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*Plenary sitting*

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**A9-9999/2021**

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# REPORT

on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system  
(2020/2260(INI))

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety  
Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

Rapporteur: Anja Hazekamp, Herbert Dorfmann

(Joint committee meetings – Rule 58 of the Rules of Procedure)

Rapporteur for the opinion (\*):  
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(\* ) Associated committee – Rule 57 of the Rules of Procedure

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system (2020/2260(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and in particular Articles 11, 13, 39, 168(1), 169(1), 191, 192(1) and 349 thereof,
- having regard to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of 2004,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/6 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on veterinary medicinal products<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market<sup>3</sup>, Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides<sup>4</sup> and Regulation (EU) No 1185/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 concerning statistics on pesticides<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2001/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 March 2001 on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy<sup>7</sup>; Directive 2006/118/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration<sup>8</sup> and Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources<sup>9</sup>,
- having regard to Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 231, 6.9.2019, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 4, 7.1.2019, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 71.

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 324, 10.12.2009, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> OJ L 106, 17.4.2001, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> OJ L 372, 27.12.2006, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1.

of animals kept for farming purposes<sup>10</sup>; Council Directive 1999/74/EC of 19 July 1999 laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens<sup>11</sup>; Council Directive 2007/43/EC of 28 June 2007 laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production<sup>12</sup>; Council Directive 2008/120/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs<sup>13</sup>; Council Directive 2008/119/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of calves<sup>14</sup>; Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations<sup>15</sup>; Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing<sup>16</sup>; Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health ('Animal Health Law')<sup>17</sup> and Directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes<sup>18</sup>,

- **having regard to its resolution of 19 June 2020 on European protection of cross-border and seasonal workers in the context of the COVID-19 crisis<sup>19</sup>,**
- having regard to its resolution of 18 December 2019 on the EU Pollinators Initiative<sup>20</sup> and its resolution of 23 October 2019 on the draft Commission regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 546/2011 as regards the assessment of the impact of plant protection products on honeybees<sup>21</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency<sup>22</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2019 on a Europe that protects: Clean air for all<sup>23</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2018 on a European One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)<sup>24</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2018 on the implementation of the 7th Environment Action Programme<sup>25</sup>,

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<sup>10</sup> OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup> OJ L 203, 3.8.1999, p. 53.

<sup>12</sup> OJ L 182, 12.7.2007, p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> OJ L 47, 18.2.2009, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> OJ L 10, 15.1.2009, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> OJ L 303, 18.11.2009, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> OJ L 276, 20.10.2010, p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> OJ C 362, 8.9.2021, p. 82.

<sup>20</sup> OJ C 255, 29.6.2021, p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> OJ C 202, 28.5.2021, p. 49.

<sup>22</sup> OJ C 232, 16.6.2021, p. 28.

<sup>23</sup> OJ C 23, 21.1.2021, p. 23.

<sup>24</sup> OJ C 433, 23.12.2019, p. 153.

<sup>25</sup> OJ C 390, 18.11.2019, p. 10.

- having regard to its resolution of 16 May 2017 on initiative on resource efficiency: reducing food waste, improving food safety<sup>26</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 April 2017 on women and their roles in rural areas<sup>27</sup> and its resolution of 16 January 2018 on women, gender equality and climate justice<sup>28</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 June 2016 on technological solutions for sustainable agriculture in the EU<sup>29</sup>,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 8 September 2015 on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the cloning of animals of the bovine, porcine, ovine, caprine and equine species kept and reproduced for farming purposes<sup>30</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 February 2015 on country of origin labelling for meat in processed food<sup>31</sup> and its resolution of 12 May 2016 on mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for certain foods<sup>32</sup>,
- having regard to European Court of Auditors (ECA) Special Reports 15/2020 of 9 July 2020 entitled ‘Protection of wild pollinators in the EU – Commission initiatives have not borne fruit’, 13/2020 of 5 June 2020 entitled ‘Biodiversity in farmland: CAP contribution has not halted the decline’, 05/2020 of 5 February 2020 entitled ‘Sustainable use of plant protection products: limited progress in measuring and reducing risks’, 02/2019 of 15 January 2019 entitled ‘Chemical hazards in our food: EU food safety policy protects us but faces challenges’, 31/2018 of 14 November 2018 entitled ‘Animal welfare in the EU: closing the gap between ambitious goals and practical implementation’, and 34/2016 of 17 January 2017 entitled ‘Combating Food Waste: an opportunity for the EU to improve the resource-efficiency of the food supply chain and 21/2019 of 19 November 2019 on Addressing antimicrobial resistance,
- having regard to the report of the European Environment Agency of 11 May 2020 entitled ‘The European environment – state and outlook 2020: knowledge for transition to a sustainable Europe’,
- **having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights,**
- having regard to the opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on the farm to fork strategy of December 2020 entitled ‘From farm to fork – the local and regional dimension’ (NAT-VII/005),
- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Development, the Committee on

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<sup>26</sup> OJ C 307, 30.8.2018, p. 25.

<sup>27</sup> OJ C 298, 23.8.2018, p. 14.

<sup>28</sup> OJ C 458, 19.12.2018, p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> OJ C 86, 6.3.2018, p. 51.

<sup>30</sup> OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 278.

<sup>31</sup> OJ C 310, 25.8.2016, p. 15.

<sup>32</sup> OJ C 76, 28.2.2018, p. 49.

International Trade, the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumers and the Committee on Fisheries,

- having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (A9-0000/2021),
- A. whereas the Commission communication on a farm to fork strategy sets out a holistic approach to the European food system, with agriculture as a provider of food as a central element, and recognises the interconnectedness of all actors throughout the supply chain and their shared responsibility in achieving the strategy’s objectives, as well as the key role of farmers in delivering public goods, including in the fight against climate change; whereas, however, the strategy must go further in taking into account the role, rights and responsibilities of consumers and the long-term economic viability of farmers; whereas the strategy has major implications for non-food agricultural production and this must be fully taken into account;
- B. whereas Europe’s food system should deliver high quality food and nutrition security in a way that contributes to social well-being and public health, maintains and restores ecosystem health, respects the planetary boundaries and ensures animal health and welfare; whereas currently, the whole food system is responsible for a range of impacts on human and animal health and welfare and on the environment, the climate and biodiversity, including deforestation and ecosystem degradation outside the EU; whereas the way in which we produce and consume food, beverages and other agricultural products needs to adapt in order to ensure coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and EU policies and commitments, as well as in general to achieve a coherent balance between the three pillars of sustainability, including the environment, climate, biodiversity, public health, the economy and food affordability, animal welfare, and economic sustainability for farmers, fishermen and actors further in the food chain and rural and coastal areas, **as well as social aspects such as working and employment conditions and health and safety standards**; whereas other important factors such as research and innovation, trade policy and waste policy, need to be taken into consideration;
- C. whereas it is necessary to ensure consistency and coherence between the measures envisaged by the farm to fork strategy and the common agriculture and fisheries policies, EU trade policy, the EU’s biodiversity strategy for 2030, the EU forest strategy, the circular economy action plan, the bioeconomy action plan, the EU climate law, as well as other related EU policies and strategies; whereas it should be stressed that all imported foods should comply with the same sustainability and agri-food safety standards that are applicable in the EU;
- D. whereas the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) estimates that 90 % of land is projected to be significantly altered by 2050 and 75 % of land has already been significantly altered; whereas 85 % of wetlands areas have already been lost<sup>33</sup>; whereas biodiversity is crucial for food security, human

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<sup>33</sup> IPBES, 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

well-being and development worldwide; whereas biodiversity loss puts European and global agricultural production, food systems and nutrition at risk; whereas it is estimated that the global social and economic costs related to land degradation amount to EUR 5.5-10.5 trillion per year<sup>34</sup>;

- E. whereas approximately 80 % of global deforestation is caused by the expansion of land used for agriculture<sup>35</sup>; whereas the Union's demand for products such as palm oil, meat, soy, cocoa, maize, timber and rubber, including in the form of processed products or services, is a large driver of deforestation, forest and soil degradation, ecosystem destruction and associated human rights violations in non-EU countries and represents around 10 % of the global share of deforestation embodied in total final consumption<sup>36</sup>; whereas unsustainable fishing has severe negative impacts on biodiversity;
- F. whereas semi-natural habitats depending on agriculture, such as grasslands, are particularly threatened and their conservation status is significantly worse than for other habitat types that do not depend on agriculture; where 45 % of agriculture-dependent habitats are assessed as bad, in comparison with 31 % of other habitats;
- G. whereas imprudent use of pesticides is a significant source of soil, water and air pollution and negatively affects human, animal and plant health; whereas it is therefore necessary to intensify efforts to significantly reduce the dependence on, risk from and use of harmful pesticides, and the use of fertilisers and antibiotics; whereas sustainable farming practices, such as the sound implementation of IPM, agroforestry, agroecology and organic farming and precision farming techniques, can help to provide solutions to reduce pesticide use at EU level and globally, and should be encouraged; whereas scientific research<sup>37</sup> indicates that pesticide use can be reduced substantially without affecting profitability and productivity negatively, especially when accompanied by increased availability of sustainable alternatives;
- H. whereas in 2018 EU member countries approved the export of more than 81 000 tonnes of pesticides containing substances banned in Europe<sup>38</sup>; whereas these hazardous pesticides can pose even greater risks in their destination countries because conditions of use (e.g. protective gear, aerial spraying) are not always as strict as in the EU; whereas these banned pesticides can return to the EU market as residues in imported foods; whereas monitoring programmes have shown that residues of several pesticides that are banned from use in the EU were detected in food sold in the EU market, in 4.5 % of the cases even at levels above the maximum residue limit (MRL) which is set

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/environment/resources/biodiversity/Executive-Summary-and-Synthesis-Biodiversity-Finance-and-the-Economic-and-Business-Case-for-Action.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> FAO, *State of the World's Forests 2016. Forests and agriculture: land-use challenges and opportunities*, Rome, 2016. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5588e.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> European Commission, *The impact of EU consumption on deforestation: Comprehensive analysis of the impact of EU consumption on deforestation. Final report*, study funded by the European Commission and undertaken by VITO, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, HIVA-Onderzoeksinstituut voor Arbeid en Samenleving and International Union for the Conservation of Nature NL, 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Lechenet, M., Dessaint, F., Py, G. et al. *Reducing pesticide use while preserving crop productivity and profitability on arable farms*, Nature Plants 3, 17008, 2017.

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.publiceye.ch/en/topics/pesticides/banned-in-europe>



for these substances to ensure consumer safety<sup>39</sup>;

- I. whereas overweight and obesity are increasing at a rapid rate in the EU<sup>40</sup>, with one in two adults overweight or obese<sup>41</sup>; whereas the causes for overweight and obesity are multifaceted, but poor diet and nutrition are among the key factors that lead to a high prevalence of overweight and obesity;
- J. whereas it is estimated that in the EU in 2017, over 950 000 deaths (one out of five) and the loss of over 16 million lost healthy life years, mainly through cardiovascular diseases and cancers, were attributable to unhealthy diets, <sup>42</sup>; whereas exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals via food and food packaging is also an increased threat to public health<sup>43</sup>;
- K. whereas around half of the zoonotic diseases that have emerged in humans since 1940 have resulted from changes in land use<sup>44</sup>; whereas animal health is an essential element in any sustainable food system and impacts on animal health have direct effects on the sustainability of the food system;
- L. whereas it is estimated that 88 million tonnes of food waste are generated in the EU each year, with associated costs estimated at EUR 143 billion<sup>45</sup>; whereas food waste has a huge environmental impact, accounting for about 6 % of total EU greenhouse gas emissions<sup>46</sup>; whereas the top contributors to food waste in the EU are households (53 %) and processing (19 %) <sup>47</sup>; whereas 10 % of the food waste in the EU is linked to date marking and consumer misunderstandings on how to read and use the date marking system<sup>48</sup>;
- M. whereas the volume of antibiotic sales to European livestock farms fell by 18.5 % between 2011 and 2016<sup>49</sup>, resulting in a reduction of antibiotic burden in agriculture by 35 % in the period 2011-2018, while in a majority of Member States antimicrobial consumption in food producing animals is lower or much lower than in humans<sup>50</sup>; whereas, however, there are big differences between the Member States, and consumption of some antimicrobials is still too high<sup>51</sup>; whereas antimicrobial resistance

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<sup>39</sup> European Food Safety Authority, *The 2019 European Union report on pesticide residues in food*, EFSA Journal, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2021.6491>

<sup>40</sup> Eurostat, *Overweight and obesity - BMI statistics*.

<sup>41</sup> Eurostat, *The European Health Interview Survey, Wave 2*, 2013.

<sup>42</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/health-knowledge-gateway/societal-impacts/burden>

<sup>43</sup> Muncke, J. et al., 'Impacts of food contact chemicals on human health: a consensus statement' *Environmental Health*, 19.

<sup>44</sup> Keesing, F. et al., 'Impacts of biodiversity on the emergence and transmission of infectious diseases', *Nature* 468, pp. 647-652, 2010.

<sup>45</sup> EU-Fusions, *Estimates of European food waste levels*, final report, 2016.

<sup>46</sup> FAO, *Food wastage footprint & climate change*.

<sup>47</sup> EU-Fusions, *Estimates of European food waste levels*, final report, 2016.

<sup>48</sup> ICF, *Market study on date marking and other information provided on food labels and food waste prevention*, final report for the European Commission, 2018.

<sup>49</sup> EMA: Sales of veterinary antimicrobial agents in 30 European countries. Trends from 2010 to 2016. Eighth ESVAC report (europa.eu).

<sup>50</sup> ECDC/EFSA/EMA second joint report on the integrated analysis of the consumption of antimicrobial agents and occurrence of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria from humans and food-producing animals, 2017.

<sup>51</sup> ECA, *Addressing antimicrobial resistance: progress in the animal sector, but this health threat remains a challenge for the EU*, 2019.



is a major threat to human health; whereas reducing and minimising the use of antibiotics in animal husbandry will help slow down its emergence and spread;

- N. whereas already in 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5°C, which stated that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society; whereas climate change and biodiversity loss constitute increasing threats to food security and livelihoods with recurring droughts, floods, forest fires, and new pests; whereas food systems are responsible for 29 % of worldwide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and have a profound effect on the climate, biodiversity, water, air, soil and carbon sinks; whereas the EU agricultural sector produces around 10 % of the EU's total GHG emissions with considerable variations between Member States, with agriculture accounting for between 3 % and 33 % of national GHG emissions<sup>52</sup>;
- O. whereas greenhouse gas emissions from European agriculture have been reduced by around 20 % since 1990; whereas GHG emissions reductions in agriculture have slowed down considerably since 2012, and have even increased in some years<sup>53</sup>; whereas agriculture can actively contribute to carbon sequestration by increasing natural carbon sinks through the uptake of nature- and ecosystem-based solutions, such as wide crop rotations, intercropping, permaculture, agro-forestry, silviculture, agroecology and ecosystem restoration, and especially the restoration and maintenance of peatland areas as a way of increasing natural carbon sinks and sequestration;
- P. whereas agriculture is the third biggest source of primary PM10 emissions in the EU, as stressed by the European Environment Agency; whereas ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) emissions from agriculture contribute to episodes of high PM concentrations experienced across Europe each spring, as well as to both short- and long-term negative health impacts;
- Q. whereas the EU consumes seven times more nitrogen and three times more phosphorus than can be considered sustainable and equitable within the planetary boundaries<sup>54</sup>;
- R. whereas increased lifecycle information alongside better tracking and monitoring of supply chain information is needed to quantify progress towards reducing the environmental impact of the European food system;
- S. whereas the European model of a multifunctional agri-food sector, consisting of various farming models and driven by family farms, is a key component of the EU's economy and society and must ensure competitive, high quality and diversified food production, food security, local supply chains, good agricultural practices, protection of land and water resources, high environmental and animal welfare standards and vibrant rural areas throughout the EU; whereas a properly supported agriculture policy will promote transitions to more localised supply chains and more sustainable agricultural practices,

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<sup>52</sup> EEA, Data viewer on greenhouse gas emissions and removals, sent by countries to UNFCCC and the EU Greenhouse Gas Monitoring Mechanism, see also IEEP 2019, Net-Zero Agriculture in 2050: How to get there (IEEP\_NZ2050\_Agriculture\_report\_screen.pdf).

