



## **TRANSFORMING SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICIES INTO REALITY, FROM THE LOCAL TO THE EUROPEAN LEVEL: THE EXAMPLE OF TORINO**

### **EVENT SUMMARY**

On 13 July, the first Local Lab organized by the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) was held in Turin. The event was coordinated in conjunction with the International University College of Turin (IUC Torino) with the support of the City of Turin and Warwick Research Development Fund. It took place at the Circolo dei Lettori of Turin, Sambuy Gardens, and at the IUC Torino. The meeting's two objectives were: 1) to involve the actors and institutions of local food chains in order to strengthen the process in building the City of Turin's Food Policy, and 2) to collect information, opinions and suggestions regarding a possible proposal for a European Common Food Policy.

The day began with a welcome message by **Tomaso Ferrando** (Warwick Law School) who opened the floor for **Olivier De Schutter**, IPES-Food Co-chair and former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. The three main principles of IPES-Food and the ambitions of the meeting were defined as aiming to include: a) multidisciplinary; b) attention to power dynamics and how it is distributed along the food chain; c) involvement of both EU-level experts (through Policy Labs) and local actors, in order to generate a bottom-up process of knowledge production and a better understanding of local dynamics in the European food system. By combining these three elements, it is possible to consider how to develop integrated policies that address some of the more significant challenges of food policy development, including: a) identifying the appropriate scale of intervention (e.g. neighborhood, city, region, Member State, EU); b) determining a balance between the desire to create an autonomous food system and the inter-dependence between urban and rural; c) mapping and resolving possible conflicts between bottom-up processes and the will of public administration to institutionalize and integrate them into more structured and regulated processes.

### **Open Round Table Sessions for All Participants**

Two round tables were held to discuss the main topics of the day: a) strengthening Turin's food policy and b) building a European Common Food Policy.

The first roundtable was introduced by **Maria Bottiglieri**, Coordinator of International cooperation and peace for the City of Turin. She highlighted that Turin was one of the

first European cities to recognize the importance of *“promoting the implementation of the right to adequate food, understood as the right to regular, permanent and free access to quality, sufficient, nutritious, and healthy food acceptable from a cultural and religious point of view, and which guarantees mental and physical fulfillment, both individual and collective, that is necessary to lead a decent life”* as is written in Article 2.o of the Statutes of Turin. It is part of a larger ambition of the city to devise a Sustainable Urban Food Policy and to appoint a Food Commission to coordinate its implementation. The future of Turin’s Food Policy, as underscored by Bottiglieri, depends on the commitment of local authorities and citizens to plan, coordinate and co-create future pathways.

Bottiglieri highlighted a number of relevant projects already underway in the Metropolitan area of Turin, including: l’Atlante del Cibo (The Food Atlas); the Co-City project funded by the European Commission for the development of Food Smart Cities; the plan to revise urban development planning to guarantee zero soil consumption; the public support for farmer access to neighborhood markets; the institutionalization of public canteens; the proposal for mandatory and healthy school lunches; the partnership with Terra Madre Salone del Gusto by Slow Food; and the recent launch of the Masters in Food, Law and Finance at IUC. To develop a virtuous cycle aimed at realizing a food policy for Turin, Bottiglieri concluded that it is necessary to put inclusive models of civic cooperation into action; in other words, *“we need models of cooperation that are not competitive”* and that are politically grounded in the full recognition of the Right to Food and food as a common good.

**Alessia Toldo** of the University of Turin, invited participants to consider the obstacles to overcome, the most effective tools for building sustainable food systems and related policies at the local and regional levels, and the actors and tools of governance necessary to further develop Turin’s Food Policy.

Addressing existing obstacles, **Andrea Saroldi** of GAS Torino (Solidarity Buying Group of Turin, a form of Community Supported Agriculture) emphasized the need to identify common goals, delimit the geographic space within which to operate, develop indicators to monitor policies and initiatives, and formulate municipal policies derived from the bottom-up with the municipality of Turin acting as a facilitator of local initiatives. In addition, Saroldi pointed to information and power asymmetries within local food systems. Different voices hold different weight – these imbalances are made most evident when dialoguing with institutions. In his opinion, the introduction of roundtable discussions between local stakeholders and the public administration would enhance the voice of those less visible, and could overcome some governance hurdles.

