










Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2020/2260(INI)	Procedure completed
A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system		
Subject		
3.10.01.02 Rural development, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)		
3.70.01 Protection of natural resources: fauna, flora, nature, wildlife, countryside; biodiversity		
3.70.20 Sustainable development		
4.20 Public health		
4.60.04.04 Food safety		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Development		18/01/2021
		 BITEAU Benoît	
	 International Trade (Associated committee)		19/11/2020
		 DE CASTRO Paolo	
	 Internal Market and Consumer Protection		15/06/2020
		 GRUFFAT Claude	
	 Fisheries		12/06/2020
		 BILBAO BARANDICA Izaskun	
European Commission	Commission DG Health and Food Safety	Commissioner KYRIAKIDES Stella	

Key events			
17/12/2020	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/12/2020	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
17/12/2020	Referral to joint committee announced in Parliament		
10/09/2021	Vote in committee		
30/09/2021	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0271/2021	Summary
18/10/2021	Debate in Parliament		
20/10/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0425/2021	Summary

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2020/2260(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 57; Rules of Procedure EP 58
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CJ14/9/04852

Documentation gateway					
Committee draft report			PE662.094	17/12/2020	EP
Committee opinion	INTA		PE663.077	24/03/2021	EP
Committee opinion	IMCO		PE661.894	16/04/2021	EP
Committee opinion	DEVE		PE663.298	23/04/2021	EP
Committee opinion	PECH		PE662.054	28/04/2021	EP
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading			A9-0271/2021	30/09/2021	EP Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading			T9-0425/2021	20/10/2021	EP Summary

A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development jointly adopted an own-initiative report by Anja HAZEKAMP (GUE/NGL, NL) and Herbert DORFMANN (EPP, IT) on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system.

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.

Need for action

The European food system has played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating its resilience with farmers and their cooperatives or producers organisations, workers employed along the food value chain, processors, distributors and retailers working together under difficult conditions. Although the EU's internal market and agricultural system largely and rapidly overcame the interruptions to supply amid the COVID-19 crisis, the situation revealed certain vulnerabilities in intricate food supply chains, demonstrating the need to ensure long-term food security, resilience and short supply chains.

The report stressed the need for urgent and bold policy and legislative change to improve the sustainability of the current food system. It also called for a structured dialogue between Parliament, Member States and all food system actors, including citizens, to seize all the opportunities offered by this strategy and to discuss gaps, opportunities and challenges in the development and implementation of a holistic common EU food policy.

Members welcomed the Commission's proposal to develop a contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security in order to coordinate a common European response to crises affecting food systems. They insisted that a prevention approach is needed to avoid panic movements and overreactions by people, firms or Member States. They urged the Commission to consider strategic food stock issues in the way that it does for strategic petroleum stocks across the EU.

According to the report, Member States should be given more flexibility to differentiate the VAT rates on food with different health and environmental impacts and enable them to choose a zero VAT rate for healthy and sustainable food products such as fruits and vegetables and a higher VAT rate on unhealthy food and food that has a high environmental footprint.

Improving access to farming

The report stressed the importance of EU funding for research and innovation, especially for SMEs and smallholders, as key drivers in accelerating the transition to a more sustainable, productive and inclusive European food system. It pointed out that the introduction of new smart-farming technologies and techniques, including digitalisation and protected cropping systems, can be beneficial for improving efficiency.

In addition, Members highlighted the key role that young farmers will have in accomplishing the transition to sustainable farming and in delivering on the aims of the strategy. As regards the issue of concentration of farmland as well as land-grabbing in the EU, Members called on the Commission and Member States, as well as regional and local administrations, to put an end to such practices in order to support young farmers and to facilitate their entry into farming.

Promoting the global transition

Members called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- ensure that all food and feed products imported into the EU fully comply with relevant EU legislation and the Unions high standards;
- maintain a holistic approach as the implementation of certain farm to fork strategy targets in the EU must not lead to the relocation of parts of agricultural production to other regions with lower standards than

the EU.