<sup>53</sup> EEA greenhouse gas - data viewer — European Environment Agency (europa.eu)

<sup>54</sup> European Environment Agency report No 1/2020

achieving higher environmental and animal welfare standards;

- T. whereas it is important to highlight the key role played by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the EU's agri-food sector at all stages of the supply chain, from processing to retail, in achieving the strategy's objectives;
- U. whereas the agriculture sector must continue to produce safe, nutritious food, while maintaining and managing the land more sustainably, all of which counteracts the depopulation of rural areas; whereas European farmers meet the highest global standards and deliver high quality food, not only for European citizens but also worldwide; whereas the agriculture sector is of immense strategic value yet, in just over a decade, several million farms have ceased to exist, representing over a third of all farms in Europe, the vast majority being small family businesses;
- V. whereas the transition of European agriculture towards more sustainable practices and circularity will require substantial investments, with adequate access to finance as a precondition; whereas the EIB is committed to increasing the share of its financing of investments in climate action and environmental sustainability to reach 50 % of its operations in 2025 and from then on; whereas this could be utilised to roll out technologies that contribute to sustainable practices and to strengthening the link of agriculture to the circular economy;
- W. whereas good soil health improves the earth's capacity for food production, water filtering and carbon absorption, thus contributing not only to stabilising the climate but also to ensuring food security, restoring biodiversity, protecting our farmland and building a healthier food system; whereas regenerative agriculture as an approach to food production and land management could mitigate those challenges, helping the transition towards a highly resilient agricultural system based on the appropriate management of lands and soils;
- X. whereas it is important that consumers are fully informed, enabled and empowered to make informed food choices; whereas this requires a healthy and sound food environment which ensures transparency and ensures that the healthy and sustainable choice is also an easy and affordable choice for all, and fosters and encourages consumption patterns that support human health while safeguarding the sustainable use of natural and human resources and a high level of animal welfare; whereas information provision, education and awareness campaigns alone are insufficient to achieve the required change towards more sustainable and healthy consumer choices as these can be influenced by aspects such as norms and conventions, price, convenience, habit and the ways in which food choice is presented; whereas, however, informed citizens and education may play an important role in achieving Europe's climate, resource-efficiency, and biodiversity objectives from the demand side; whereas mandatory labelling of nutrient content and origin, as well as comprehensible information on animal welfare and sustainability, in principle on all food products, and the public provision of information on the true cost of production can help to guide the consumer towards healthy, sustainable and safe nutrition; whereas consumer information should also be adapted to the digital age, while leaving no-one behind;
- Y. whereas the Mediterranean diet, recognised by UNESCO in 2010 as an intangible

cultural heritage of humanity, is known as a healthy, balanced diet, with a high nutritional, social and cultural value, based on respect for the territory and biodiversity, ensuring the conservation and development of traditional activities and crafts related to fishing, sustainable hunting and agriculture and playing a protective role in the primary and secondary prevention of the main chronic degenerative diseases;

- Z. whereas water and agriculture are inextricably linked and sustainable water management in the agriculture sector is vital to allow the production of high-quality and adequate food and to ensure the conservation of water resources;
- AA. whereas the globalisation of the food market has increased, bringing with it a related increase in the importance of free trade agreements between the EU and non-EU countries;
- AB. whereas the results obtained from the implementation of the environmental standards currently in force need to be taken into account;
- AC. whereas the serious situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on all players in the European agri-food chain, from primary production to food service industries;
- AD. whereas 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, including lockdowns, and facing sanitary risks, to ensure that European consumers continue to have access to safe, affordable and high quality products without impediment, while respecting the integrity of the internal market; whereas the EU's internal market and agricultural system largely and rapidly overcame the interruptions to supply amid the COVID-19 crisis, which, nevertheless, revealed certain vulnerabilities in intricate food supply chains, demonstrating the need to ensure long-term food security, resilience and short supply chains; whereas, in this context, it is essential to emphasise the value of food security and security of supply chains for all EU citizens and the importance of having all necessary tools available to farmers so that they may produce diverse food sustainably;
- AE. whereas although farmers' rights were enshrined in the FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in 2004, intellectual property rules have often been at odds with them, putting local, traditional and indigenous seed systems at risk;
- AF. whereas consumers are increasingly concerned about animal welfare and animal health; whereas a high level of animal welfare is important to sustainable development and has the potential to strengthen the economic and environmental sustainability of European farmers, creating a new market for farmers to sell products based on higher animal welfare standards; whereas the Commission has announced an evaluation and revision of existing animal welfare legislation, including on animal transport and slaughter of animals; whereas horizontal rules to protect animals in farming, combined with science-based, species-specific animal welfare requirements for all farmed species would significantly benefit animal welfare; whereas transition periods and support for farmers are essential with respect to legislative changes to allow more sustainable farming and

to achieve animal welfare improvements;

AG. whereas geographical indications result from immemorial EU heritage and are the fruit of the adaptation of mankind to his environment and an expression of EU identity;

AH. whereas it is highly important to tackle food fraud and unfair practices by recognising and investigating fraudulent activities;

1. Welcomes 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; emphasises the inextricable links between healthy people, healthy societies, healthy animals, and a healthy planet; stresses that this strategy is essential to bring the food system, including animal and crop production, within planetary boundaries, while underlining the importance of achieving decent working, employment conditions and fair opportunities across the whole food value chain and the need to achieve a suitable and balanced policy approach; encourages 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*

2. Recalls that impact assessments are an integral part of the EU rulemaking process; welcomes the Commission's announcement that it intends to perform detailed impact assessments, including public consultations, in line with the Better Regulation guidelines for any legislative initiative under the farm to fork strategy, including those regarding effective quantitative targets<sup>55</sup>; stresses that these ex-ante scientific impact assessments should include robust environmental assessments, should cover the three dimensions of sustainability (environmental, economic and social, including health) in a holistic and systemic approach and consider cumulative effects, and should include the cost of non-action in terms of immediate and long-term impact on human health, environment, biodiversity, and general sustainability, as well as taking into account generational renewal, possible trade-offs between policy goals, the availability of means to achieve the targets and the different farming models across the EU Member States; notes the importance of describing the methods of calculation, baselines and reference periods of each individual target and highlights the need for cooperation, consultation and collaboration with Member States; acknowledges that the first mid-term review of the farm to fork strategy is planned for mid-2023; stresses the need for this mid-term evaluation to reflect in depth on the cumulative impact of all actions in a holistic and systemic manner, covering all dimensions of sustainability, be they environmental, economic or social, including health;
3. Welcomes 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; invites the Commission to use this proposal to set out a future-oriented holistic, balanced, integrated and environmentally, socially and economically sustainable common food policy, in which all actors make their contribution, aimed at reducing the environmental and climate footprint of the EU food system as well as

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<sup>55</sup> Answers by Ms Kyriakides to written question E-000689/2021.

reducing its negative impacts on biodiversity and human and animal health and welfare in order to make Europe the first climate-neutral and close-to-zero-pollution continent by 2050 at the latest, and strengthening its resilience to ensure medium- and long-term food security in the face of climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss; stresses the need to ensure economic and social sustainability throughout the food chain as good socioeconomic prospects and the competitiveness of the various sectors concerned will help fulfil the goals of the strategy; encourages the EU in leading a global transition towards sustainability from farm to fork, based on the principle of a multifunctional agricultural sector that is sustainable from an environmental, social (including health) and economic viewpoint, on the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) principles of agroecology and the UN right to food, while ensuring enhanced policy consistency and coherence to enable all actors in the European food system to carry out long-term planning based on realistic and transparent SMART objectives; stresses the need for urgent and bold policy and legislative change in the face of overwhelming scientific evidence of the need to improve the sustainability of the current food system and the higher costs incurred resulting from a failure to act and highlights the importance of innovation and sustainable practices; suggests that the respective baselines in each Member State and progress achieved be taken into account, as well as their specific (regional) conditions, while promoting the exchange of know-how and best practices between Member States; stresses the need to include the entire food and beverage chains including production, processing, marketing, storage, transport distribution, hospitality, retail, disposal and recycling of secondary materials; calls for this legislative proposal to pay full regard to the welfare of farm animals, given that this is integral to food sustainability;

4. Supports the development of food policy strategic plans<sup>56</sup>, which serve to facilitate, stimulate and upscale new and existing national, regional, and local food policies, also giving consideration to the complex issue of food poverty in Europe; emphasises the importance of the underpinning of these plans by independent, impartial science and research and the involvement of stakeholders from a broad variety of perspectives to ensure a legitimate and inclusive process; stresses that 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 in order to increase synergies and avoid and manage trade-offs; calls therefore 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; calls on the Commission to promote a societal dialogue on a common understanding of sustainability and its various components, on the path towards its proposal for a legislative framework for a sustainable food system, which ultimately will have to be based on one coherent approach to all aspects of sustainability;
5. Welcomes 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

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<sup>56</sup> Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) and Ecologic Institute, Think2030 policy paper, *European food and agriculture in a new paradigm: Can global challenges like climate change be addressed through a farm to fork approach?*, 2021. <https://think2030.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/European-food-and-agriculture-in-a-new-paradigm-WEB.pdf>



affecting food systems; insists that a prevention approach is needed to avoid panic movements and overreactions by people, firms or Member States; considers that it will be an adequate response to the growing expectations about food security that are to be addressed at European level; urges the Commission to consider strategic food stock issues in the way that it does for strategic petroleum stocks across the Union;

6. Emphasises the need for actions in order to promote sustainable farming, reduce the use of and risks associated with pesticides, protect and restore soil ecosystems, and increase landscape features on farmland that support the recovery of species and habitats protected under the nature directives, including pollinators and their habitats; recalls that agricultural productivity and resilience is dependent on the sustainable management of natural resources to guarantee the long-term sustainability of our food systems;
7. Emphasises that European consumers, farmers, and businesses have an interest in a successful transition towards a more sustainable food system; highlights that improved stakeholder information and agricultural policies can support this transition; stresses that the ecological transition in food production and the resulting contribution to climate change mitigation could be a win-win situation for primary producers, the environment, the economy and society as a whole, providing sustainable, safe, sufficient, affordable, healthy and nutritious food, and can be achieved with a balanced approach that synergises sustainable practices and economic opportunities; reiterates that to ensure a proportionate contribution from the sector, agriculture should be a target- and incentive-driven part of the EU's ambition to move towards net-zero emissions by mid-century at the latest, while also addressing emissions that are linked to European food production and consumption but are generated outside Europe; stresses that participation of and support for farmers in climate action is crucial in order to achieve global mitigation targets and the SDGs, without compromising global food and nutrition security, and while leaving no-one behind;
8. Emphasises the need to ensure coherence between the farm to fork strategy and the objectives of the European Green Deal, including on climate, biodiversity, zero pollution and health; underlines that maintaining and enhancing biodiversity is crucial for safeguarding EU and global food security, and that coherence must be guaranteed with the EU biodiversity strategy, including the contribution of Natura 2000 and Marine Protected Areas to supporting healthy food production, as well as consistency regarding the common agricultural policy (CAP), common fisheries policy (CFP), EU trade policies and the EU bioeconomy strategy; highlights that the SDGs offer a relevant framework to integrate in a coherent and systemic manner environmental, social and economic objectives, and allow the design of crosscutting policies that better reflect the interlinkage between each policy objective; recalls that the social dimension must be fully integrated in all future initiatives of the farm to fork strategy along with the economic and environmental dimensions to achieve much-needed policy coherence for sustainable development; insists that the improvement of working conditions in line with the eight fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO), collective bargaining and social protection should be included as sustainability criteria;

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

9. Welcomes the decision to revise the directive on the sustainable use of pesticides and the reduction targets for pesticides, nutrient losses from both organic and mineral sources and sales of antibiotics and is convinced that these targets are well within reach but that their achievability depends on the availability of safer, effective and efficient alternatives; highlights the importance of further holistic education and communication, including through advisory services to achieve this transformation; emphasises the need for these reduction targets to be of a binding nature and the importance of pursuing them through holistic, preventive and circular approaches such as organic and agroecological practices, innovative sustainable agricultural practices, implementing precision agriculture and integrated crop and pest management practices where appropriate, and the use of sustainable alternatives, aided by a life-cycle perspective; stresses the need to establish fast-track evaluation, authorisation and registration processes for non-chemical low-risk pesticides, while ensuring that their assessment is subject to the same level of rigour as for other substances; insists that each Member State, according to its climatic and agricultural production characteristics, 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 in line with the Green Deal's zero pollution ambition, accompanied by well-defined crop-specific support measures ensuring accountability and enforceability at all levels, and using independent and complete data to help reach these targets as well as support and training for implementation at farm level and further research and development for innovative and sustainable farming solutions; calls on the Commission to support Member States in improving their systems of supervision, monitoring and proper enforcement of the rules on the use of pesticides and to enhance communication with and raise awareness among their final users; reiterates its call for the translation into legislation of the above targets and objectives, including through the revision of the Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides and calls on the Commission to clarify how it will deal with individual Member States' contributions to Union-wide binding targets while ensuring a level playing field and to clarify the baselines for these targets, taking into account the different starting points, efforts undertaken and characteristics of each Member State, and identifying clearly the many non-synthetic and other alternatives already known today, their availability, and the impact on the viability of the sector, on farmers' incomes and on food security, and invites the Commission to draft a plan for minimising synthetic inputs in agriculture; calls on the Commission to support Member States in giving particular attention to the specific conditions that apply to the use of pesticides in groundwater protection zones through better communication, monitoring and inspections;
10. Stresses the key role of integrated pest management (IPM) in reducing pesticide dependency and urges the Member States to ensure it is applied and that its implementation is assessed and monitored systematically; calls on the Member States to convert the general IPM principles into practical and measurable criteria and to verify these criteria at farm level, and calls on the Commission to ensure that Member States effectively implement these IPM principles through their CAP strategic plans; urges them to include well-defined and tailored measures and practices for every crop, such as flower strips as a baseline to reverse the use of pesticides and the resistance of pests; calls on retailers in the food chain to proactively cooperate with farmers on implementing and scaling up all available IPM practices and methods for every crop in



their supply chain and to report on their own contribution to the goals and reduction targets as part of their environmental, social and governance reporting;

11. Considers that, although the EU has one of the most stringent systems in the world, both the regulation on pesticide approval as such and its implementation need to be improved; recalls its resolution on the Union's authorisation procedure for pesticides<sup>57</sup> and expects the Commission and Member States to address all its calls without delays, underlines that the regulatory framework should encourage innovation and research in order to develop better and safer plant protection products and alternatives; points out that, in addition to revising the directive on the sustainable use of pesticides to reduce the use of and risks associated with pesticides, the Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) should improve the environmental risk assessment for plant protection products, inter alia by taking into account the effects of pesticides on soil water quality and drinking water sources, including cumulative and synergistic effects; urges the Commission to adequately assess progress made towards policy objectives and to improve the harmonised risk indicators laid down in Commission Directive (EU) 2019/782<sup>58</sup> to also include toxicity, persistence and bioaccumulation and to take into account agricultural areas or volumes of active substances and the way plant protection products are used in order to effectively reduce the use of synthetic pesticides and heavy metals in conventional and organic farming, and to adopt clear scientifically based criteria for what constitutes unacceptable effects on the environment, taking into account real-life exposure (acute and chronic) to multiple plant protection products, including cumulative and synergistic effects; insists that prophylactic uses of pesticides, including seed treatment with systemic pesticides, should be restricted as much as possible where it poses a danger to human health or the environment; calls on the Commission to present its legislative proposal on pesticides data at the latest by mid-2022;
12. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 are properly applied and thereby to guarantee, inter alia, a minimum standard of notification on emergency authorisations of pesticides, including the requirement for Member States to provide complete and detailed explanations and to make those notifications public; welcomes the role of EFSA in examining these derogations;
13. Calls for the full consideration of the cumulative and synergistic effects of pesticides in the setting of MRLs as well as for the criteria of animal health and environmental risks to be better taken into account when assessing applications for new MRLs in accordance with article 14 of the MRL regulation; calls for data collected through post-market biomonitoring to be used to verify the accuracy of predicted pesticide exposure levels for the setting of MRLs as well as for acceptable exposure levels for farm workers, residents, bystanders and consumers, as well as farm animals; emphasises the need to continue to pay great attention to the protection of the health and safety of users in future EU legislative initiatives linked to the use of pesticides; recalls the importance

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<sup>57</sup> European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2019 on the Union's authorisation procedure for pesticides. OJ C 411, 27.11.2020, p. 48.

