4.2021
<b>Uitslag eindstemming</b>	+ :            40 - :            1 0 :            3
<b>Bij de eindstemming aanwezige leden</b>	Andrus Ansip, Pablo Arias Echeverría, Alessandra Basso, Adam Bielan, Biljana Borzan, Vlad-Marius Botoș, Markus Buchheit, Anna Cavazzini, Dita Charanzová, Deirdre Clune, Carlo Fidanza, Evelyne Gebhardt, Alexandra Geese, Maria Grapini, Svenja Hahn, Virginie Joron, Eugen Jurzyca, Arba Kokalari, Marcel Kolaja, Kateřina Konečná, Jean-Lin Lacapelle, Maria-Manuel Leitão-Marques, Morten Løkkegaard, Adriana Maldonado López, Antonius Manders, Beata Mazurek, Leszek Miller, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Anne-Sophie Pelletier, Miroslav Radačovský, Christel Schaldemose, Andreas Schwab, Tomislav Sokol, Ivan Štefanec, Róza Thun und Hohenstein, Kim Van Sparrentak, Marion Walsmann, Marco Zullo
<b>Bij de eindstemming aanwezige vaste plaatsvervangers</b>	Clara Aguilera, Jordi Cañas, Claude Gruffat, Sylvie Guillaume, Jiří Pospíšil, Barbara Thaler

## HOOFDELIJKE EINDSTEMMING IN DE ADVISERENDE COMMISSIE

40	+
ECR	Adam Bielan, Carlo Fidanza, Beata Mazurek
ID	Virginie Joron, Jean-Lin Lacapelle
PPE	Pablo Arias Echeverría, Deirdre Clune, Arba Kokalari, Antonius Manders, Dan-Ştefan Motreanu, Jiří Pospíšil, Andreas Schwab, Tomislav Sokol, Ivan Štefanec, Barbara Thaler, Róza Thun und Hohenstein, Marion Walsmann
Renew	Andrus Ansip, Vlad-Marius Botoş, Jordi Cañas, Dita Charanzová, Svenja Hahn, Morten Løkkegaard, Marco Zullo
S&D	Clara Aguilera, Biljana Borzan, Evelyne Gebhardt, Maria Grapini, Sylvie Guillaume, Maria-Manuel Leitão-Marques, Adriana Maldonado López, Leszek Miller, Christel Schaldemose
The Left	Kateřina Konečná, Anne-Sophie Pelletier
Verts/ALE	Anna Cavazzini, Alexandra Geese, Claude Gruffat, Marcel Kolaja, Kim Van Sparrentak

1	-
ECR	Eugen Jurzyca

3	0
ID	Alessandra Basso, Markus Buchheit
NI	Miroslav Radačovský

Verklaring van de gebruikte tekens:

+ : voor

- : tegen

0 : onthouding