Lastly, Members welcomed the Commissions commitment to promoting the global phasing out of pesticides no longer approved in the EU and to ensuring that hazardous pesticides banned for use in the EU in accordance with the relevant legislation are not exported outside the EU. They also considered that the EU should support developing countries to help them reduce the imprudent use of pesticides and promote other methods to protect plants and fishery resources.

A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system.

Parliament welcomed the ambitions and goals of the farm to fork strategy as an important step in ensuring a sustainable, fair, healthy animal friendly, more regional, diversified and resilient food system, which is central to achieving the goals set out in the European Green Deal and in the SDGs. It encouraged the Commission to translate the strategy into concrete legislative and non-legislative action as soon as possible, accompanied by the proper financial support mechanisms for the transition.

Need for action

Members welcomed the announcement of an evidence-based proposal for a legislative framework for sustainable food systems based on transparent data and taking into account the latest scientific knowledge. They invited the Commission to use this proposal to develop a comprehensive, balanced, integrated, environmentally, socially and economically sustainable common food policy. This proposal should take full account of farm animal welfare as a fundamental aspect of food sustainability.

Parliament also supported the development of strategic food policy plans, stressing the need for a new cross-cutting approach to governance is needed to ensure coherence between EU food and farming policies and those that influence them such as trade, energy, competition, and climate policies. It also welcomed the Commission's proposal to develop an emergency plan to guarantee food supply and security to coordinate a common European response to crises affecting food systems.

Building a food supply chain that works for citizens, workers, producers, distributors and the environment

Parliament called for measures to promote sustainable agriculture, reduce the use of pesticides, protect and restore soil ecosystems, to help the recovery of species and habitats protected by nature directives, including pollinators and their habitats.

According to Members, the regulatory framework for the authorisation of pesticides should encourage innovation and research for the development of better and safer plant protection products and alternatives to them. Members insisted that each Member State should establish robust, effective and time-bound quantitative reduction targets in their reviews of the CAP strategic plans and other relevant policy instruments, with the ambition of reducing to zero the agricultural emissions to soil, groundwater, surface water and air.

Antimicrobial resistance is a transnational and cross-border health threat that requires coordinated EU action. Members stressed the need to further reduce the use of antibiotics, including in food production. It welcomed the Commission's plan to reduce overall sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 50% by 2030.

Healthier food

Parliament called on the Commission to ensure that a mandatory and harmonised EU front-of-pack nutritional label is developed based on robust, independent scientific evidence and demonstrated consumer understanding, with open access for all market operators including small and medium-sized operators, taking into account the additional burden to food operators and unions. In order to facilitate comparison across products, it should include an interpretive element to provide transparent, comparable and harmonised product information and be based on uniform reference amounts.

According to the report, Member States should be given more flexibility to differentiate the VAT rates on food with different health and environmental impacts and enable them to choose a zero VAT rate for healthy and sustainable food products such as fruits and vegetables and a higher VAT rate on unhealthy food and food that has a high environmental footprint.

Parliament also called for an improved EU policy to promote agricultural products and foodstuffs by focusing on European quality labels, such as the EU organic label and geographical indications, on short, local and regional supply chains, on healthy nutrition and lifestyles, and on promoting greater consumption of fruit and vegetables as part of a varied and balanced diet, and lower intake of sugar, salt and fats with the aim of reducing obesity rates.

Making the transition possible

The resolution stressed the importance of EU funding for research and innovation, especially for SMEs and smallholders, as key drivers in accelerating the transition to a more sustainable, productive and inclusive European food system. It pointed out that the introduction of new smart-farming technologies and techniques, including digitalisation and protected cropping systems, can be beneficial for improving efficiency.

In addition, Members highlighted the key role that young farmers will have in accomplishing the transition to sustainable farming and in delivering on the aims of the strategy.

Promoting the global transition

Members called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- ensure that all food and feed products imported into the EU fully comply with relevant EU legislation and the Unions high standards;
- maintain a holistic approach as the implementation of certain farm to fork strategy targets in the EU must not lead to the relocation of parts of agricultural production to other regions with lower standards than the EU.