Similarly, **Gino Anchisi** of the Associazione degli Asparagi di Santena (Association of Asparagus in Santena) reminded participants of the importance in defining which foods are being discussed: food produced in the Metropolitan area of Turin or food imported from long distances. Anchisi focused on three crucial issues: a) the need to strengthen alliances between rural and urban producers, and for newer urban producers to learn from the experiences of those who have been producing in outer-urban areas; b) the fact that food markets are changing and that direct relationships between consumers and

producers are growing; and c) the issue of land access and that many young people who wish to start agricultural enterprises cannot find land, not only due to lack of access to credit, but also because many landowners are reluctant to lease out land for the longer periods required (at least 10 years) to invest in growing fruits and vegetables (as opposed to wheat and corn).

Regarding financial obstacles, **Isabella De Vecchi** of Panacea and Filiera delle Farine di Stupinigi, raised the issue of international competition and its direct cost on local producers and those who wish to practice quality agriculture. To allow for local food system transformation, she suggested a fair price could be guaranteed through public procurement, or by identifying the anti-competitive practices of dominant actors that lower prices and reduce fair labour and environmental practices.

**Edoardo Daneo** of Coordinamento Comuni per la Pace (Municipal Coordination for Peace), reminded participants of the difficult economic situation currently experienced by many Italian municipalities, including Turin. To improve the local economy, municipalities in financial constraint often feel compelled to accept that large new businesses settle in the area (e.g. big supermarket chain) rather than directing investments towards smaller local initiatives. Daneo also stressed the need to adjust the minimum prices of commodities to promote competition and support small-scale farmers. Current market access and prices encourage producers to sell commodities to international markets or multinationals rather than to local businesses.

Another barrier to the implementation of a Torino Food Policy is the need to meet normative legislation on food safety set at the European level. Daneo highlighted that the European Commission only addresses the right to healthy and adequate food through a narrow understanding of consumer health. This has been made clear by the approval of HACCP protocols meant to prevent food contamination. Daneo noted that regulation of this kind can lead to food that is considered 'safe' from a sanitary point of view, but nutritionally poor from a health standpoint. It is also due to inflexible food safety regulations, that public food waste (e.g. from school meals) cannot be donated to low income groups – with the exception of informal channels such as local, non-institutional organizations – nor can it be re-purposed locally as animal feed. The disconnect between European food safety and hygiene regulations and local realities must be considered; this requires cooperation between the city and civil society to find local solutions. A review of public procurement and the establishment of roundtable discussions involving all local stakeholders were suggested to support local practices and greater local biodiversity.

**Massimiliano Borgia**, Director of the Festival of Food Journalism, took the floor by saying that one of the problems associated with planning a city food policy could be citizens' lack of awareness of food issues. Alongside the development of a municipal food policy, Borgia suggested organizing public information campaigns for all actors in the food chain, including consumers. In his opinion, it is only by improving information access and awareness that it will be possible to develop an urban food culture coherent with outer-urban/rural production – where food is viewed not as a commodity but as an integral part of everyday life. The Festival Director also recalled that food is closely linked to the often-

neglected issue of water. In Daneo's opinions, there are two concerns linking food and water in Turin that should be prioritized by a local food policy council: 1) the proliferation of algae found in the Po riverbeds, due to industrially-grown corn crops in Saluzzo and Carmagnola, which release pollutant chemicals into the local aquifer; 2) agri-food industry water usage, which significantly reduces water availability. The council should attempt to identify these and other priorities, and above all, define what can and cannot be done at the local scale.

**Paolo Hutter** highlighted the issue of food waste and related initiatives emerging throughout Turin, including a project hiring immigrants to manage surplus from markets and redistribution. These initiatives demonstrate food's social role and highlight the possibility for food policies to better support social enterprises and for food to serve as a means to strengthen social integration. However, **Andrea Benzo** of Food Not Bombs Augusta Taurinorum, recalled that the current Gadda law on food waste and surplus only allows recognized organizations to redistribute surplus, automatically sanctioning non-institutionalized groups who use the same practices.