<sup>58</sup> Commission Directive (EU) 2019/782 of 15 May 2019 amending Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the establishment of harmonised risk indicators. OJ L 127, 16.5.2019, p. 4.

of ensuring that all users receive protective equipment as well as comprehensive information and training about the use and the associated dangers of pesticides; stresses the need to ensure that each agricultural worker is able to access official documentation reporting the type of pesticide used during their work activity; underlines that in order to achieve these targets it is crucial to further revise Directive 2004/37/EC on carcinogens or mutagens at work<sup>59</sup>, Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides and Directive 98/24/EC on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work<sup>60</sup>;

14. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to act to reduce nutrient losses by at least 50 %, while ensuring that there is no deterioration in soil fertility; is convinced that this would be best achieved through the closure of nutrient cycles, nutrient recovery and reuse and encouraging and rewarding farmers to plant leguminous crops; insists that legally binding legislative initiatives as well as measures aimed at enabling farmers to improve nutrient management are needed to that end; emphasises the importance of pursuing these targets through holistic and circular approaches to nutrients management, such as agroecological practices and smart farming, which can deliver co-benefits for soil quality and biodiversity and help farmers end their dependency on mineral fertilisers and reduce phosphorus and nitrogen flows; points out that the reduction of inefficient fertilisation and the phasing-out of excessive fertilisation should take into account the climate and environmental impacts of different fertilisers, including the presence of heavy metals; urges Member States to put forward in their strategic plans measures to promote the efficient management and circularity of nutrients, as well to strongly support education for farm advisors and farmers and to use the reform of the CAP as an opportunity to curb emissions of ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) from the agricultural sector; stresses that improved management of nutrients presents both economic and environmental benefits; highlights the importance of the application of modern and innovative technologies and solutions such as precision farming, targeted fertilisation that is adapted to plant requirements, and plant nutrition advisory services and management support, as well as the need to install broadband in rural areas for that purpose; believes that support should be given to sustainable farm business models to aid nutrient recovery, recycling and reuse from contaminant-free waste streams;
15. Stresses that in order to achieve the targets for the reduction of the use and associated risks of chemical pesticides and the reduction of nutrient losses, safer alternatives must become available to ensure the availability of a functioning plant protection toolbox; highlights, however, the importance of education in ensuring the proper application of preventive measures; calls for an increase in research and development of alternative plant protection products, fertilisers, more resistant varieties that require less input to secure stable yields and digital tools, as well as incentives for application methods and technologies such as precision agriculture; invites the Commission to speed up and simplify the adoption of new plant health solutions, including plant protection products with a lower impact, such as low-risk substances or biosolutions, and to introduce a definition and a separate category for natural substances in horizontal legislation, as well as to engage in initiatives aimed at finding alternative assessment paths for these

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<sup>59</sup> Directive 2004/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work. OJ L 158, 30.4.2004, p. 50.

<sup>60</sup> Council Directive 98/24/EC of 7 April 1998 on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work. OJ L 131, 5.5.1998, p. 11.

low-risk, basic and naturally occurring substances; further stresses that reduced use of pesticides must be matched by increased availability on the market of sustainable alternatives with equivalent effectiveness in plant health protection to chemical pesticides in order to avoid proliferation of plant pests; calls, furthermore, for measures to facilitate the incorporation of new approach methodologies (NAMs) in chemical food and feed risk assessments, reducing the need for tests using animals and ultimately contributing to the complete phasing-out of animal testing;

16. Reiterates the crucial importance of protecting bees and other pollinators against the harmful effects of pesticides and diseases; recalls its objection of 23 October 2019<sup>61</sup> and reiterates its call on the Commission to ensure that the revision of the bee guidance and the future implementing acts do not lead to a level of protection for bees below that laid down in the EFSA bee guidance from 2013, and are based on the latest scientific and technical knowledge, and thus proposes modifying the uniform principles, not only with regard to acute toxicity for honeybees but at least also with regard to chronic toxicity and larval toxicity for honeybees and acute toxicity for bumblebees; notes that EFSA is designing its own modelling system, ApisRAM, which appears to be more in line with the biology of honeybees than BeeHAVE and less open to conflicts of interests; urges the Commission to urgently reassess those substances that have the same mode of action as neonicotinoids;
17. Reiterates its call for a pollinator indicator<sup>62</sup> and a restoration target; calls on the Commission and the Member States to secure a new EU-wide pollinator monitoring framework with robust schemes deployed at Member State level, interim milestones, clear time-bound objectives, indicators and targets; stresses that the monitoring activities must be integrated in the new CAP monitoring and evaluation framework;
18. Calls on the Member States to carry out systematic, standardised field monitoring of biodiversity on farmland, including pollinators, involving professionals, farmers and citizen scientists and to use the data to help evaluate EU policies and their implementation;
19. Recalls the importance of a One Health approach; stresses that antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a growing transnational and cross-border health threat where coordinated EU action can make a difference; acknowledges the substantial efforts made to reduce the use of antimicrobials in animals contributing to the global effort to reduce antibiotic resistance; highlights, however, the need to further reduce the use of antibiotics, including in food production; welcomes the Commission's plan to reduce overall sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 50 % by 2030, underlines that progress already made at Member State level must be taken into account; points to the fact that intermediate targets and clear actions and measures, including the application of sanctions as provided for in EU legislation, are necessary to achieve this goal; recalls, furthermore, that to achieve this goal, improved animal husbandry practices are key as better animal welfare improves animal health, thus reducing the need for medication; believes that the proper implementation of the Veterinary

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<sup>61</sup> OJ C 202, 28.5.2021, p. 49.

<sup>62</sup> As per the commitment made in the EU pollinators initiative (COM(2018)0395), action 5C  
[https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/documents/EU\\_pollinators\\_initiative.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/documents/EU_pollinators_initiative.pdf)

Medicines Regulation<sup>63</sup> and Regulation (EU) 2019/4 on medicated feed<sup>64</sup> will further reduce the use of antibiotics and calls on the Commission to scrutinise the implementation and enforcement by Member States; underlines that antimicrobials, other than human reserve antibiotics, must remain available for essential use, in order to ensure that animal health and welfare is protected at all times;

20. Welcomes the emphasis placed on the need to continue the reduction of overall EU sales of antibiotics for farmed animals and in aquaculture, and stresses that EU initiatives in this area have been and will be adopted under the One Health approach that recognises the interdependence between the health and well-being of humans, animals and the environment; calls on the Commission and the Member States to focus on additional measures to enable and incentivise sustainable innovative solutions, particularly in prevention tools and alternative treatments; calls for efforts to ensure equivalent standards for products of animal origin imported into the EU to those established under the Veterinary Medicines Regulation; notes the need, as part of the revision of the Feed Additives Regulation<sup>65</sup>, to address the use of substances currently not classified as antibiotics but having antibiotic properties in line with Article 4(14) of the Veterinary Medicines Regulation that may be used in animal agriculture and aquaculture for preventative use; **draws attention to the fact that workers in the food chain are at risk of contracting AMR pathogens**, for example when using the ‘top dressing’ technique when they administer veterinary medicinal products; stresses the need to take appropriate measures to reduce this serious occupational health risk;
21. Recalls that agriculture and forestry play an important role in addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation; emphasises the importance of recognising and monitoring the impact of agriculture and animal production on GHG emissions and land use; stresses the need to reduce these emissions in order to contribute to the EU’s commitment to the Paris Agreement; stresses the need and potential to maintain, restore and enhance natural carbon sinks and reduce agricultural emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, in particular in the feed and livestock sectors as well as the organic and mineral fertiliser sector without further compromising animal welfare and while ensuring no deterioration in soil fertility; acknowledges that healthy animals require less natural resources and that sustainable livestock management practices can lead to reductions of GHG emissions; calls for appropriate and tailored regulatory measures and targets for emissions from agriculture and related land use as part of the ‘fit for 55’ package to ensure ambitious reductions of all GHG emissions in these sectors, inter alia by addressing livestock densities in the EU and embedded land use emissions from imported feed and food; calls for a coherent policy mix to enable a transition towards more sustainable practices such as grass-based extensive livestock production as part of a mixed farming system which respects the carrying capacity of the local environment and supports biodiversity;
22. Takes note of promising developments in the area of feed additives that help to reduce

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<sup>63</sup> Regulation (EU) 2019/6. OJ L 4, 7.1.2019, p. 43.

<sup>64</sup> Regulation (EU) 2019/4 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the manufacture, placing on the market and use of medicated feed, amending Regulation (EC) No 183/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Directive 90/167/EEC. OJ L 4, 7.1.2019, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2003 on additives for use in animal nutrition. OJ L 268, 18.10.2003, p. 29.

emissions of greenhouse gases and water and air pollutants from animal husbandry; welcomes, in this regard, the Commission's plans to facilitate the placing on the market of sustainable and innovative feed additives and calls for relevant research programmes to support their further development;

23. Points out that extensive permanent grassland-based, silvo-pastoral or extensive organic animal husbandry, often involving pastures of high environmental value, are key features of the European food system and that its quality schemes and are a defining element of many traditional rural communities which allows them to make productive use of land that otherwise would have been abandoned; underlines that this form of land-based and low density agricultural production can have multiple positive effects for the environment and for the conservation of cultural landscapes, contributes to protecting rural areas from depopulation and abandonment, helps in mitigating against climate change, and contributes to a circular economy and biodiversity restoration and must therefore be supported and encouraged; emphasises that support should be given to farms making the transition to more sustainable forms of production and moving away from farming practices such as high density stocking and crop monocultures; calls on the Commission to ensure that its policies and funding programmes support the traditional European cultural landscape, such as sloping and terraced vineyards and extensive permanent grassland-based production supporting biodiversity; notes that Member States' reports under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive<sup>66</sup> highlight that many semi-natural grasslands are in unfavourable, inadequate or bad conservation status and that pollinators which depend on them are threatened, putting pollination services in jeopardy;
24. Calls for stronger harmonisation of the legal framework for animal husbandry in the EU, using common, science-based animal welfare indicators and welcomes the Commission's commitment to evaluate and revise, where necessary, the existing body of animal welfare legislation; underlines the importance of taking into account the latest advances in animal welfare science and responding to public, political and market demands for higher animal welfare standards; calls on the Commission to put forward a legislative proposal with the objective of phasing out the use of cages in EU animal farming, assessing the possibility of a phase-out by 2027; emphasises the need for this phase-out to be based on a science-based impact assessment and to ensure an appropriate transition period; calls on the Commission to adopt a species-by-species approach that takes into account and assesses the characteristics of each different animal, which should have housing systems suited to their specific needs, while safeguarding animal and human health, **ensuring the protection of workers** and ensuring sufficient support and a transition period with the aim of maintaining the competitiveness of farmers and breeders;
25. Recalls the importance of a high-quality animal welfare system, including in transport and slaughter; emphasises that a high level of animal welfare is integral to sustainable development and is essential for superior food quality that facilitates healthier nutrition, meeting the requirements of consumers and contributing to biodiversity conservation; emphasises that a coherent and harmonised approach is needed, considering human

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<sup>66</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.



health, the environment, biodiversity, animal health and welfare and climate in a holistic and joint way when referring to a sustainable food system;

26. Considers it important to start infringement procedures against systemically non-compliant Member States in the implementation and enforcement of existing animal welfare legislation and, where necessary, to close legislative gaps and set higher standards in legislation for animal welfare; stresses that it is essential for the EU to take into account the compliance of non-EU countries with animal welfare standards, particularly where imported products are concerned;
27. Emphasises that animals should experience as little distress as possible when transported and slaughtered and therefore welcomes the intention to revise the existing animal welfare legislation regarding animal transport and the slaughter of animals; calls on the Commission and the Member States to facilitate local slaughter solutions, including mobile slaughter, with smaller units and better staff training on avoiding animal suffering; calls on the Commission to promote alternatives to live animal transport wherever possible;
28. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement and enforce relevant EU legislation, in particular Council Directive (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations<sup>67</sup>; regrets the current non-compliance with the ruling of the European Court of Justice that animal welfare protection does not stop at the EU's external borders and that animal transporters departing from the European Union must therefore also comply with European animal welfare rules when leaving the EU, while pointing out the difficulties in its application due to the lack of jurisdiction in non-EU territory;
29. Recalls that 70 % of emerging diseases and pandemics have an animal origin according to IPBES; expresses its deep concern about the increasingly frequent emergence of zoonotic diseases that are transferred from animals to humans (anthropozoonoses), such as Q fever, avian influenza and the new strain of influenza A (H1N1), which is exacerbated by climate change, environmental degradation, land use changes, deforestation, the destruction of and pressure on biodiversity and natural habitats, illegal trafficking of wild animals, and our current food production and consumption systems; underlines that animal production systems which involve the confinement of animals of a similar genotype in close proximity to one another can increase the susceptibility of animals to infectious disease, creating conditions for the emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases<sup>68</sup>; calls on the Commission and Member States to accelerate the move away from these agricultural practices and from the unsustainable use of wildlife, including illegal trafficking, and towards better management of veterinary prevention and the promotion of high standards of animal health and animal welfare, including

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<sup>67</sup> OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> IPBES Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics; EPRS, *The link between biodiversity loss and the increasing spread of zoonotic diseases*; HSI report, *The connection between animal agriculture, viral zoonoses, and global pandemics*; Dhingra SM, Artois J, Dellicour S, et al. 2018. 'Geographical and historical patterns in the emergences of novel highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5 and H7 viruses in poultry', *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* 5:84. [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5996087/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5996087/); Jones BA, Grace D, Kock R, et al. 2013. 'Zoonosis emergence linked to agricultural intensification and environmental change', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 110(21):8399-404. [www.pnas.org/content/110/21/8399](http://www.pnas.org/content/110/21/8399).

with the EU's trading partners, in order to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases and invasive species and to promote the EU's high biosecurity standards as the best practice at global level; acknowledges that disease prevention and preparedness, i.e. availability of diagnosis, prevention and treatment methods, is key to containing emerging threats to human and animal health;

30. Welcomes the Commission's recognition of organic farming as one of the strong components on the EU's path towards more sustainable food systems and the ambition to increase the EU's agricultural land under organic farming by 2030; underlines that a majority of Member States have already adopted targets to increase the agricultural area under organic production; looks forward to the analysis of the organic sector in the overall impact assessment of the strategy and stresses the importance of the European action plan for organic farming in increasing its uptake; underlines that the development and growth of the organic sector must be accompanied by market-driven and supply chain developments and measures stimulating further demand for organic food and ensuring consumer trust, together with public procurement, fiscal incentives and a broad variety of promotion measures, research, innovation, training and scientific knowledge transfer, all of which would contribute to the stability of the market for organic products and fair remuneration for farmers;
31. Welcomes the notion of enhancing, incentivising and rewarding natural carbon sequestration in soils, which has already been achieved on some farms, providing additional rewards to farmers for developing and maintaining good agricultural practices for carbon sequestration, which should lead to the enhancement of carbon sinks across the EU; underlines that agriculture and food policies should facilitate the transition to sustainable farming by rewarding farmers for the environmental and climate benefits they deliver; stresses the importance of nature-based solutions such as wide crop rotations, intercropping, permaculture, agroecology and ecosystem restoration, and especially the restoration and maintenance of peatland areas for increasing natural carbon sinks and sequestration; stresses, however, that agriculture and farming practices with significant negative impacts on climate, biodiversity, soil, water, air, and or animal welfare should not receive climate funding, nor be incentivised or rewarded; calls on the Commission to explore a framework for robust carbon quantification and certification that should avoid the possibility of misrepresentation known as greenwashing; calls on the Commission to present several options for carbon farming and underlines that carbon markets are part of a much broader set of regulatory and non-regulatory measures to reduce GHG emissions, and stresses that carbon farming schemes should be part of an incentivising toolbox to deliver on climate objectives; calls for the proposals to be in line with animal welfare and environmental objectives and the 'do no harm' principle of the Green Deal; is in favour of stimulating the uptake of regenerative agriculture practices, improving access to technologies, data, training and information, and complementing farmers' incomes through carbon sequestration and payments for ecosystem services, thereby increasing their resilience;
32. Underlines the importance of ensuring the security and diversity of seed and plant propagating material to provide stable yields and plant varieties adapted to the pressures of climate change, including traditional and locally-adapted varieties, and varieties suitable for organic production and low input farming systems, while ensuring transparency and freedom of choice for farmers and access to genetic resources and



innovative plant breeding techniques in order to contribute to healthy seeds and protect plants against harmful pests and diseases and to help farmers tackle the growing risks caused by climate change, ensuring an incentive for open innovation through plant variation;

33. Raises awareness of the potential negative effects of concentration and monopolisation in the seed sector and calls on the Commission to take measures to counter them if necessary; emphasises, in this context, the importance of open innovation through plant breeders' rights and notes with concern the detrimental effect of wide-scoped patents in the seed sector; believes that non-commercial production and use of traditional and locally-adapted varieties of seed by private citizens and smallholders should not be subject to disproportionate EU and national regulation; stresses the importance of preserving a strong single market for the EU seed sector;
34. Calls for strengthened coordination at EU level to stimulate the preservation and sustainable use of genetic diversity and for the establishment of a common EU platform for information exchange on preserved genetic resources;
35. Welcomes the announcement of the revision of marketing rules for traditional and locally-adapted crop varieties in order to contribute to their conservation and sustainable use; stresses the need for measures to facilitate the registration of seed varieties, including for organic farming, and to ensure easier market access for traditional and locally adapted varieties;
36. Takes note of the study on the status of new genomic techniques under Union law and in light of the Court of Justice ruling in Case C-528/161a(SWD(2021)0092), and of the Commission's announcement that it plans to initiate a regulatory policy action including an impact assessment and public consultation on plants derived from certain new genomic techniques, aimed at maintaining a high level of protection of human and animal health and the environment, while reaping potential benefits from science and innovation, in particular to contribute to sustainability and to the sustainability goals of European Green Deal and the farm to fork strategy; highlights the precautionary principle and the need to ensure transparency and freedom of choice to farmers, processors and consumers, and stresses that this policy action should include risk assessments and a comprehensive overview and assessment of options for traceability and labelling with a view to achieving proper regulatory oversight and providing consumers with relevant information, including for products from third countries in order to ensure a level playing field;
37. Reiterates its call on the Commission to present a new legislative proposal on the issue of cloning and 'clone food' as a matter of urgency; insists that this proposal should include a ban on cloning, a ban on the placing on the market and importing of cloned animals, their reproductive material and their descendants and a ban on the placing on the market and importing of food from cloned animals and their descendants; deeply regrets the lack of action to regulate clones and their descendants and reiterates that natural or artificial breeding or breeding procedures which cause, or are likely to cause, suffering or injury to any of the animals concerned must not be practised and that it is necessary to ensure that food from cloned animals and their descendants does not enter the food chain;

