



Common Food Policy for Europe unveiled — a blueprint for reform shaped by 400 food system actors

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A Common Food Policy for Europe is urgently required to address climate change, halt biodiversity loss, curb obesity, and make farming viable for the next generation.

This was the key message of a report launched today by the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food), following a three-year process of participatory research.

Launching the report today at the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee, Olivier De Schutter, IPES-Food co-chair and lead author, said: "A Common Food Policy can spark a wholesale transition to sustainable food systems in a way that the CAP, as a Common *Agricultural* Policy, cannot."

"The most ambitious reforms — the reforms we most urgently need — will only become viable on the basis of reclaiming decision-making processes from powerful lobbies, bringing new actors around the table, shaping policies in more democratic ways, and allowing new priorities and new coalitions of interest to emerge."

The report maps out a single, time-bound vision for reforming European food systems under a Common Food Policy: a policy framework setting a direction of travel for the whole food system, realigning the various sectoral policies that affect food production, processing, distribution, and consumption, and refocusing all actions on the transition to sustainability.

"We eat three times per day, but the EU does not have an overarching strategy to deliver the food systems that we want in Europe," De Schutter said.

"As a result, we have anti-obesity strategies, alongside agri-trade policies that make junk food cheap and abundant. We offer premiums to young farmers, alongside a subsidy model that drives up land prices and undermines access to land. And we have strict environmental standards, while the advisory services farmers would need to meet them are being defunded."

"A Common Food Policy can put an end to these costly contradictions by tackling the root of the problem: the way we make policies and set priorities in food systems."

The report puts forward 80 concrete reform proposals, carefully sequenced over the short-, medium- and long-term. "The Common Food Policy is an ambitious reform agenda. But it is realistic because the proposals are designed to reinforce one another."

“Farmers cannot simply be expected to shift to a new production model. We must take steps in parallel to guarantee access to land, to rebuild regional processing facilities, to facilitate access to markets, and to spark changes in consumption habits.”

The proposals include the following:

- Create a **European Commission Vice-President for Sustainable Food Systems** and a **Food Intergroup in the European Parliament** to oversee & harmonize sectoral policies (CAP, trade, environment, etc.).
- Require Member States to develop **Healthy Diet Plans** (covering public procurement, urban planning, fiscal and social policies, marketing & nutrition education) as a condition for unlocking CAP payments, & introduce comprehensive **EU-wide restrictions on junk food marketing**.
- Introduce an **EU-wide ‘agroecology premium’** as a new rationale for distributing CAP payments, rebuild **independent farm advisory services**, & create an **EU Land Observatory** to promote a major shift to sustainable farming & land use.
- Make **food importers accountable** for ensuring their supply chains are free from deforestation, land-grabs and rights violations (‘due diligence’), **remove investor protections (‘ISDS’)** in trade agreements, and provide **accessible complaints mechanisms** for farmers and civil society.
- Increase support for **initiatives linking farmers and consumers** (‘short supply chains’), **relocalized processing and value-adding activities**, **local food policy councils**, and **urban food policies**.
- Create an **EU Food Policy Council** to bring the concerns of local food system actors to the EU level and ensure that EU policies are systematically designed to support the emergence of local food initiatives.

De Schutter added: “The governance shift to an integrated food policy is not an optional add-on: it is the key to unlocking change.”

The Common Food Policy vision draws on the collective intelligence of more than 400 farmers, food entrepreneurs, civil society activists, scientists and policymakers consulted through 5 policy labs in Brussels, 4 local labs around Europe, and the May 2018 EU Food and Farming Forum (EU3F). The blueprint also includes proposals already endorsed by the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, and broad civil society coalitions.

The report captures a growing consensus: more and more voices are calling for integrated food policies, including the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, a growing number of MEPs, the European Commission’s in-house scientific bodies (EEA, JRC, SAM, SCAR Committee), some national governments (Netherlands, Sweden), the OECD, and a range of civil society groups.



“Ultimately, this report is a call to action,” De Schutter said, calling on the European institutions to take on the challenge of working with all food system actors to complete, adopt, and implement a food policy for Europe.

“Whether we look at CAP reform, pesticide approvals or trade negotiations, the gap between what citizens want food systems to deliver, and what current policies are able to achieve, is bigger than ever.”

“The Common Food Policy offers a Plan B for Europe: it is about reclaiming public policy for the public good, and rebuilding trust in the European project.”

Read the [full report and executive summary](#)