**Luca Remmert** of La Bellotta Farm stressed the importance of food education for youth and children, and offered anecdotes that demonstrate the increasing separation between urban and rural culture. He also pointed to the number of medium/large producers who have chosen to abandon horticulture in favor of corn production for biogas. In his opinion, this choice, dictated by financial survival, demonstrates the importance of re-thinking incentives and market opportunities for agricultural producers in order to avoid larger farms choosing to produce crops for energy rather than food. A significant obstacle, as Remmert concluded, is represented in access to credit; farming enterprises – especially small-scale producers – must be able to more easily access the resources necessary to support their activity and reach financial security.

**Damiano Disime**, representing the international campaign People 4 Soil, reiterated the themes of access to land, the preservation of soil quality, and the viability of peasant livelihoods as central principles in the construction of a new food system. He highlighted that without guaranteeing soil fertility or resilient practices, it will be impossible to carry out the agroecological revolution necessary to nourish a growing world population, nor will it be possible to establish a production model that respects the ecological limits of the planet. Disime suggested restoring jobs in the countryside, lowering costs of land access by small producers, redefining distribution of European subsidies, reducing bureaucracy and fiscal policies, working on training and education of new farmers, installing shops with farmer products in abandoned locations in the city as possible proposals. He also noted that it is necessary to consider legislations on peasant farming in developing a food policy, namely to protect local practices and meet local needs.

Subsequently, **Andrea Calori** of ESTA stressed the importance of representation – e.g. to incentivize small-scale producers to form alliances that reinforce their voice with regards to public authorities and large production and distribution points. Calori also raised the issue of conducting public research for the public good, namely in relation to issues relating to the food supply chain.

**Daniele Albanese** of Caritas Italiana and **Abderramane Amajou** of Slow Food Italia focused on the role of migrant workers and the importance for food policies to consider issues of integration and working conditions, in addition to food security concerns. In this regard, it was underlined that Caritas Italiana and IUC Turino are about to conclude an agreement to involve students from the IUC Law Clinic in the legal support of migrants who inhabit the Caritas Presidium of Saluzzo (either during their stay or before they move into the presidium).

**Mario Gala**, shepherd and farmer of Green Fennel Farm in Langhe and Roero, summarized some of the major concerns and obstacles experienced by farmers (young and old) when faced with the constraints of today's highly industrialized food systems – e.g. accessing land, passing on traditional knowledge, being economically viable enough to remain in the countryside. With an aging farmer population and the reduction in the number of farmers per hectare, Gala raised that in ten years, Italy could lose most its farmers, their knowledge of agro-ecological practices and traditions, creating further imbalance between cities and rural areas.

Finally, **Florence Egal** from the FAO FSN Forum stressed the need to develop a greater awareness of challenges and opportunities existing at the local level, to create synergies with EU-level food and agricultural policies.

### Working Groups

#### **Urban Commons; Report on Public Community-Authority; Scale of Intervention**

From the themes that emerged from the morning's discussions, three afternoon workshops were created to address: a) the relationship between food and the Commons in the city of Turin, b) the relationship between bottom-up and state-led initiatives, c) the scale of intervention needed to develop appropriate sustainable food policies.

#### **a) Urban commons and food policies (Moderator: Tomaso Ferrando)**

This workshop theme was chosen on the basis of the City of Turin's decision to adopt a Pact of Public Commons – a municipal regulation identifying instruments for greater collaboration between citizens and public administration. **Maria Bottiglieri**, of the city of Turin, presented the idea of the Pact as a tool for participatory urban transformation, characterized by parity and co-action between citizens and the municipality. **Emmanuel Saporito** of Labsus subsequently referred to specific experiences of food-related collaboration agreements, including those of Bologna (Open Fields) and Cortona (suspended spending, etc.), where food was used as an entry point to discuss collective utility, social cohesion, and citizen responsibility to manage and improve public spaces.

Many challenges were raised regarding how these Pacts defines the notion of 'commons'. It was highlighted that conviviality and sharing cannot be recognized without a degree of reciprocity between public authorities (in the form of concessions) and civil society (in the

form of responsibility/ownership). For example, an alternative food network cannot be recognized as a common good unless the city plays a fundamental role in supporting it. It was also deemed problematic that pacts often refer to their initiatives as 'new' practices or innovations, when common practices and common goods have been an integral part of society for centuries. It was also stressed that systems of participation and decision-making must be carefully considered when developing the Pact. In response, it was agreed that developing a pact requires, at minimum, that the public administration account for citizen concerns and interests.