38. Highlights the important role of European farmers in realising the transition to a sustainable food system and stresses that sufficient financial resources must be made available to achieve this; emphasises the need for all of the various sustainable production methods, including organic, integrated production and agro-ecology, to be utilised, promoted and supported, as they can deliver environmental sustainability, increase the proportion of total cultivated land area under environmentally-friendly systems and offer strong guarantees in terms of quality, safety, quantity and price;
39. Insists that the national strategic plans, to be drawn up by the Member States and approved by the Commission under the new CAP, ensure adequate financial support for all EU farmers and foresters to strengthen their competitiveness and income, so that they and their families may achieve a decent standard of living, combat rural depopulation and maintain vibrant rural communities;
40. Welcomes the fact that the new CAP will provide incentives to promote innovative, digital, ecological, regional and sustainable business models for agriculture and artisanal food production, notably through fostering short supply chains such as products with protected geographical indications or designations of origin, respecting single market rules and through approaches including innovative local logistics such as ‘green hubs’, and the integration of artisanal food production into other services in rural areas such as tourism or gastronomy; stresses that regional marketing of agricultural products and partnerships plays an important role in the promotion of sustainable supply chains; acknowledges that when local production is not available, imports are needed;
41. Calls on the Commission to only approve CAP national strategic plans which clearly demonstrate a commitment to sustainability from the economic, environmental and social perspectives and are in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal, the relevant EU-wide targets and the Paris Agreement;
42. Calls for these plans to take due account of the specific challenges facing the EU’s outermost regions in terms of biodiversity, agricultural production and the supply of foodstuffs and raw materials; stresses that adequate financial support under the CAP is crucial to allow EU agriculture to contribute to the transition towards climate neutrality and to enhance the conservation of biodiversity; points out that reinforced support measures, including training programmes and advisory services, are essential to enable farmers to play their role in meeting the targets of the strategy; calls for ‘enhanced eco schemes’ to be implemented in national strategic plans, in line with Parliament’s position, which would avoid an unnecessary duplication of conditionality controls;
43. Underlines that healthy soils are a precondition for ensuring security of food, feed and fibre production; calls on the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to prevent its further degradation at the EU level; underlines that agricultural soil is a basic natural resource, the good condition of which is key to fulfilling the farm to fork strategy; stresses, in this context, the importance of the new soil strategy and calls on the Commission to take appropriate action based on it to bring about the necessary solutions; acknowledges the essentiality of soil organic matter and biodiversity and the services and goods which it provides; regrets that soils are under increasing pressure; believes that robust EU-wide monitoring of soil organisms and trends in their range and volume must be put in place and maintained across all Member States;

44. Recognises the importance of high-diversity landscape features, which are essential in order to maintain basic ecosystem services such as pollination or natural pest control, for agricultural production and which increase its productivity in the long term; welcomes the EU target of dedicating at least 10 % of agricultural area to this end; recalls the findings of the impact assessment of 20 October 2011 entitled ‘common agricultural policy towards 2020’ (SEC(2011)1153) stating that no significant impacts on production or income would be generated at farm level;
45. Stresses that agricultural land is limited and hence must be used efficiently; highlights the need to include innovative farming models with low land-use footprints such as horticulture and insect farming into the strategy;
46. Points out that ‘protected cultivation’ of fruit and vegetables in modern greenhouses is a highly sustainable food production system that is increasingly being used and offers a number of advantages; calls on the Commission to recognise the ongoing transformation in the European horticultural sector, which enables more sustainable food production and contributes to food security, food safety, increased resource efficiency and reduced food waste throughout the food production chain; highlights that besides a low land-use footprint, modern horticulture contributes to different goals of the strategy such as a low need for input, efficient use of resources and production of fruits and vegetables close to the point of consumption, thereby promoting shorter supply chains and security of supply; calls on the Commission to consider allocating research and innovation investment funds for protected growing systems in modern greenhouses that use fewer resources to grow the same yields;
47. Calls on the Commission to encourage Member State governments to expand or create systems which allow members of the public to rent and utilise derelict and unused government-owned land for food production;
48. Stresses the importance of using agro-forestry and forest curtains to reduce pressure on natural forests, help tackle climate change and increase productivity, as well as alternatives to the use of fertilisers in agricultural production; encourages the Commission and the Member States to develop tools in their future national strategic plans to encourage reforestation and afforestation and to promote sustainable agroforestry, including silvo-pasture where possible; calls on the Commission to promote EU-wide specialised training programmes in order to make farmers aware of the benefits of integrating woody vegetation in agriculture; highlights that restoration and rejuvenation of existing agroforestry systems, as well as the establishment of new ones, would contribute to the biodiversity strategy’s target of three billion trees, serving both biodiversity and climate objectives as well the objective of diversification and circularity;
49. Stresses the importance of robust and strict criteria for biomass-based renewable energy production and calls on the Commission to bring forward science-based criteria as part of the review of the Renewable Energy Directive;
50. Recalls that the European agri-food and fisheries system should deliver a sufficient and varied supply of safe, nutritious, healthy, affordable and sustainably-produced food to citizens at all times and underlines that increasing the economic, environmental and

social sustainability of food production will ultimately increase its medium and long-term resilience as well as create new economic opportunities and contribute to the use of raw materials of European origin; highlights that more locally-produced food can contribute to all these objectives, including food security; recalls that in the EU, 33 million people<sup>69</sup> cannot afford a quality meal every second day; stresses that food affordability and availability requires appropriate policy responses and must remain a key consideration when assessing increases in production costs including those resulting from changing farming practices; highlights the need to support the development of sustainable food SMEs in rural areas;

51. Urges the Commission to integrate food aid issues in the farm to fork strategy since many Europeans suffer from lack of food, especially single parent families and students, and the social and economic consequences of the pandemic will increase that figure; recognises the unique role of the food aid associations across the European Union that need to be better supported because of the growing number of people who need help; considers that in order to increase the resilience of our food system we need to increase connections between food policies and agricultural policies at every level from the local to the European level;
52. Welcomes the fact that the European Green Deal seeks to ensure decent living conditions for people working in farming and fishing and for their families; recalls that the social dimension must be fully integrated in all future initiatives of the strategy along with the economic and environmental dimensions; underlines that the COVID-19 pandemic has shed a new light on challenging working and living conditions and, therefore, emphasises the importance of protecting the individual and collective labour and social rights of farm labourers and workers, including seasonal and mobile workers employed along the EU food supply chain; calls for proper working and living conditions for all workers in the sector, collective bargaining and social protection;
53. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to consider agricultural land, agricultural know-how, the food supply chain and its workers as strategic assets for the safety and well-being of all Europeans and to ensure that working and social protection conditions throughout the agri-food supply chain, including proper control of unfair practices in this chain, meet national and EU standards for all workers;
54. Underlines the importance of seasonal workers for a well-functioning supply chain and calls for robust measures to ensure proper working and living conditions for these workers; encourages retailers to assume responsibility and adhere to social, environmental and economic sustainability criteria in their purchasing practices;
55. Welcomes the intention of the Commission to propose an emergency plan to deal with food crises by taking stock of the experience acquired during the COVID-19 pandemic and by including harmonised measures to guarantee the proper functioning of the internal market; considers that the promotion of territorial food projects which stimulate the development of short food circuits in the Member States can help in facing such crises;
56. Shares the view that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of

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<sup>69</sup> Eurostat, 2018.

securing a robust, sustainable and resilient food system that functions in all circumstances, and one which is capable of ensuring access to a sufficient supply of affordable and local food for European consumers; stresses the need, in this respect, to preserve the smooth functioning of the single market, and in particular the movement of foodstuffs, including during health crises; stresses, too, that the pandemic should also be seen as an opportunity to build a sustainable and resilient food system and not as an excuse to scale down ambitions, given that sustainability and health are interconnected issues;

57. Stresses the need, due in part to the disruptions to global production chains and increased price volatility caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, to develop open strategic autonomy for the EU with the aim of ensuring access to key markets and reducing dependency on imports of critical goods such as plant-based protein sources; reiterates that agri-food systems must be acknowledged as a crucial aspect of the EU's open strategic autonomy in order to ensure sufficient availability of safe and good-quality food and to maintain functioning and resilient food supply chains and trade flows during future crises, in line with Article 2(1) of the Paris Agreement;
58. Stresses that the agri food sector supports not only farmers but also upstream and downstream businesses, secures and creates jobs and is the backbone of the entire food industry; highlights in this respect that the preservation of the cultural landscape is the driving force for active rural areas; highlights the importance of traditional craftsmanship in regional and local food production and the rich cultural diversity that results from it; recalls that maintaining and passing on knowledge of craftsmanship in food production should also be supported as a horizontal part of the farm to fork strategy, for example by better including it in participatory research and development programmes;
59. Expresses disappointment at the lack of prominence and ambition for the contribution and potential of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the farm to fork strategy; urges the Commission to pay due attention to the specific nature of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in any future legislative proposals, strategies or guidelines; emphasises the need for an ecosystem-based approach to bring fish populations to sustainable levels and to restore marine and coastal ecosystems, which should also focus on the benefits and the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors;
60. Underlines that robust and reliable legal frameworks for the fisheries and aquaculture sector, consistently applying the precautionary principle and aligned with the updated strategic guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture, should provide the basis for sustainably harnessing potential in the sector as well as for better protection and animal health measures, including reduced use of veterinary drugs, as well as antibiotics, with subsequent increases in fish populations and more clarity regarding the use of space and licenses for all anthropogenic uses, including in aquaculture, allowing for greater predictability for investments without undermining environmental legislation; highlights the importance of a transparent and participative mechanism, in line with Directive 2014/89/EU on maritime spatial planning, for allocating space to all stakeholders in an equitable manner; stresses the need to fully respect marine protected areas;

61. Stresses that good traceability mechanisms, responding to consumers demands by providing information on where, when, how and what fish has been caught or farmed, including origin and method of production labelling and high sustainability and animal welfare standards for all products sold on EU markets, including those imported from outside the EU, are essential to ensure food safety, transparency for consumers, the sector and the different administrations, the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fisheries and to achieve the targets of the Green Deal and the SDGs; stresses, to this end, the importance of technologies that are cyber secure in developing accurate digital decentralised traceability systems; calls for a coordinated approach to ensure consistency between different initiatives on this issue, involving all actors in the value chain; calls for control measures to make sure all imported fisheries products that enter the EU market comply with internationally agreed social standards, **such as those laid down in ILO Convention No. 188 on Work in Fishing** and implemented in the EU through Council Directive (EU) 2017/159<sup>70</sup>, in order to prevent fisheries products being placed on the EU market caught by vessels that do not respect minimum social standards;
62. Recalls the aims of the CFP to ensure the sustainable exploitation of living marine biological resources, restoring and maintaining fish populations above biomass levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield, as well as to ensure profitability of fishing activities and to contribute to the supply of highly nutritional food to the EU market and reduce the EU market's dependence on food imports and stresses the need to improve the monitoring, control and enforcement of the CFP, including the full implementation of the landing obligation and the introduction of electronic monitoring of certain vessels;
63. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to build on existing sustainable practices and to facilitate, encourage and provide adequate support for the transition to low-impact fisheries and aquaculture and the sustainable development of the sectors, including small-scale coastal fisheries, such as through the application of selective fishing gear, environmentally friendly aquaculture, including organic aquaculture, and energy efficiency solutions and by increasing the percentage of the national quotas allocated to small-scale coastal fisheries; stresses the need to support fishers and actors in the fish product supply chain, including in the outermost regions, in the transition to more digital practices by investing heavily in training and providing financing for digitisation and conversion to 'green' practices and tools; underlines the importance of the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) in this regard in promoting the development of a sustainable blue economy and modernising the fisheries sector in line with the objectives of the CFP;
64. Demands that the Council of the European Union proactively make public all documents related to the adoption of total allowable catch (TAC) regulations, in line with the European Ombudsman's recommendation in case 640/2019/FP;

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<sup>70</sup> Council Directive (EU) 2017/159 of 19 December 2016 implementing the Agreement concerning the implementation of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 of the International Labour Organisation, concluded on 21 May 2012 between the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the European Union (Cogeca), the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and the Association of National Organisations of Fishing Enterprises in the European Union (Europêche). OJ L 25, 31.1.2017, p. 12.



65. Stresses the need to monitor and promote the responsible exploitation of fisheries resources while applying zero tolerance in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by making full use of the instruments at the EU's disposal in accordance with the IUU Regulation<sup>71</sup>, including using 'red cards' if a country fails to comply with EU requirements and by strengthening the policy of sustainable fisheries agreements with non-EU countries; highlights that these agreements must become truly sustainable and be in line with the best scientific advice available and must neither threaten the small-scale fisheries sector in non-EU countries nor undermine local food security;
66. Urges the Commission and Member States to deliver on the legally binding measures it committed to in the framework of the marine Natura 2000 sites and to adopt a holistic approach to the marine environment and tackle the root causes of water pollution, including marine litter and urban and industrial waste water, putting an end to practices that are harmful to the marine environment and human health and incentivising fishers to sustainably collect maritime waste while avoiding additional fuel consumption and emissions as well as bycatch of marine animals and fish and negative ecosystem impact, and to implement measures to improve water quality and disease control and limit stocking density in aquaculture production in the interests of human health and animal welfare;
67. Highlights the value of the work of women and men in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and the important role that women play in processing, promoting and marketing the fish that is caught; recalls the potential of sustainable aquaculture and fisheries to create green jobs and considers that the ecological transition of food systems, including fisheries, should take place in a way that ensures a fair income and a strong position across the value chain, and underlines in this respect the importance of the active participation of producer organisations in the fisheries and aquaculture sector;
68. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support and encourage the development of more sustainable fishing techniques and gear and higher welfare methods of capture, landing, transport and slaughter of fish and marine invertebrates, on the basis of the best available science, as well as improvements to animal welfare standards for farmed fish in order to reduce stress and improve fish quality; stresses that the Union should support and encourage investments in such gear, methods and improvements;
69. Highlights the contribution of pond fishing with its traditional management practices to the achievement of the targets of the farm to fork strategy and the interlinked biodiversity strategy; underlines that cultivated pond areas provide habitats for rare species, make positive contributions to the climate and to water reserves, serve as nutrient sinks, retain sediment and contribute to the sustainable production of regional food; calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider pond fishing in relevant measures and programmes;
70. Recalls that primary producers are in a significantly more disadvantaged position in terms of income compared both to other operators along the food supply chain and to

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<sup>71</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 1.



the rest of the economy; stresses that it is essential to strengthen the position of primary producers in the food supply chain, especially with regard to small and medium-sized producers, in order to enable them to capture a fair share of the added value of sustainably produced food, including through the encouragement of cooperation and collective actions, making use of the possibilities provided for in the common market organisations for agricultural, fishery and aquaculture products, including the adaptation of competition rules;

71. Stresses that securing a stable and fair income for primary producers is crucial in enabling the transition of the food system towards greater sustainability and more circular agriculture, in combating unfair trade practices and in managing risks and crises; calls for primary producers throughout the EU to be supported in making this transition including through the uptake of new technologies and in boosting efficiency in terms of farming systems, waste management and input supply and packaging; underlines that producer prices should cover the costs of production and reflect social, economic and environmental sustainability and thus be in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal;
72. Takes the view that supply chain agreements should be encouraged to ensure a fair distribution of value to farmers and to guarantee greater transparency and traceability in the supply chain as a whole, fostering the growth of youth employment in the sector;
73. Welcomes the goal of shortening supply chains; highlights however, the reality of island Member States and island territories, disconnected from mainland Europe, faced with issues of isolation and dependence on imports for necessary products, such as grains for animal feed, which needs to be respected when implementing measures to reduce the dependence on long-haul transport and other measures which will shorten supply chains; highlights that without long-haul transport of certain foodstuffs the food security of these disconnected areas would be jeopardised;
74. Notes that citizens' expectations are evolving and driving significant change in the food market, with a growing demand for locally produced food as a result; emphasises the importance of locally produced food, the opportunities it offers to our farmers and the significant positive contributions it can deliver to our environment; therefore, encourages the Commission and the Member States to actively promote the development of local food strategies, together with short supply chain initiatives;
75. Recognises the importance of fresh organic food consumed locally, which is beneficial for the health of consumers and the environment; highlights the great potential in promoting cooperation between local primary producers and tourism service providers, which could enhance the consumption of fresh locally grown food; calls for support measures to promote such cooperation;
76. Calls for the promotion of measures allowing for raw materials to be processed as close as possible to their place of origin, which significantly reduces the carbon footprint and ensures better traceability of foodstuffs;
77. Highlights that while new sustainable business models are enormous opportunities for SMEs, several initiatives envisaged under the strategy could lead to the creation of substantial red tape; welcomes the Commission's commitment to adhere to the better

regulation tools, to assess the impacts on SMEs as well as to take action to promote sustainable and circular business models specifically for SMEs, to utilise the InvestEU Fund to facilitate access to finance for SMEs and to offer tailored solutions to help SMEs to develop new skills and business models; urges the Commission and the Member States to reduce the administrative burden on small and medium-sized participants in the food chain through measures such as streamlining registration processes and making permit and licence and approvals more efficient and also by ensuring that relevant regulatory bodies are appropriately staffed, in order for small food producers to get their products to market as quickly and easily as possible;

