

Joint letter to call for this Commission to leave a legacy of the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy through sustainable public food procurement

Brussels, 16 January 2024

Dear President von der Leyen,

Cc: Commissioner Kyriakides, Commissioner Wojciechowski, Commissioner Sinkevičius, Commissioner Breton, Mrs. Sandra Gallina, Mrs. Kerstin Jorna, Mrs. Florika Fink-Hooijer, Mr. Wolfgang Bartscher, Mrs. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, Mr Bjorn Seibert, Mr Peter van Kemseke.

We, the undersigned organisations, are writing to urge you to **leave a legacy on sustainable food systems and the EU Farm to Fork strategy and consider sustainable food procurement (SFP), identified as the [preferred policy instrument](#) in this regard, as a low-hanging fruit.**

More concretely, we ask you to **clearly define the areas for the future development of minimum mandatory SFP criteria**, and in particular, to **include the four strategic minimum standards** outlined below, to be further developed and adapted at the national level.

Countless studies and good practices across Europe show the enormous potential of SFPF as an effective mechanism to promote healthy diets, fight malnutrition, combat food insecurity, foster the demand for fair and organic products, support small-scale farmers and tackle climate change, while maintaining stable costs. See [Sustainable public food procurement a goal within reach](#).

While the [EU criteria for green public procurement of food](#) are available and, to a limited extent, in use, their scope does not exploit the full win-win potential of sustainable food procurement for consumers, producers, the environment, kitchen/food preparation staff and society at large. Health, climate considerations and support for small-scale farmers are lacking entirely from these recommendations.

On the other hand, the areas for minimum mandatory standards identified by DG SANTE and developed (via targets, criteria, verification, etc.) by the legally-screened [EU Food Policy Coalition Manifesto](#), namely: healthy diets, organic and agro-ecological products, small-scale farmers support, climate action, social economy and labour rights, fair trade and animal welfare standards, hold vast potential. For instance,

(1) **The achievable target of 20% organic products** has shown significant health and environmental benefits in countries with minimum sustainable procurement standards, such as Italy and France. For instance, thanks to these minimum mandatory criteria, in schools and kindergartens in Rome, seven tonnes of bread, 9.8 tonnes of pasta and 21 tonnes of fruit are served on a daily basis from organic agriculture.

(2) **A minimum of 10% of food products coming from small-scale producers** represents an effective measure to tackle the dire issue of farmers' loss in Europe. 40% of small farmers have disappeared during the last 20 years in Europe.

(3) **A culturally-appropriate, planet-friendly food procurement and education based on less animal protein** on the public plate has shown the most significant GHG reductions (e.g. Milan, Ghent, Copenhagen, Malmö).

(4) Finally, for public health prevention (child obesity) and social equity and food security, we strongly recommend implementing an **EU minimum standard on healthy school meals combined with food education** as requested by the [San Sebastián Declaration of the Spanish EU Presidency](#), which clearly outlines the EU's legal basis (inter alia, the EU Child Guarantee (Council resolution) and the EU School Scheme), and the political support across all parties, for such a minimum EU standard.

The Farm to Fork Strategy, and sustainable food procurement in particular, offer a unique opportunity to address the shortcomings of our food system that this Commission cannot afford to miss. Small Plate, Big Impact!

We remain at your disposal to provide any further information or support necessary on any of the above.

Signed by:

- Peter Defranceschi, Head of City Food Program ICLEI European Secretariat (Europe)
- Eduardo Cuoco, Director of IFOAM Organic Europe (Europe)
- Milka Sokolovic, Director General of EPHA European Public Health Alliance (Europe)
- Franco Falocco, Director of Fondazione Ecosistemi (Italy)
- Felix Segarra Beltran, President of Mensa Cívica (Spain)
- Eva Blaho, Director of Skutocne Zdrava Skola (Slovakia)
- Tom Vaclavik, Director of Skutecne Zdrava Skola (Czech Republic)
- Maurizio Mariani, Director of Eating Cities (France)
- Philipp Stierand, Founder and Managing Director of Speiseräume (Germany)
- Madeleine Coste, Advocacy Director Slow Food (Europe)
- Olga Kikou, Head of Brussels Compassion in World Farming EU (Europe)
- Camilla Björkbom, Political Advisor Food Policy for Eurogroup for Animals (Europe)
- Anaïs Berthier, Head of Brussels ClientEarth (Europe)
- Ariel Brunner, Regional Director of BirdLife Europe and Central Asia (Europe)
- Claudia Paltrinieri, Director of FoodInsider (Italy)
- Paola Plaku, Policy Officer Fair Trade Advocacy Office (Europe)
- Patrick ten Brink, Secretary General of European Environmental Bureau (Europe)

Signatories' logos:



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