The final part of the debate focused on the role of the farmer as a producer of collective utility, and as a representative of the general interest in preserving the environment, reproducing traditional practices and guaranteeing the Right to food of the urban population. Despite this role, **Mario Gala** noted that farmers are still often considered as burdens to society, and are in no way recognized for their social and collective value. In his opinion, the peasantry represents a common good. It is for this reason that public authorities should acknowledge farmers' value to society, and work to simplify administration in favour of small-scale farmers, strengthen economic support for farmers, and facilitate the repopulation of rural areas.

#### **b) Bottom-up and public authorities (Moderator: Roberto Sensi)**

The second working group's objectives were to 1) define the various levels of governance required to support food system reform (political, geographical and administrative), and 2) identify the opportunities and obstacles given existing complexities. The participants decided to first list and then examine possible scales of intervention. They considered the main obstacles that must be overcome to create effective and democratic reforms.

Participants first discussed legality and its relation to legitimacy. The example of food waste recovery was used to explain that while some initiatives may be ethically legitimate, they are not necessarily legally legitimate, as they are often implemented outside existing regulatory frameworks. A solution would be to improve coordination between regulations and bottom-up experiences, whether at the municipal or at the national level. Regulations between different sectors should also be harmonized to avoid contradictions.

Other regulatory incoherences raised included public support for micro-enterprises, and the conflicting incentives between support for small-scale businesses on the one hand, and obstacles raised by other administrative levels and policy areas on the other. **Eugenio Sapora** of the Alveare Che Dice Si referred to the issue of public land concessions for commercial activities and the lack of investment, tax incentives and recognition of social entrepreneurship.

**Silvia Pigozzi** of the Fondazione Cariplo subsequently suggested the importance of institutional dialogue and participation, and proposed that a local Food Policy Council could create spaces for ongoing dialogue between local administrations and food system actors. In responses, a few participants noted the difficulty in securing holistic

representation. Rotating systems of participation was suggested as a possible solution to include as many relevant stakeholders as possible.

A further emerging theme included education, or rather, empowerment. Using the example of the 'liberi di scegliere' or 'free to choose' project, which aims to improve the choice and availability of students' food from vending machines, it was pointed out that it is necessary to involve different levels of governance when developing food policies.

For **Emile Frison** of IPES-food, a crucial element in the process towards a sustainable food policy is the consolidation of relevant policy areas, or more specifically, the recognition of political responsibility at all levels of implementation, including the national one. The case of Belo Horizonte was brought forward as a testament of local success. Its local success was in part due to supportive national policies such as "Fame Zero". However, in the case of Italy, the regional law of Lombardy on the right to food, to which **Roberto Sensi** of Action Aid and IUC Torino has contributed, was mentioned as an example of an intervention at a high political level that lacked both enactment from below and recognition from above. As a result, the policy remains idle, although it has the potential to support new opportunities.

In conclusion, the group agreed on the importance of building a multi-stakeholder network of advocacy and mobilization at different levels. Only by identifying a set of clear goals, building a horizontal and vertical network, combining advocacy and dialogue, and by sharing positive examples and learning from errors, is it possible to go beyond the fragmentation and inconsistency of our current framework. Local, provincial, regional, national and European levels are intrinsically linked. Policies and initiatives must therefore be holistic and representative, meeting the needs and requirements of the base while supported by all levels of policy-making.

### **c) Scale and geography of intervention (Moderator: Alessia Toldo)**

Identifying the appropriate scale of action, and defining the appropriate relationships between different levels of government (city food strategies, metropolitan areas, regions, states), represents a primary obstacle in the construction of food policies. Participants agreed that it is difficult to identify an optimal scale or territory at which to enact a food policy. Each territory is characterized by fixed and unique conditions (in terms of resources, network of actors, relationship with the context and external environments) difficult to reproduce elsewhere. Creating food policies at a higher scale of policy-making increases the risk of over-generalization and over-simplification of regulations to the detriment of local specificities. This signifies that in order to be truly territorial, a food policy should be constructed from characteristics, interests, problems, needs and opportunities specific to a given context.