78. Considers the allocated budget to achieve the ambitions of the EU Green Deal and the Just Transition Mechanism to be insufficient to deal in a socially sustainable manner with the consequences of the expected transformation; calls for the Just Transition Mechanism also to cover agricultural regions that may be adversely affected and underlines the need to ensure the proper involvement of social partners in the definition and implementation of future initiatives of the strategy; recalls that the transition to this system will require significant investments and it cannot be accomplished without the complicity and support of European farmers;
79. Urges the Commission to thoroughly enforce Directive (EU) 2019/633 on unfair trading practices, and to carefully monitor its transposition into national law; calls on the Commission to reinforce efforts to strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain and bring forward concrete proposals in line with the strategy;
80. Reiterates that dual quality in food products is unacceptable and needs to be fully counteracted in order to avoid discriminating against and misleading European consumers; considers, therefore, that the food to fork strategy must include provisions to prevent double standards in food quality, and to this end calls on the Commission to monitor the situation on the market closely and propose targeted legislation where necessary; stresses, furthermore, the role of consumer organisations in identifying these misleading practices;
81. Reminds the Commission of the need to follow up on the EU code of conduct on responsible business and marketing practices by producing a monitoring framework for the food and retail sectors and providing legislative measures if progress in integrating economic, environmental and social sustainability and animal welfare considerations into corporate strategies is insufficient, and in so doing promoting and rewarding the efforts of sustainable agricultural producers while increasing the availability and affordability of healthy, sustainable food options and reducing the overall environmental footprint of the food system and the societal costs of unhealthy diets;
82. Insists on the need for the EU code of conduct for food and retail businesses to focus on commitments which are relevant to shaping healthy and sustainable food environments, and which are specific, measurable and time-bound, that can tackle dual standards in agri-food practices and are centred on key operations of the entities involved;
83. Stresses the importance of halting and addressing consolidation and concentration in the grocery retail sector in order to ensure fair prices for farmers and decent labour conditions for workers; insists on the need for agricultural production costs to be taken

into account by upstream actors and for fair prices to apply at all links in the supply chain; recalls the importance of making farmers more resilient in the market by getting more value out of the food chain, which is achieved by encouraging their participation for example in producer organisations or cooperatives;

84. Calls for improvements to be made in a non-discriminatory manner to the EU promotion policy for agricultural and food products, as well as to the EU school scheme and the European Healthy School Lunches initiative; believes that these improvements should strengthen high-quality European agricultural production and contribute to sustainable production and consumption in line with this strategy, the European Green Deal and the SDGs; considers that these improvements should focus on educational messages based on available scientific data, on EU 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;
85. Highlights further, in the context of the EU promotion programme, the importance of greening the environment, both indoors and outdoors, as a natural solution to the effects of climate change and air pollution, as well as for a healthy living environment and people's wellbeing;
86. Underlines the need to boost European information campaigns on moderate consumption of wines while maintaining the promotion of quality products; considers that only broad information and education campaigns would be effective in combating the abuse of consumption and recalls that moderate wine consumption is part of the Mediterranean diet;
87. Recognises the role of EU quality schemes and geographical indications in the EU, such as protected designation of origin (PDO), protected geographical indication (PGI), geographical indication of spirit drinks and aromatised wines (GI) and traditional speciality guaranteed (TSG), which are excellent examples of the EU setting quality standards in agriculture; welcomes the revision of the EU GI policy to allow protected geographical indications or designations of origin to further contribute to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of European regions, benefiting producers, consumers and society as a whole through the production of high quality products that create a strong link to the regions; stresses the need to improve the recognition of their authenticity among consumers who are not always in a position to distinguish European GIs from other products without the designation; considers it also necessary to reduce the administrative burden for small producers who wish to join these quality schemes and to strengthen the protection of GIs against misuse or imitation at international level; reiterates their important role in trade between the EU and partner countries;
88. Highlights the recognition in the strategy that most Europeans' diets are not in line with recommendations for healthy eating, and that a population-wide shift in consumption patterns is needed towards more healthy foods, diets and lifestyles, including increased consumption of sustainably and regionally produced plants and plant-based foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and legumes, and to address the overconsumption of meat and ultra-processed products, as well as products high in

sugars, salt and fats, which will also benefit the environment and animal welfare and secure a more resilient economy; emphasises that EU-wide science-based recommendations, including clear objectives, for sustainable, healthy and more balanced diets, taking into account the cultural and regional diversity of European foods and diets, as well as consumers' needs, would help and encourage consumers and inform Member States' own efforts to integrate sustainability elements in national dietary advice; calls on the Commission to develop such recommendations and specific actions to effectively promote healthy, sustainable and more balanced diets;

89. Welcomes the fact that the strategy rightly recognises the role and influence of the food environment in shaping consumption patterns and the need to make it easier for consumers to choose healthy and sustainable diets; encourages the Commission and the Member States to take a more systematic and evidence-based approach in order to facilitate creating healthy, sustainable and fair food environments instead of only relying on a code of conduct; reiterates the importance of promoting healthy, more balanced and sustainable diets by improving the food environment, raising consumer awareness of the impacts of consumption patterns, including via digital channels, and providing information on diets that are better for human health and have a lower carbon and environmental footprint, such as products from short local and regional supply chains, which should be accompanied by a range of measures to make food production more sustainable by default;
90. Calls for a comprehensive and complementary range of measures, including regulatory measures and consumer awareness campaigns to reduce the burden that overconsumption of highly processed foods as well as of other products with high salt, sugar and fat content place on public health; calls on the major food producers and retailers to swiftly and seriously reformulate those processed foods not covered by EU quality schemes where improvements towards a healthier composition can be achieved, and welcomes the Commission's intention to launch initiatives to stimulate this reformulation, including by setting maximum levels of sugar, fats and salt in certain processed foods, and urges the Commission to closely monitor the progress in reformulation; underlines that such reformulations should also seek to minimise health risks posed by food improvement agents, pesticide residues and harmful chemicals; calls for particular attention to be given to food for children and other special purpose foods and for an effective and EU-wide regulatory approach to tackle the exposure of children and adolescents to advertising and marketing of processed foods high in fat, sugar and salt on broadcast and digital media;
91. Considers that further development and sustainable innovation in the field of plant protein production and alternative sources of protein in the EU, such as insects or algae, is a way of effectively addressing many of the environmental and climate challenges that EU agriculture is facing, as well as preventing deforestation, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation in countries outside the EU and reducing Europe's current dependence regarding its supply of plant protein; calls on the Commission to build upon its report on the development of plant proteins in the European Union (COM(2018)0757) and to present an EU protein transition strategy covering the demand and the supply side to support and boost the sustainable production of protein crops, including local supplies of feedstuffs and food production, enhancing EU self-sufficiency and lowering global environmental and climate impacts; underlines the

importance of reducing dependence on the importation of protein crops from overseas;

92. Recalls its call to extend the EU generic risk assessment across the legislation to prevent the exposure of consumers to hazardous substances in food;
93. Recalls that nutrient profiles, which are long overdue, remain pertinent and necessary to meet the objectives of Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods<sup>72</sup>; welcomes the announcement of a legislative proposal to establish nutrient profiles; points out that many food products, including some marketed towards children, continue to use health and nutrition claims despite them having high levels of nutrients of concern; stresses that a robust set of nutrient profiles must be developed to prohibit the use of nutrition and health claims on foods high in fats, sugars and/or salt; calls for particular attention to be given to food for children and other special purpose foods;
94. Recognises that front-of-pack nutritional labels have been identified by international public health bodies such as the World Health Organization as a key tool to help consumers make more informed, more balanced and healthier food choices; stresses that front-of-pack nutrition labelling system, which is consistent with and complementary to dietary guidelines, should help consumers to make healthier food choices by providing them with comprehensible information on the food they consume; calls 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; stresses furthermore that 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; calls on the Commission to duly take into account the specific characteristics of single ingredient products and products under European quality schemes (PDO, PGI, GI etc.), particularly the invariability of their composition, while stressing that any considerations regarding potential exemptions should be based on scientific reasoning; calls for the establishment of a digital system for the provision of additional voluntary information for food products (EU4healthyfood), and suggests that this information could be provided in a digital manner via a QR code and be retrieved easily by the consumer;
95. Notes that healthy products, including food, may contain natural or synthetic ingredients which have different impacts on the environment and the health of consumers; Calls for the introduction of mandatory labelling schemes for healthy products, indicating whether an ingredient is of synthetic origin when obtained by a chemical synthesis, especially in cases where natural equivalents exist;
96. Calls on the Commission to make an assessment of changes in consumer behaviour, such as in the online purchasing of food products;
97. Welcomes the Commission's initiative aimed at improving origin labelling and its consideration of extending it to a wider range of products; reiterates its call for

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<sup>72</sup> OJ L 404, 30.12.2006, p. 9.



mandatory origin labelling; stresses that this should be comprehensive and harmonised and cover all food products and should cover catering facilities, restaurants and retail and be fully verifiable and traceable and not undermine the proper functioning of the internal market; emphasises that the food information regulation<sup>73</sup> needs to be revised with a focus on milk and meat as ingredients; calls on the Commission to rectify the current practice whereby products whose primary ingredients are not locally or regionally sourced can be marketed as such if the origin of these non-local primary ingredients is indicated in the small print, and to make the origin of the primary ingredients more visible to the consumer; calls on the Commission to propose legislative changes for honey labelling rules that will result in better consumer information and to support the EU beekeeping sector by reinforcing import inspections in order to prevent imports of adulterated honey while stressing that all country-of-origin labelling needs to be effectively enforced to combat food fraud;

98. Welcomes the Commission's intention to create a sustainable food labelling framework and calls on the Commission to define the methodology and specify which dimensions of sustainability would be covered while ensuring that the new scheme does not conflict with existing environmental frameworks such as the EU ecolabel or the organic logo; highlights that many unsubstantiated and even misleading environmental claims and advertising methods are currently being used and calls on the Commission to introduce a regulatory framework establishing a clear, swift and efficient pre-approval procedure for all sustainability claims and labels; stresses that such a framework would protect consumers from untruthful sustainability claims while ensuring that businesses that genuinely strive for more environmentally friendly operations are duly rewarded for their efforts; stresses the need for inspections by public control authorities of any label allowed on food products;
99. Underlines the need to establish labelling on animal products, which should be based on identifying the method of production as well as animal welfare indicators, and contain the place of birth, rearing and slaughter of the animal, and stresses that these requirements should be extended to processed products in order to increase transparency, help consumers to make a better choice and contribute to the welfare of animals; stresses that production and market uptake of plant-based proteins should be better supported, and calls furthermore for the long-overdue harmonisation of requirements with regard to labelling for vegetarian and vegan foods to be put forward without further delay;
100. Reaffirms its belief that policy measures to increase food system sustainability should not depend solely on shifting the responsibility to purchase sustainable products to consumers as this lacks effectiveness, while consumer choice is an important factor for the uptake of sustainably produced and healthier diets; underlines the importance of good nutritional and environmental education as well as the availability of easily comprehensible relevant information in this regard; emphasises that sustainability labelling should be based on scientific harmonised sustainability criteria, should entail inspections by public control authorities wherever possible, and new legislative measures where necessary; notes, however, that third-party certification and labelling

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<sup>73</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers. OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

alone are not effective but can be complementary tools in ensuring the transition to sustainable production and consumption; acknowledges that increasing transparency through methods such as labelling is an important element that can help consumers to make more sustainable purchasing decisions, which is important for achieving the transition to a more sustainable, regional and healthy food system;

101. Underlines that food prices must send the right signal to consumers; considers that true food prices, reflecting the true cost of production for farmers and also for the environment and society, are the most efficient way to achieve sustainable and equitable food systems in the long term; welcomes, therefore, the strategy's objective to guide the food industry towards practices that make the healthy and sustainable choice the easy, accessible and affordable one for consumers; supports giving Member States 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, as is already implemented in some Member States but not currently possible for all<sup>74</sup>, and a higher VAT rate on unhealthy food and food that has a high environmental footprint; recalls that household expenditure on food products varies significantly across EU Member States and affordability should be ensured for consumers in all Member States, while also ensuring fair income for primary producers for their sustainable and healthy products and increasing transparency and consumers' awareness regarding the costs and profits related to each stage of the food supply chain; invites the Commission to launch a study to quantify in economic terms the environmental and societal costs, including health-related costs, associated with the production and consumption of the most consumed food products on the EU market;
102. Calls for a revision of public procurement legislation with a view to introducing or reinforcing minimum mandatory criteria for kindergartens and schools, other public institutions and private companies delivering public services so as to encourage: sustainable food production, including traditional and typical foods with geographical indications; the consumption of local and, where possible, seasonal products; short supply chains including direct sales; higher animal welfare standards; and the reduction of food waste and packaging in line with the principles of the circular economy; calls for the promotion of healthier and balanced diets and dietary patterns by creating a food environment that makes healthy, informed and sustainable choices the easiest ones for consumers to make; calls on the Commission further to develop monitoring and reporting tools on sustainable food procurement;
103. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to revise the EU legislation on food contact materials (FCM) while regretting the lack of harmonised action until now and proposes that the Commission bring forward the date of publication of the proposal; insists on the need for a comprehensive, harmonised regulation of all FCMs including those materials and contaminants that are not yet covered at EU level, insists that this should be based on the precautionary principle, the principle of 'no data, no market', comprehensive safety assessments based on the latest scientific data and scientific work of the

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<sup>74</sup> Supporting the mid-term evaluation of the EU action plan on childhood obesity, The childhood obesity study. EPHORT consortium: Jolanda Boer, Jeanine Driesenaar, Anneke Blokstra, Francy Vennemann, Nikolai Pushkarev, Johan Hansen. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/7e0320dc-ee18-11e8-b690-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>



European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and EFSA, and stresses that effective enforcement and the provision of improved information to consumers are crucial; reiterates its call to revise the legislation on FCM in line with the regulation on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH), as well as classification, labelling and packaging regulations, and to insert, without further delay, specific provisions to substitute endocrine disrupting chemicals and other hazardous chemicals in all FCM while not affecting the packaging role in preserving food safety or quality; welcomes the intention of the Commission to establish rules for the safe recycling into food contact materials of plastic materials other than PET; stresses at the same time that equal safety requirements should be applied to virgin and recycled materials and that responsible actors in supply chains and final consumers have to be able to easily access information about the identity and safety of chemicals in food contact materials;

104. Highlights that food waste and loss have enormous environmental consequences, exacerbate climate change and are a waste of limited resources such as land, energy and water and a loss of revenue to farmers; reiterates its call to take the measures required to achieve a Union food waste reduction target of 30 % by 2025 and 50 % by 2030 compared to the 2014 baseline; underlines that binding targets at every stage of the supply chain, including primary production, pre-retail and retail, are needed to achieve this; calls on all Member States to establish and implement food waste prevention programmes that fully integrate the principles of the circular economy and include the promotion of short food supply chains, which lower the risk of generating food waste; stresses that CAP objectives include food waste prevention, emphasises that action should be encouraged to curb food waste occurring at primary production level and early stages of the supply chain, including unharvested food; underlines the importance of ensuring animal health, inter alia as a means to avoid food losses and waste at source and highlights that recovering plant-based food waste for animal feeding is a viable solution where food waste cannot be prevented; stresses the importance of raising public awareness and providing guidance on how to avoid food waste to promote long-term consumer behavioural change; calls on the Commission to identify any potential barriers that hinder a faster pace of reducing waste and calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure adequate financing for research, innovation, engagement of stakeholders and information and education campaigns through the creation of national food waste funds with the objective of eliminating waste;
105. Underlines that, in line with the waste hierarchy, the focus should be on prevention of food waste; welcomes the proposed revision to clarify the current EU rules on date marking in order to prevent and reduce food waste and food loss; stresses that any change to date marking rules should be science based and should improve the use, expression and presentation of date marking by all actors in the food chain, including in the hospitality industry, and its understanding by consumers, in particular ‘use by’ and ‘best before’ labelling, while at the same time not undermining food safety or quality; emphasises that harmonised date marking would help to combat food waste; calls for an accompanying revision of rules on the distribution of food stuffs, with the objectives of identifying and eliminating potential barriers to waste reduction, increasing efficiency and boosting competition and innovation;
106. Stresses the importance of fighting food fraud and counterfeiting in the food sector

which mislead consumers and distort competition in the internal market, highlights the need to urgently address the complex issue of food fraud, more specifically including mislabelling, the replacement, dilution, addition, removal or substitution of ingredients with cheaper or substandard replacements, unapproved chemical treatments or processes and falsified documentation, and paying particular attention to the counterfeiting and illegal trade of geographical indications; highlights the importance of imposing effective penalties which should fit the crime and calls on Member States to adequately reflect that principle in national legislation, in line with the Official Controls Regulation<sup>75</sup>; calls on the Commission to work on a European force against food fraud to enhance coordination between the different relevant national agencies in order to ensure the enforcement of EU food standards both within the EU single market and regarding our imports;

