



WWF

ACTION PLAN



2014



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The European Union has woken up to the urgency of gearing its policies to deliver on a more sustainable food system. The 7th European Parliament took a strong stance to achieve this vision, not least through the EU Food Sense initiative which I chaired. WWF played a constructive role in supporting our work, in particular through their work on the LiveWell for LIFE project. I hope the European Parliament and WWF will continue their cooperation on this crucial challenge.

Edward McMillan-Scott –
Former ALDE MEP and founder of the
EP Sustainable Food Steering Group



80%

of Europeans indicate they are willing to eat less meat and meat of certified origin for environmental reasons¹

ENCOURAGE MORE SUSTAINABLE AND HEALTHY CONSUMPTION

If everyone in the world were to live as the average European, we would need more than 2,6 planets to sustain our lifestyle. Food represents 20-30% of the EU's environmental footprint, yet 1/3 of food is wasted from farm to fork. At the same time, Europe has consistently high levels of obesity and people who are overweight. The LiveWell for LIFE project, led by WWF and Friends of Europe, shows that encouraging healthy and sustainable diets would be the most effective means to improve public health as well as reduce GHG emissions from the food chain. Such diets would resemble current eating patterns and would not cost more.

The Europe 2020 Strategy 'Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe' set out to reduce the EU's food chain's resource use by 20% by 2020. The 7th Environmental Action Programme detailed the key conditions to achieve this milestone, stressing the importance of sustainable consumption. In 2014, the European Commission consulted stakeholders on how best to support the transition to a more sustainable European food system. Despite a large convergence among stakeholders on an EU sustainable food strategy, the Commission still has to act on these recommendations.

HOW CAN MEPs IMPROVE THIS POLICY?

- Ensure any future EU food strategy strikes the right balance between production, waste and consumption measures. It should aim at improving governance and policy coherence between the different EU domestic and international policy objectives: i.e. achieving food and nutrition security for all; reducing environmental degradation and the EU's dependence on foreign resources; ensuring fair competitiveness in the food sector; making European agriculture more resilient and maintaining food safety.
- Support and strengthen specific legislative proposals by the Commission to encourage more sustainable food consumption, such as the recent Food Waste Target and the upcoming proposal on the revision of Green Public Procurement Guidelines for Food.

YOUR ACTION PLAN

- 1 Generate cross-party awareness and support for a sustainable European food system, for example through the European Parliament Steering Group on Sustainable Food and EU Food Sense initiative, or through an intergroup such as the Land Use and Food Policy Intergroup (LUFPIG).
- 2 Urge the Commission via parliamentary questions and reports to come forward with relevant legislative proposals to reduce food waste and encourage healthy and sustainable food consumption patterns.
- 3 Call on Member States to present their national strategies for sustainable food systems to the European Parliament, and encourage governments without such a strategy to develop it.
- 4 Communicate the benefits of a sustainable food system to stakeholders, and engage with constituencies on how governments, the private sector, NGOs and citizens can achieve it by taking joint responsibility.

WE MUST ACT NOW!

The existing EU food policy framework is incoherent, and the absence of an integrated strategy is a policy gap the EU cannot afford in light of reduced government budgets and increasing economic costs of public health and environmental degradation.

• **Social impact:**

- Globally, 0.9 billion of the world's population are structurally undernourished. Yet 1.4 billion people are overweight - of which 0.5 billion are obese².
- Per year 2.8 million deaths in the EU result from causes associated with overweight and obesity, leading to significant medical costs³.

• **Environmental impact:**

- Europe is the continent most dependent on imported land and deforestation. Nearly 60% of land for European agricultural and forest products is used outside Europe⁴.
- If European retailers and citizens reduced food waste by 40% by 2020, it would save an area of agricultural land the size of Belgium. If a healthy diet were adopted simultaneously, it would save an area of land *three* times the size of Belgium⁵.

• **Economic impact:**

- If European retailers and citizens reduce food waste by 40% by 2020, it will result in annual savings of € 123 per person. The total savings for the EU will amount to € 75.5 billion⁶.
- The LiveWell Plate outlines a healthy and sustainable diet. By following its recommendations, Europeans would meet their national healthy diet guidelines, reduce the carbon footprint of their diet by 25%, and actually save some money.

TIMELINE

Expected:

Commission to present a coherent strategy to meet the 7th EAP objective that by 2020 structural changes in consumption patterns and lifestyles have reduced the overall environmental impact of food production and consumption

2015-2019:

Parliament to follow-up on initiatives aimed at building a more sustainable food system in Europe, such as the upcoming review of the Green Public Procurement Guidelines on Food



2.8 mn

deaths per year in the EU associated with overweight and obesity

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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