Participants recommended choosing a clearly defined territory in which to enact a food policy, based on the interests of a local network of actors and production practices (**Nora McKeon**). However, localized policies often come into conflict with higher scales of action

and competencies, thus creating regulatory obstacles (for example, canteens are managed municipally but the region oversees public health and agriculture, etc).

In this regard, participants welcomed EU institutions to play a leading role in providing general principles and guidelines to support territorial-based activities and suggest the appropriate allocation of funds (**Andrea Saroldi** cited the metropolitan PON, and the funds of the province of Cuneo). Emphasis was also placed on the central role of policies and the need to build and activate specific competencies that are not yet sufficiently valued (**Andrea Calori**). **Daniele Messina** concluded by highlighting the importance of pursuing alliances between rural and urban to reinforce a complimentary vision of territories and to re-establish a connection between production and consumption.

### **Public Event** **Making Sustainable Food Policies a Reality**

European citizens may choose the food they put into their shopping baskets, but they have not chosen the food systems that serve up that food. There is currently no EU 'food policy'. Instead, the food we eat is shaped by disconnected policies in different areas (agriculture, food safety, trade, environment) and at different levels (EU, national, local). Local initiatives to build sustainable food systems are emerging in cities around Europe, but how can they be taken further? And how can they be better supported at the national and EU level? In other words, how can we build *sustainable food policies* at all levels?

On 13 July, **Olivier De Schutter** (former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, co-chair IPES-Food) and **Cinzia Scaffidi** (Vice President of Slow Food Italy), **Luca Ferrero** (ASCI Piedmont), **Isabella De Vecchio** (Panacea) and **Tomaso Ferrando** (Warwick University School of Law) came together to address these questions at the Circolo dei Lettori in Turin.

**Olivier De Schutter** explained IPES-Food's mission as one that looks at food in a multidisciplinary, systemic and comprehensive way. Dialogue between different policy areas and regions of the world helps to strengthen the diversity of experiences and knowledge surrounding food. This is the direction to follow in building sustainable food systems at the European level, namely by moving beyond the current European Common Agriculture Policy to a European Common Food Policy (understood as a set of integrated food and agricultural policies). The Common Food Policy project, launched by IPES-Food 18 months ago, continues to build on collective mobilization.

The Vice President of Slow Food Italy, **Cinzia Scaffidi**, identified the starting point for building a local, national and European food policy as finding agreement on what food represents and what functions it covers. Food represents public health, ecology, landscape, economics and law: "*We need to think about how many affiliations we have to food, the space it occupies in our daily lives and how we construct our societies around it. Because, bearing in mind the increasing cases of food poverty, it is true that whatever we do, at the end of the day, we eat*". To define food's multiple purposes and value, we need



awareness and information. Only in this way can food become central to all policies, from environment to trade, and receive due attention from local to national authorities.

*"To what extent can we talk about local food policies without considering global ones?"* began **Luca Ferrero**, President of ASCI Piemonte (Association of Italian Countryside Solidarity). Peasant farming is a branch of Ferrero's association that opted to break away from the standardization of food imposed by agro-industry. However, small-scale and peasant production alone cannot ensure food system sustainability. According to Ferrero, it is also crucial to build consumer awareness, and enable them to take responsibility of their actions within the food chain. This would result in greater recognition of the impact of ones every day decisions and practices surrounding food.

Closing the event, **Isabella de Vecchi** of Panacea discussed food practices. Panacea is the first bakery of Turin to produce and give value to naturally leavened bread with flour coming from just beyond the city's limits, from the Filiera della Farina di Stupinigi. Despite obstacles faced by the business – including having to set prices according to competitors' market prices – Panacea represents a genuine sustainable alternative to bread, characterized by the return to ancient tradition, co-operation, sharing of knowledge, and social integration and participation. de Vecchi's intervention demonstrated a positive example linking the city to the countryside, and of a product made sustainably at all points of the value chain.

*Notes prepared by Lidia Mahillon, Valentina De Gregorio, Tomaso Ferrando, Alessia Toldo, Roberto Sensi and Carol Choi – IUC Torino researchers and students.*