107. Urges the Commission to monitor and enforce the continuous allocation of adequate resources for official food controls in order to ensure that a sufficient number of controls is performed to verify the compliance with food and feed requirements and urges the Commission and the Member States to strengthen customs checks to ensure compliance with EU production standards, inter alia on food safety, antimicrobial resistance, animal welfare and plant protection products, as well as to avoid the entry of plant and animal pests into the EU; calls on the Member States to stringently and consistently enforce the product traceability provisions of the General Food Law (GFL) Regulation<sup>76</sup> throughout the food chain; highlights that in cases of incidents which involve risks for public health and safety, public authorities should fully, properly and immediately inform the public about the potential risks posed by the food products concerned, in line with the relevant provision of the GFL Regulation;

### *Enabling the transition*

108. Underlines 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, diversified, local, healthy and inclusive European food system; encourages the agri-food sector to actively use the funding earmarked for it in Horizon Europe in this regard; emphasises equally the need to facilitate the investments needed to encourage sustainable practices and the circular economy and bio-economy;
109. Points out that the introduction of new smart-farming technologies and techniques, including digitalisation and protected cropping systems, can be beneficial for improving efficiency, the use of resources and environmental sustainability, and can deliver positive economic benefits from agricultural production; acknowledges that innovation must remain compatible with the restoration and promotion of traditional practices and knowledge, especially those adapted to the agro-climatic characteristics of each area;
110. Highlights the importance of implementing the various integrated pest management

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<sup>75</sup> Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products. OJ L 95, 7.4.2017, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety. OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1.

practices and of providing independent farm advisory services in ensuring a broader and inclusive transfer of knowledge to the farming sector; believes that this would be helped via the establishment of a system for the collection and dissemination of sustainable practices and by building upon the existing specialised training systems for farmers in Member States, without introducing additional administrative burdens for farmers in Member States; calls on the Member States to dedicate a sufficient share of their allocations for farm advisory services to services and technical assistance related to sustainable practices that contribute to the objectives of the strategy; believes that, given their acquired knowledge and know-how, the input of small-scale primary producers would also play an important part in achieving real results at the level of individual agricultural holdings;

111. Emphasises the importance of higher education institutions in fostering the promotion of research and innovation and providing advice on sustainable best practices; recognises the role of universities in the development and transition of the agri-food sectors in regions with distinct characteristics, including outermost regions; welcomes the strategy's intention to help SME food processors and small retail and food service operators develop new skills, while ensuring that they are not subjected to additional red tape; stresses the strategic importance of collective approaches through producer organisations and cooperatives to bring farmers together in achieving their goals;
112. Highlights that multiple synergies are possible between agriculture and European space policy in order to properly understand soils and food quality and meet the challenges of the environment, climate and demographic change; encourages the participation of all Member States in science and research programmes and calls on the Commission to take action to ensure that more equal progress is made in all Member States;
113. Recalls the need to promote effective agricultural knowledge and innovation systems (AKIS), enabling the agricultural sector to become more sustainable by speeding up innovation and fostering close cooperation between all interested stakeholders such as farmers, researchers, advisers, experts and NGOs, through high-quality and inclusive training and lifelong learning and by accelerating knowledge transfer, including on the implementation of integrated farming techniques such as integrated pest management for every crop;
114. Calls on the Member States, when designing and implementing their CAP National Strategic Plans, to take full advantage of the possibilities provided by AKIS; recalls, in addition, the need for a farm sustainability data network for the purposes of setting benchmarks for farm performance, documenting the uptake of sustainable farming practices and enabling the precise and tailored application of new production approaches at farm level, including by processing collected data and providing farmers and interested stakeholders with easy access to relevant information, especially on best practices; points out that data on agriculture and farmland is of public interest but that farmers' access to and control of their own farm data must be protected;
115. Highlights the importance of comprehensive access to fast broadband connections to facilitate the uptake of digital farming technologies at farm level and stresses the importance of supporting farmers in making efficient use of such innovative solutions while safeguarding their economic viability; recognises that farmers' organisations are

valuable contacts in developing information brokerage services geared towards innovation; stresses the importance of Horizon Europe in achieving the goals of research and innovation in the field of soil and food health, which has the potential to attract the next generation to the agricultural sector;

116. Highlights the fundamental role of independent farm advisory systems in disseminating innovation and knowledge, stimulating the exchange of experiences and promoting practical demonstrations, and calls on Member States in particular to provide comprehensive advice to farmers on adopting more sustainable production systems; encourages the Commission and the Member States to actively support bottom-up initiatives bringing farmers and citizens closer by working at local level and incorporating local knowledge, to better adapt to the specific realities on the ground; emphasises the importance of promoting the training of young farmers and entrepreneurs in sustainable farming and food systems;
117. Calls, in addition to farm advisory systems, for the establishment and the promotion of multi-stakeholder platforms that increase collaboration and mobilise the sharing of knowledge and technology, across the entire agricultural and food chain, to help scale up innovation and advance agricultural production systems; stresses, further, the importance of extending this possibility to all actors in the chain, without additional administrative burdens;
118. Highlights the key role that young farmers will have in accomplishing the transition to sustainable farming and in delivering on the aims of the strategy; underlines that the ecological transition of our food system is an opportunity to contribute to a vibrant countryside; stresses that the CAP should provide better support to young and new farmers in terms of income, generational renewal, training, youth employment, entrepreneurship and digitalisation especially in peripheral and very sparsely populated areas, so as to create a space enabling the inclusion and retention of young people in agriculture, given that they are likely to be the early adopters of new and more sustainable farming methods;
119. Highlights that young farmers and potential new entrants encounter difficulties in purchasing or leasing land and stresses the need to ease the way for young farmers to enter the sector; stresses the need to ensure that this strategy does not adversely affect the availability and price of land, leading to increased speculation and further hindering young people's access to land;
120. Notes that the concentration of farmland as well as land-grabbing in the EU, encouraged in some cases by policies at the local, regional, national and EU-level, can create difficulties for young farmers and new entrants seeking land on which to set up a farm; calls 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;
121. Considers, furthermore, that this strategy is an opportunity to improve the prospects of rural women and highlight the crucial role they play by providing women entrepreneurs with an enabling environment, including legal and political considerations, leading to greater access to information, knowledge and skills, as well as facilitating access to

financial resources, leading to the creation of more jobs in rural areas;

*Promoting the global transition*

122. Recalls the global responsibility of European food systems and their key role in setting global standards for food safety, environmental protection, social protection and animal welfare; reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of Policy Coherence for Development principles; calls 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 Union's high standards and to provide development assistance to support primary producers from developing countries in meeting those standards; welcomes the Commission's intention to take the environmental impacts of requested import tolerances into account; considers that embedded land use and land use change emissions from imported feed and food should be addressed;
123. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to 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;
124. Recalls that access to the EU market and its 450 million consumers provides our trading partners with a strong incentive to improve their sustainability as well as their production and labour standards; believes that the success of the Green Deal is closely connected to our trade policy;
125. Welcomes the Commission's 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 Union, and urges the Commission to present its proposals to that end as soon as possible; considers 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; stresses that the strategy must not favour imports of products from non-EU countries with a greater environmental and climate impact; notes, in this respect, that agri-food products from non-EU countries must therefore be subject to the same requirements, including zero-tolerance of residues of substances meeting the cut-off criteria;
126. Points to the need for safe and affordable food for a global population of around 10 billion by 2050 in the context of rapid population growth, climate change, the scarcity of natural resources and changing consumption patterns; calls on the Commission to strengthen the global dimension of the strategy to ensure the right to adequate food and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas and emphasises that EU policies on fair, sustainable and resilient food systems should explicitly address gender inequality; urges the Commission to provide support for developing countries to protect their infant industries, promote food security, support climate change mitigation for agriculture, and meet EU and international sustainability standards for exporting their agricultural products;
127. Stresses the need for the EU to champion human rights and the right to food as a central

principle and priority of food systems and as a fundamental tool to transform food systems and ensure the rights of the most marginalised to access nutritious foods and to **implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas;**

128. Stresses that, unless animal production standards in non-EU countries are aligned with those of the EU, imports of animal products from those countries should be forbidden;
129. Notes with concern that several audits carried out by DG Sante as well as detailed NGO investigations state that full traceability of live horses from Argentina destined to the European Union market is not ensured, involving food safety risks, and that animal welfare is compromised; calls on the Commission to suspend the import of horse meat from countries where applicable EU requirements relating to traceability and animal welfare are not complied with;
130. Recalls that structural animal experiments that are not indispensable should have no place in the food chain as Directive 2010/63/EU prescribes the replacement and reduction of the use of animals in procedures; calls on the Commission and Member States to stop the import and domestic production of Pregnant Mare Serum Gonadotropin (PMSG), which is extracted from the blood of pregnant horses that are systematically impregnated and exposed to blood collections, involving health and welfare issues;
131. Calls on the Commission to urgently present a proposal for an EU legal framework based on mandatory horizontal due diligence throughout the supply chain for EU and foreign companies operating in the single market that ensures sustainable supply chains and investments that are free from adverse environmental impacts including deforestation, forest degradation, ecosystem conversion and degradation and adverse impacts on human rights and governance, to promote good governance and to increase traceability and accountability in global supply chains;
132. Notes that the EU internal market is the world's biggest importer and exporter of agri-food products; is convinced that the EU should use its position as a major global player to set the benchmark and direct international standards for sustainable food systems, based on **respect for human and labour rights, fair competition, the precautionary principle, environmental protection and animal welfare in accordance with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules; considers that the protection of standards in these areas should be an integral part of all trade agreement chapters and that multilateral and regulatory cooperation could further help to achieve the objectives of the farm to fork strategy;**
133. Calls on the Commission to strengthen the trade aspects of the farm to fork strategy in order to ensure consistency between the common commercial policy, the customs union action plan, the common agricultural and fisheries policies and the objectives of the farm to fork strategy, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 and other related EU policies, and to pursue these objectives in a gradual way through the development of efficient green alliances in all relevant bilateral, regional and multilateral forums, including the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, as well as through an ambitious revision of its trade policy, by establishing a dedicated framework on sustainable agri-food



systems and products for future trade agreements, notably by means of non-regression clauses, improving the functioning of safeguard clauses and putting an end to imports of products that exceed the maximum EU residue limits for plant protection products, in accordance with WTO rules; calls on the Commission to promote better coordination between all public and private stakeholders in order to achieve these objectives; considers that the EU should reconfirm the mandate of the Committee on World Food Security as the international policy platform for food security and nutrition;

134. Welcomes the farm to fork strategy's ambition of ensuring enforceable trade and sustainable development chapters in all EU trade agreements as a means of guaranteeing that the greater regulatory ambitions put forward are consistent with EU trade policy and are complied with by non-EU countries that have signed trade agreements with the EU; emphasises the importance of strengthening the enforceability of trade and sustainable development chapters in trade agreements including, as a last resort, through sanction-based dispute mechanisms, in order to promote a global approach to climate and biodiversity, foster more sustainable agri-food production, **put a stop to global deforestation and raise labour standards in line with the eight core conventions of the ILO**; suggests that trade and sustainable development chapters should also take account of equivalent standards of production, such as animal welfare, traceability, antimicrobial resistance and the use of plant protection products, which should be systematically certified by independent audit and certification bodies at all production and distribution stages, as well as roadmaps with milestones subject to ex-post evaluations; urges the Commission to provide support to developing countries in a bid to promote food security and provide assistance on aligning with European standards for sustainable agri-food systems; expects the Commission's Chief Trade Enforcement Officer to fully perform his role in guaranteeing the proper application of the agreements in question by addressing market distortions, strengthening the enforcement of trade and sustainable development chapters and engaging in constructive dialogue with governments and stakeholders;
135. Calls for the EU to help developing countries adopt appropriate national legislation with a view to protecting threatened genetic resources for food and agriculture, guaranteeing the continued use and management of these by local communities, indigenous peoples, men and women, and ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from their use;
136. Takes note of the Commission's study on the cumulative economic impact of EU trade agreements on agriculture, which shows that under both a conservative and an ambitious scenario the EU's trade agreements are expected to generate a positive overall balance for its agri-food trade and greater value until 2030, thus demonstrating that EU trade agreements have a positive effect on the EU agricultural sector;
137. **Emphasises that the EU-Mercosur agreement cannot be ratified as it stands since, inter alia, it does not ensure biodiversity protection, in particular in the Amazon, nor does it bring guarantees as regards farming standards;**
138. Notes that **trade and sustainable development chapters do not address the potential negative impacts of trade agreements on land use change, deforestation or climate change; considers that European and international environmental, safety, animal welfare and social standards should be comprehensively applied to all chapters in trade**

agreements in order to prevent any other trade provisions from undermining those standards;

139. Points out that trade agreements should ensure that the parties involved actively engage in the promotion of sustainable development principles and that international standards are in line with the EU's environmental and climate ambitions; considers, furthermore, that these agreements should take account of the binding nature of compliance with the Paris Agreement in order to guarantee a global transition to sustainable food systems;
140. Points out that farming and fishing are vital to the development of sustainable economic activity in the outermost regions and highlights the contribution and added value of these sectors with regard to food security and responding to public demand for sufficient, safe and high-quality products; calls for the structural agronomic and trade constraints of the outermost regions referred to in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to be systematically taken into account during the implementation of the farm to fork strategy and the subsequent legislative proposals, in order to enable those regions to compete on a level playing field and ensure the availability of viable alternative solutions to the agri-food sectors if their means of production and trade flows are restricted;
141. Welcomes the proposed new initiative on climate and trade at the WTO; underlines the importance of using this framework to develop a comprehensive and sustainable agri-food system based on common and ambitious production standards; urges the Commission to engage proactively at the WTO to enable an ecological transition, ensure that trade policy is consistent with the SDGs, continue negotiations on transparent food security stocks and, in particular, prevent situations where agri-food products become the adjustment variable or a collateral victim of trade conflicts, while continuing to develop an ambitious, WTO-compatible sustainable trade policy;
142. Welcomes references to relevant UN processes in the farm to fork strategy; highlights the need for the EU to support the Committee on World Food Security and its civil society mechanism as the foremost multilateral policy platform on food systems; calls on the Commission to promote the global transition towards sustainable food systems and food security in all the relevant international forums, including the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit;
143. Stresses how important it is to share modern technologies and expertise with developing countries and train local and European farmers in order to help them implement innovative agricultural practices, as the agricultural sector is crucial for food security and employment in those regions;
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144. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

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. This included several long awaited evaluations and reports on pesticide and nutrition legislation and a roadmap for a fitness check and revision of the existing animal welfare legislation, including on animal transport and the slaughter of animals, to ensure a higher level of animal welfare. The ENVI and AGRI committees have decided to jointly draw up an own initiative report on the Farm to Food strategy.

The ENVI rapporteur welcomes the Farm to Fork Strategy as a much needed first step towards ensuring healthy food for all and making sure that the way food is produced and consumed in the EU will respect the boundaries of the Earth that sustains us, and stresses that there is much work to be done to achieve that. The way in which money prevails over life and essential values is most evident in the agricultural and food sector, where economies of scale threaten to make life on Earth unbearable or even impossible in the near future.

Over the past decades, many reports have been published with regard to the detrimental impacts of our food system on the environment and public health, and many practical and policy solutions have been put forward<sup>1</sup>. The ENVI rapporteur welcomes these much needed analyses and policy suggestions and draws particular inspiration from the IPES-Food report *Towards a Common Food Policy for the EU*<sup>2</sup>.

Industrial livestock production and chemical-intensive monocultures are driving high greenhouse gas emissions, soil degradation, air pollution, water contamination, biodiversity loss and are compromising animal welfare, thereby undermining the critical ecosystems upon which all life on Earth depends. Globally, food and farming systems contribute up to 30% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Agriculture is responsible for some 90% of EU ammonia emissions, which has significant negative effects on the natural environment and is a major contributor to the air pollution that kills 400,000 Europeans each year. Pesticide and fertiliser use continues to seriously threaten biodiversity (including crucial pollinators) and human health and must be drastically reduced.

The EU is increasingly outsourcing the environmental footprint of its food systems. More than 30% of the land required to meet EU food demand is located outside Europe. The EU imports millions of tons of soya-based animal feed every year, including from South American countries where deforestation (responsible for 20% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions), evictions, pesticide poisoning and human rights abuses have been alleged in intensive export cropping zones. EU imports have been estimated to account for almost one quarter of the global trade in soy, beef, leather and palm oil resulting from illegal forest clearance in the

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<sup>1</sup> Such as: EAT Lancet Commission 2019 report *Food in The Anthropocene: the EAT-Lancet Commission on Healthy Diets From Sustainable Food Systems*; IPCC 2019 *Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems*; the EEA 2017 report *Food in a green light - A systems approach to sustainable food*, ECA's special reports on EU CAP and Biodiversity policies; The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (wrr) 2014 report- *Towards a Food Policy*, and many others

<sup>2</sup> International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) (2019) *Towards a Common Food Policy for the EU*, [http://www.ipes-food.org/\\_img/upload/files/CFP\\_FullReport.pdf](http://www.ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/CFP_FullReport.pdf)

tropics.

Less than half of EU fish and seafood consumption is met by domestic production, meaning that Europe also has a huge impact on global marine resources. This is exacerbated by the fact that around 20% of the food produced in the EU is lost or wasted, costing €143 billion per year in terms of wasted resources and environmental impact.

Food systems are also driving health impacts through changing diets. Unhealthy diets, high in salt, sugar, fat and animal protein are a leading risk factor for disease and mortality in Europe. They are responsible for almost half of the burden of cardiovascular disease, which is the leading cause of death in the EU. Chronic diseases, which are often diet-related, account for up to 80% of healthcare costs in the EU. Over half of the European population is overweight, more than 20% are obese and these numbers are rising. Antimicrobial resistance and exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) via foods and food packaging, plus the agricultural contamination of water sources also generate major health externalities.

Current responses –from public policies and from the private sector – are failing to address these severe and interconnected challenges in our food systems adequately. Prevailing solutions have failed to reconcile the multiple aspects of sustainability (economic, social, and environmental), and have often traded them off against each other. They have relied on and reinforced a highly specialised, industrialised, capitalised, standardised and export-oriented model of agriculture and food production – a model that systematically generates negative impacts and externalities. Faith has been placed in technology-led, market-led, and industry-led change that is based on the ability of large companies with extensive supply chains to reach large numbers of people. Yet, the current incentives for conserving resources, promoting biodiversity, sequestering carbon and protecting public health are clearly insufficient to redirect innovation pathways. The reliance on self-regulation in many parts of the food chain has proved to be highly ineffective.

The ENVI rapporteur believes it is high time for a holistic approach to tackle the problems in our current food system in an integrated manner. A fundamental change of direction is required in order to put food systems on a more sustainable course. The various policies affecting food systems, including agriculture and trade, must be urgently reformed in order to address climate change, halt biodiversity loss, curb obesity and make farming viable for the next generation. The nature of the challenge requires comprehensive public policy-driven responses.

Moving towards integrated food policies can remedy the democratic deficit in food systems and rebalance power. By shifting the focus from agriculture to food, a wider range of stakeholders can be meaningfully involved in designing and assessing policies. Healthy food environments, from farm to fork, should become a key objective for action at both an EU and national level, in order to look collectively at production, distribution, retail and consumption and to build comprehensive intervention packages. Consumers will play a crucial role in this much-needed transition and ought to be enabled to make healthy and sustainable choices, amongst others by comprehensive, independent and science based consumer information.

Food is a basic need for our existence and a human right. The production of our food therefore deserves our full attention. Healthy, sustainable agriculture is possible if we respect nature, restore nutrient cycles, reduce chemical inputs and pay farmers a fair price for their

products. Citizens also need to understand fully where food comes from, how it is produced and whether the price they pay for it actually covers all the production and environmental costs. We must ensure access to land, clean water and healthy soils and move to a regenerative kind of agriculture, which **is climate resilient, agro-ecological and socially just**. We should put trade in the service of sustainable development, which requires a rethinking of the way we currently import and export foodstuffs all over the world. We also need to critically reflect on the big corporate interests, which threaten nutritional security. Building fairer, shorter and cleaner supply chains and promoting sufficient, healthy and sustainable diets for all, including building-in the right incentives into food prices, are essential.

According to the ENVI rapporteur, the precautionary and do no harm principles, rectifying problems at the source, extending producer responsibility and true cost accounting should be leading principles in the transition towards a healthy and sustainable food system. The legislative framework that the Commission has announced must set the agenda for a fundamental change in the entire food system. All sectoral legislation and policies should contribute to that goal, and be made to give the right incentives for all actors in the food chain to make the sustainable choices, which are needed to ensure that the way we produce and consume is aligned with the planetary boundaries, guidelines for health and the moral codes we want to live by. Our knives and forks are the most important weapons that we have in the fight against climate change, poverty, hunger, disease, animal suffering and biodiversity loss. It is high time we start using them effectively.

From the perspective of the AGRI Rapporteur, the publication of the Commission's communication "The Farm to Fork strategy" establishes the link between the European Green Deal and the European Food system.

This brings together on one hand the European agriculture and food sector and its extensive legal framework, its significant budget and most of all, the wealth of contributions to the daily well-being of Europa citizens; and on the other hand, climate change, the most urgent challenge humankind is facing across all countries and human activities.

In terms of policy, the EU's most integrated policy (Common Agriculture Policy) and most comprehensive legislation (General Food Law) are called upon to contribute to the most ambitious project of the current European Commission and European Parliament mandate and the most pressing objective of the EU as such: to achieve climate neutrality in Europe by 2050.

The European Food system is of primordial importance for the European economy: More than 47 million persons in more than 15 million holdings produce almost €900 billion turnover annually. All food production actors (agricultural producers and the food processing industry) jointly account for 7.5% of employment and 3.7% of EU's total value added. In detail, this translates into around 12 million farms producing agricultural products for processing by about 300.000 enterprises in the food and drink industry. These food processors sell their products through the 2.8 million mainly Small-and-Medium sized Enterprises (SME) within the food distribution and food service industry, which deliver food to the EU's 500 million consumers.

However, all these average figures mask a great diversity in both production structure as well as consumption patterns: while the average EU farm has 16ha of agricultural land, 66% of

them have less than 5ha and only 7% have more than 50ha of agricultural land. Household expenditure on food and drinks on EU average is 14% while in Romania it is 30% and in Austria 9% of disposable income.

All these differences however come together in one single European Food System, built on two principles:

Multifunctional agriculture driven by family farms, delivering a variety of goods and services, ensuring quality food production, good agriculture practice, high environmental standards and vibrant rural areas throughout the European Union;

Precautionary principle covering both agricultural inputs and outputs, which enables decision-makers to adopt appropriate measures in the face of scientific evidence about an environmental or human health hazard.

Both of these principles developed over time, undergoing political reforms and substantial crises, while reflecting demographic changes and shifting consumption patterns.

The challenge arising from climate change is not the only one the European Food system is facing: decrease in soil quality and organic matter and loss of insect, bird and mammal life in intensive agriculture areas; unbalanced diets due to high energy, processed (sugary) foodstuffs being more easily available than healthy fruit & vegetables; increasing economic pressure due to high land prices and capital-intensive technology as well as market concentration in the up- and downstream sectors.

A key issue in a successful effort to allow the European Food system to contribute its share to achieving climate neutrality is the consistency of laws and policies avoiding contradictions while ensuring stability of rules and procedures and thus long term planning and investments, drawing from a thorough ex-ante assessment of all legislative proposals with the active involvement of stakeholders.

Another element of high importance is to pursue a know-how driven and evidence-based approach throughout the Food system, from specialised training for food business operators to Farm Advisory Services, allowing to bring the results of basic and applied research as both social and technological innovation to real-life use.

A key driver of a transition of the Food system is consumer responsibility and choice, where the supply of sustainable agriculture products and artisanal food production meets the demand of consumers in a food environment, that allows the consumer to make an informed choice for healthy, quality and local products.

While the European Food system continued to deliver safe, affordable, and high quality products throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, this crisis has brought to light the need for more resilience by reducing dependencies in terms of access to (export) markets and (third country) **inputs as well as seasonal labour** and the flow of goods within the Single market.

Providing support to primary producers and food crafts in the transition is crucial by tailor-made support programmes in CAP National Strategic Plans but also targeted measures in the wider legal framework including competition rules and the fight against unfair trading



practices as well as allowing for flexibility in the food chain rules.

Finally, the future CAP 2022-2027 plays a critical role notably in the design and management of the objectives and measures (Ecoschemes) set in the National Strategic Plans, empowering all actors in the European Food system to embark on new green business models, integrating environmental and social sustainability criteria while ensuring economic viability and freedom of choice.

The AGRI Rapporteur firmly believes that focusing on these core elements in the holistic approach of the Farm to Fork Strategy will allow the European Food system to deliver to the European objective of climate neutrality by 2050.

18.3.2021

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system (2020/2260(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Paolo De Castro

(\*) Associated committee – Rule 57 of the Rules of Procedure

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on International Trade calls on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committees responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into their motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses that EU trade policy, in particular after its current review process, can play a major role in the transition towards more sustainable and resilient agri-food systems, in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal and its ‘do no harm’ principle, the Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a view to ensuring full alignment with the objective of limiting global warming and biodiversity loss;
2. Recognises that farming in the EU accounts for 1 % of total greenhouse gas emissions worldwide<sup>1</sup> and acknowledges the efforts of the agricultural sector in climate action; stresses the need to continue providing farmers in the EU, in particular small farmers, with adequate support to ensure compliance with sustainability standards, competitiveness, vibrant rural areas, decent incomes and a fair standard of living for the European agricultural community; calls for an effective just transition, including through multilateral engagement and international cooperation, towards an

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<sup>1</sup> European Environment Agency, data extracted in September 2017 (excluding emissions/removals from land-use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) activities).

environmentally, socially and economically sustainable global food system that allows for a level playing field which leaves nobody behind;

3. Notes that the EU internal market is the world's biggest importer and exporter of agri-food products; is convinced that the EU should use its position as a major global player to set the benchmark and direct international standards for sustainable food systems, **based on respect for human and labour rights**, fair competition, the precautionary principle, environmental protection and animal welfare in accordance with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules; considers that the protection of standards in these areas should be an integral part of all trade agreement chapters and that multilateral and regulatory cooperation could further help to achieve the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy;
4. Believes that sustainable production should be a key characteristic of EU agri-food products and EU trade agreements, and should be further promoted by expanding the concept of quality to social and environmental aspects and ensuring that the concept of sustainable production encompasses the global climate, environmental footprint and the consumption of resources per kilogram of product, in addition to the well-established international reputation of EU-agri food products for being safe and healthy; stresses, in this regard, that EU quality schemes and geographical indications, together with an ambitious, market-oriented and comprehensive EU promotion policy, should be considered an asset with regard to the objective of fostering sustainable trade;
5. Welcomes the Commission's 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 are not exported outside the Union; urges the Commission to present a legislative proposal to that end as soon as possible; welcomes the Commission's announcement to review import tolerances for substances that meet the cut-off criteria and urges the Commission to adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards residues of those substances; **encourages the Commission to impose standards to prevent workers and residents from being contaminated from pesticide use**;
6. Calls on the Commission to strengthen the trade aspects of the Farm to Fork Strategy in order to ensure consistency between the Common Commercial Policy, the Customs Union Action Plan, the Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies and the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and other related EU policies, and to pursue these objectives in a gradual way through the development of efficient Green Alliances in all relevant bilateral, regional and multilateral forums, including the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, as well as through an ambitious revision of its trade policy, by establishing a dedicated framework on sustainable agri-food systems and products for future trade agreements, notably by means of non-regression clauses, improving the functioning of safeguard clauses and putting an end to imports of products that exceed the maximum EU residue limits for plant protection products, in accordance with WTO rules; calls on the Commission to promote better coordination between all public and private stakeholders in order to achieve these objectives; considers that the EU should reconfirm the mandate of the Committee on World Food Security as the international policy platform for food security and nutrition;

7. Stresses the need, due in part to the disruptions to global production chains and increased price volatility caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, to develop open strategic autonomy for the EU with the aim of ensuring access to key markets and reducing dependency on imports of critical goods such as plant-based protein sources; reiterates that agri-food systems must be acknowledged as a crucial aspect of the EU's open strategic autonomy in order to ensure sufficient availability of safe and good-quality food and to maintain functioning and resilient food supply chains and trade flows during future crises, in line with Article 2(1) of the Paris Agreement;
8. Highlights the importance of improving transparency in the food supply chain and of better traceability of all production and distribution processes in accordance with the right of European consumers to have more information on the origin and production methods of the foodstuffs they consume; notes that innovative digital tools such as blockchain and appropriate mandatory labelling on the origin of food products have the potential to significantly increase transparency and traceability, thereby combatting fraud and illegal production methods, as well as improving consumer confidence; calls for the promotion of local markets and sustainable food supply chains in order to preserve the production specificities and distinctiveness of EU products;
9. Welcomes the Farm to Fork Strategy ambition of ensuring enforceable trade and sustainable development chapters in all EU trade agreements as a means of guaranteeing that the greater regulatory ambitions put forward are consistent with EU trade policy and complied with by third countries that have signed trade agreements with the EU; emphasises the importance of strengthening the enforceability of trade and sustainable development chapters in trade agreements including, as a last resort, through sanction-based dispute mechanisms, in order to promote a global approach to climate and biodiversity, foster more sustainable agri-food production, put a stop to global deforestation and raise labour standards in line with the eight core conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO); suggests that trade and sustainable development chapters should also take account of equivalent standards of production, such as animal welfare, traceability, antimicrobial resistance and the use of plant protection products, which should be systematically certified by independent audit and certification bodies at all production and distribution stages, as well as roadmaps with milestones subject to ex-post evaluations; urges the Commission to provide support to developing countries in a bid to promote food security and provide assistance on aligning with European standards for sustainable agri-food systems; expects the Commission's Chief Trade Enforcement Officer to fully perform his role in guaranteeing the proper application of the agreements in question by addressing market distortions, strengthening the enforcement of trade and sustainable development chapters and engaging in constructive dialogue with governments and stakeholders;
10. Notes that trade and sustainable development chapters do not address the potential negative impacts of trade agreements on land use change, deforestation or climate change; considers that European and international environmental, safety, animal welfare and social standards should be comprehensively applied to all chapters in trade agreements in order to prevent any other trade provisions from undermining those

standards;

11. Is convinced that legislation for mandatory horizontal due diligence at EU level throughout the supply chain for EU and foreign companies operating in the single market is necessary to achieve the SDGs, promote good governance and increase traceability and accountability in global supply chains;
12. Stresses the risk of putting the EU agri-food sector at a competitive disadvantage owing to a lack of global convergence of standards and increased costs for consumers; recalls that impact assessments are an integral part of the EU rulemaking process and that economic, social and environmental effects must be taken into account; calls on the Commission to draw up a comprehensive ex-ante, scientific and cumulative impact assessment based on public consultations with representatives of the agri-food chain and other relevant stakeholders and to publish regular follow-up assessments together with the baselines and reference periods of the targets envisaged in the Farm to Fork Strategy, as well as proportionate measures, a suitable timeframe for adaptation and compensation mechanisms with a view to maintaining the competitiveness, productivity and social resilience of the EU agri-food sector and preventing agricultural production and the ensuing environmental footprint from being outsourced and relocated to third countries by, in particular, ensuring the reciprocity of standards and effective monitoring for all agri-food and forestry products imported into the EU;
13. Underlines that a coordinated and harmonised approach to unfair competition practices and the need for equivalent food standards, paying due regard to the precautionary principle, is of vital importance to ensure an uninterrupted supply of foodstuffs in all Member States and effective and efficient security and customs checks, including through the elimination of non-tariff barriers in third countries, of divergences in the level and quality of controls, and of differences in customs procedures and sanctions policies at the EU's points of entry into the Customs Union; urges the Commission to strengthen customs checks by means of direct, unified control mechanisms in coordination with the Member States and in full compliance with the principle of subsidiarity in order to prevent food fraud, adulteration and imports of products exceeding the maximum acceptable residue limit of active substances, in particular substances that meet the EU cut-off criteria, to enhance protection of intellectual property rights, notably geographical indications, and ensure respect for EU production standards, such as animal welfare, antimicrobial resistance and the use of plant protection products, as well as avoid the possible entry of plant and animal pests into the EU so as to ensure the highest level of sanitary and phytosanitary protection;
14. Points out that trade agreements should ensure that the parties involved actively engage in the promotion of sustainable development principles and that international standards are in line with the EU's environmental and climate ambitions; considers, furthermore, that these agreements should take account of the binding nature of compliance with the Paris Agreement in order to guarantee a global transition to sustainable food systems;
15. Ask the Commission to develop the Farm to Fork Strategy taking account of the fact that each sector has different production methods that are more or less sustainable; calls on the Commission to emphasise that a balanced diet should include all food;

16. Points out that farming and fishing are vital to the development of sustainable economic activity in the outermost regions and highlights the contribution and added value of these sectors with regard to food security and responding to public demand for sufficient, safe and high-quality products; calls for the structural agronomic and trade constraints of the outermost regions referred to in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to be systematically taken into account during the implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy and the subsequent legislative proposals, in order to enable those regions to compete on a level playing field and ensure the availability of viable alternative solutions to the agri-food sectors if their means of production and trade flows are restricted;
17. Emphasises the importance of granting equal access to technological and scientific innovations, including plant breeding innovations capable of improving the resistance of varieties and fostering the diversity of genetic resources and food production systems, while devoting particular attention to local breeds, in compliance with EU food safety regulations and the precautionary principle in particular; stresses that forging strong relationships with trade partners on research, development and the transfer of knowledge in areas such as land management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, agro-ecology and fair and resilient value chains could be a key factor in fostering more sustainable agri-food production while safeguarding agricultural productivity and supporting the competitiveness of EU farming on global markets; recommends that cooperation should also focus on smallholder farmers and small-scale food producers, as they would benefit the most from such cooperation;
18. Welcomes the proposed new initiative on climate and trade at the WTO; underlines the importance of using this framework to develop a comprehensive and sustainable agri-food system based on common and ambitious production standards; urges the Commission to engage proactively at the WTO to enable an ecological transition, ensure that trade policy is consistent with the SDGs, continue negotiations on transparent food security stocks and, in particular, prevent situations where agri-food products become the adjustment variable or collateral victim of trade conflicts, while continuing to develop an ambitious, WTO-compatible sustainable trade policy;
19. Takes note of the Commission's study on the cumulative economic impact of EU trade agreements on agriculture, which shows that under both a conservative and an ambitious scenario the EU's trade agreements are expected to generate a positive overall balance for its agri-food trade and greater value until 2030, thus demonstrating that EU trade agreements have a positive effect on the EU agricultural sector;
20. Asks the Commission to explore the necessity of applying specific conditions to and exemptions for certain food categories or foodstuffs such as olive oil and for those covered by geographical indications, for the assessment of harmonised nutritional labelling, in view of their key role in EU trade agreements and protecting local value at a global level.



## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	18.3.2021
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 43 -: 0 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Barry Andrews, Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Tiziana Beghin, Geert Bourgeois, Saskia Bricmont, Udo Bullmann, Daniel Caspary, Miroslav Číž, Arnaud Danjean, Paolo De Castro, Emmanouil Fragkos, Raphaël Glucksmann, Markéta Gregorová, Roman Haider, Christophe Hansen, Heidi Hautala, Danuta Maria Hübner, Karin Karlsbro, Maximilian Krah, Danilo Oscar Lancini, Bernd Lange, Margarida Marques, Gabriel Mato, Sara Matthieu, Emmanuel Maurel, Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó, Samira Rafaela, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Massimiliano Salini, Helmut Scholz, Liesje Schreinemacher, Sven Simon, Dominik Tarczyński, Mihai Tudose, Kathleen Van Brempt, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, Jörgen Warborn, Iuliu Winkler, Jan Zahradil
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Marco Campomenosi, Jérémy Decerle, Jean-Lin Lacapelle, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

43	+
ECR	Geert Bourgeois, Emmanouil Fragkos, Dominik Tarczyński, Jan Zahradil
ID	Marco Campomenosi, Roman Haider, Maximilian Krah, Jean-Lin Lacapelle, Danilo Oscar Lancini
NI	Tiziana Beghin, Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó
PPE	Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Daniel Caspary, Arnaud Danjean, Christophe Hansen, Danuta Maria Hübner, Gabriel Mato, Massimiliano Salini, Sven Simon, Jörgen Warborn, Iuliu Winkler, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
Renew	Barry Andrews, Jérémy Decerle, Karin Karlsbro, Samira Rafaela, Liesje Schreinemacher, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne
S&D	Udo Bullmann, Miroslav Číž, Paolo De Castro, Raphaël Glucksmann, Bernd Lange, Margarida Marques, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Mihai Tudose, Kathleen Van Brempt
The Left	Emmanuel Maurel, Helmut Scholz
Verts/ALE	Saskia Bricmont, Markéta Gregorová, Heidi Hautala, Sara Matthieu

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

23.4.2021

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT**

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety  
and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system  
(2020/2260(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Benoît Biteau

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committees responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into their motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that about 75 % of plant genetic diversity has been lost worldwide; whereas wide-scale genetic erosion increases our vulnerability to climate change and the prevalence of new pests and diseases;
  - B. whereas industrial agriculture and breeding are driving habitat loss and creating conditions for viruses, such as COVID-19, to emerge and spread;
  - C. whereas the consolidation of the food sector, including through patenting, is driving a reduction in seed and livestock genetic diversity;
  - D. whereas although farmers' rights were enshrined in the FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in 2004, intellectual property rules have often been at odds with them, putting local, traditional and indigenous seed systems at risk;
1. Points to the need to provide safe and affordable food for a global population of around 10 billion by 2050 in the context of rapid population growth, climate change, the scarcity of natural resources and changing consumption patterns; highlights that food systems are currently unable to provide the world's population with diversified and good-quality food in sufficient quantity or enable it to cope with climatic, social, health and economic crises; recalls UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which aims to achieve zero hunger by 2030; is deeply concerned by the UN's estimate that the COVID-19 pandemic would double the number of people facing severe hunger by the end of 2020; regrets the fact that food and nutrition security has not been a priority of

the Team Europe initiatives; calls for a uniform and interdisciplinary approach to the implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy; recalls that nutrition is a prerequisite for physical and mental well-being, in particular for young women, children and infants, who are most likely to be exposed to malnutrition or undernourishment in areas affected by chronic food shortages, natural disasters, famine and armed conflict; urges the EU to mobilise additional resources and to work in close cooperation with partner countries, civil society and non-governmental organisations to secure nutritious, safe, affordable and high-quality food, especially for those left the furthest behind; highlights that 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet and that 690 million people suffer from hunger;

2. Underlines that while the disruptions triggered by COVID-19 have shone a spotlight on the vulnerabilities of the global food system, family farmers and smallholders have demonstrated their ability to provide diversified products and to increase the sustainability of food production; urges the EU, accordingly, to safeguard the rights of developing countries to food sovereignty as a means to achieve nutritional security, poverty reduction, inclusive, sustainable and fair global supply chains and local and regional markets, devoting particular attention to family farming, with the aim of securing the supply of affordable and accessible food; reiterates that sustainable food production and food security are essential prerequisites for the achievement of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement; is of the opinion that a comprehensive approach is needed to meet these objectives, which should recognise the role of trade, including at local and regional levels; expresses support for reducing dependence on pesticides and antimicrobials and restricting over-fertilisation in order to reduce air, soil and water pollution and reverse biodiversity loss; **calls for the support of local production and consumption and small-scale producers and farmers, in particular women and young people, in order to create local employment, guarantee fair prices for producers and consumers, protect workers' health and safety, notably migrant workers, and reduce countries' dependence on imports and their vulnerability to international price fluctuations**; recalls that the capacity of agroecology to reconcile the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainability has been widely recognised in landmark reports, notably by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and the World Bank and FAO-led global International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD); emphasises the EU's role as a global enabler in the transformation of food systems and in tackling all forms of malnutrition in humanitarian, development and any fragile contexts; considers that the Farm to Fork Strategy should promote the global transition towards resilient, fair and sustainable agri-food systems; calls on the Commission to present a comprehensive, holistic impact assessment of the targets envisaged in the European Green Deal, including on developing countries; stresses the need to enable small-scale farmers to be less dependent on external inputs and to strengthen their resilience to crises, with countries facilitating the production, exchange and use of peasant seeds; **urges the EU to ensure that working conditions and social protection throughout its food supply chains meet national, EU and international standards for all workers and pay particular attention to vulnerable populations such as migrant workers**;
3. Welcomes the upcoming legislative proposal on an EU Code of Conduct and Monitoring Framework for Responsible Business and Marketing Practices in the Food

Supply Chain; believes that this code of conduct should lay down robust due diligence standards for agri-food companies, should be accompanied by binding targets and measures to discourage non-compliance, such as administrative or economic sanctions, and ensure sustainable practices in the food value chain;

4. Stresses that short and resilient supply chains hold considerable potential to address current failures in the food system and recalls that climate-friendly agriculture involves inter alia reducing dependence on fossil fuel energy, including the use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers; insists that EU funding for agriculture must be in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and support investments in agroecology, agroforestry, crop diversification and energy consumption; recalls that agricultural expansion and unsustainable agricultural intensification practices are major causes of biodiversity degradation worldwide, including the genetic erosion of crop and livestock varieties; stresses the importance of preserving agricultural biodiversity, local animal and plant breeds and local varieties while ensuring high-quality, safe and affordable food, as part of the One Health approach, to secure nutritious, safe, affordable and high-quality food throughout the year, preserve biodiversity and increase climate resilience, which is beneficial to the dynamic development of territories and the strengthening of social cohesion by reducing social inequalities; stresses, in this regard, the crucial role of research and development in nurturing innovation in agriculture, the circular economy and integrated food systems, with positive ramifications for all sectors of local economies; recalls that investments in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture must also be a priority in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources; emphasises the need to strengthen resilience to climate change, particularly among smallholder farmers;
5. Emphasises that EU policies on fair, sustainable and resilient food systems should explicitly address gender inequality; recalls that the majority of smallholder farmers in developing countries are women, who also account for almost half of all agricultural workers in those countries; stresses, therefore, that the promotion of a long-term strategy for the conservation, improvement and management of genetic resource diversity for food and agriculture requires the recognition of the role and knowledge of women as food providers and producers; urges the EU and its Member States to support women's right to education and equality and to strive, notably through development aid, for their active participation as decision makers, and to help address the discriminations they face, notably on access to land, productive resources and financial services;
6. Stresses that the Farm to Fork Strategy should serve the achievement of the SDGs at EU and global levels; calls on the Commission and the Member States to establish an EU platform to monitor and assess the implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy and ensure that multilateral mechanisms, such as the UN FAO, incorporate all elements of the Farm to Fork approach in their policy recommendations;
7. Notes that increasing vertical and horizontal concentration in the agri-food sector reinforces the industrial food and farming model; highlights that as long as further vertical integration takes place in the livestock industry, there is a risk of zoonotic and food-borne disease proliferating; considers that the European Green Deal requires assessment and monitoring of the social, environmental and public health impacts of

production and processing activities in the agri-food sector and calls on the Commission to consider revising competition law to address and mitigate these impacts; calls for the dissemination of expertise, for greater efficiency and innovation in the agri-food sector, and adherence to the precautionary principle to be included in all food safety requirements; calls on the Commission to strengthen the global dimension of the strategy to ensure the right to adequate food and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas; stresses the need to guarantee decent labour conditions for all workers and promote alternative business models rooted in the social and solidarity economy, such as consumer-friendly cooperative schemes; calls for the EU to use its cooperation programmes to help improve the working conditions of farm workers around the world and boost the incomes of small-scale farmers in partner countries; supports the advancement of regional trade, which presents opportunities for economic growth and diversification while offering affordable food for consumers; calls for the EU to support capacity-building for regional integration efforts, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area; welcomes the announcement of legislative initiatives in 2021 and 2022 to enhance cooperation with primary producers in order to support their position in the food chain; insists that the legislation should not only cover EU-based producers, it should also protect producers and farmers from developing countries who work with European companies;

8. Stresses that the SDGs provide a constructive framework for the EU to integrate its environmental, social and economic objectives consistently and systemically; welcomes the initiatives taken by the EU to promote fairer and more sustainable value chains, including through mandatory legislation on due diligence; calls for continued efforts to ensure consistency between the EU's trade and development policies, in line with the principle of policy coherence for sustainable development; stresses that all the relevant actors in the agri-food sector need to exercise due diligence over their supply chain, namely by establishing responsible and effective practices on the environment, human rights and good governance, such as minimum age requirements and occupational safety;
9. Recalls that seed diversity is vital for building up the resilience of farming to climate change; calls for the EU to support intellectual property rights regimes that enhance the development of locally adapted seed varieties and farmer-saved seeds;
10. Is of the opinion that poor access to land, water scarcity and other food production constraints are serious obstacles to increasing agricultural supply and productivity; stresses the importance of transforming European food systems towards agroecology to reduce their impact on climate change within and outside the EU; urges the Commission to provide support for developing countries to protect their infant industries, promote food security, support climate change mitigation for agriculture, and meet EU and international sustainability standards for exporting their agricultural products; calls for the EU to boost investments in the transition towards more sustainable agriculture in partner countries, such as by supporting innovative farming methods and private sector engagement; underlines, in this regard, the key role of civil society in helping the poorest communities and smallholder farmers by linking them to training, resources, markets and value chains;



11. Calls for the EU to help developing countries adopt appropriate national legislation with a view to protecting threatened genetic resources for food and agriculture, guaranteeing the continued use and management of these by local communities, indigenous peoples, men and women, and ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from their use;
12. Urges the Commission to devise an EU strategy for the production and supply of vegetable proteins aimed at reducing Europe's dependence on genetically modified (GM) feed imports, creating shorter food chains and bolstering regional markets;
13. Notes that the Farm to Fork Strategy lays out principles for a cleaner, pesticide-free EU agricultural sector with a reduced reliance on fertilisers and lower greenhouse gas emissions; stresses that all EU free trade agreements (FTAs) must be consistent with the European Green Deal, the Biodiversity Strategy and the Farm to Fork Strategy, notably its objectives on reducing the EU's dependence on critical feed materials, such as soya grown on deforested land, the shift to a more plant-based diet and shorter and more resilient supply chains, and the need to increase organic farming, improve animal welfare, reverse biodiversity loss and become the global standard for sustainability; expresses disappointment at the fact that the Farm to Fork Strategy does not contain an explicit declaration that equivalent requirements will be applied in relation to animals and agri-food products imported from third countries; highlights that EU trade policy should serve to secure ambitious commitments from third countries such as on animal welfare, the use of pesticides and the fight against antimicrobial resistance; calls on the Commission to ensure that all products imported to and exported from the EU by trade partners fully comply with EU standards in the field of animal welfare, the use of pesticides and the fight against antimicrobial resistance; stresses that EU development cooperation must help local farmers and producers from developing countries to comply with the relevant EU regulations and standards;
14. Stresses that EU FTAs and economic partnership agreements should not disrupt local agriculture or cause harm to small producers and that their benefits must be shared evenly; recalls the need to abide by the principle of policy coherence for development to ensure that European exports do not hinder the development of local and emerging production; considers that the EU has an important role to play in promoting the upward convergence of standards on food safety and animal welfare in partner countries and in reviewing international trade relations to make food systems sustainable and fair, with environmental and social objectives integrated in a comprehensive and holistic manner across all trade agreement provisions; encourages the EU, in particular, to explore the possibilities to revise the current World Trade Organization definition of dumping to cover cases where subsidies enable exports to be sold at a price lower than the costs of production; welcomes the Commission's commitment to ensuring the compliance of EU trade agreements with the Paris Agreement; stresses that in order to be enforceable, the environmental objectives in the EU's FTAs should be clear, measurable and verifiable; calls for the EU to align its trade policy with the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy and the carbon neutrality objective of the European Green Deal; calls, in particular, for market access in FTAs to be conditional on compliance with criteria on the processes and methods of production, with reference to environmental sustainability and climate change; calls on the Commission to strengthen the enforcement mechanism of the trade and sustainable development (TSD) chapters and to use this as a tool to foster a more diverse and sustainable food system, and to

ensure that FTA provisions do not undermine the objectives and standards enshrined in the TSD chapters;

15. Points out that FTAs can make it easier to use and exchange modern and efficient technologies and expertise, as well as common agricultural practices;
16. Recalls that the Farm to Fork Strategy aims to gradually ban hazardous pesticides from agriculture and promote alternative practices; highlights that the use of some pesticides in intensive agriculture in developing countries can have an impact on the health of workers who have little access to training on plant protection and healthcare, in addition to causing environmental damage; calls for education and training in sustainable plant protection approaches and for the minimisation of exposure to hazardous substances; denounces the EU's double standards on pesticides, which allow the export from the EU of hazardous substances banned in the Union; demands that the current EU rules be modified to eliminate this legal discrepancy in line with the Rotterdam Convention of 1998 and the European Green Deal; considers that the EU should support developing countries to help them reduce the use of pesticides and promote other methods to protect plants and fishery resources, should promote the global phasing out of highly hazardous pesticides and should stand firm in its commitment under the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability to ensure that hazardous pesticides banned in the EU are not produced for export, and to ensure that no banned pesticides are allowed as residues in food placed on the European market;
17. Welcomes references to relevant UN processes in the Farm to Fork Strategy; highlights the need for the EU to support the Committee on World Food Security and its civil society mechanism as the foremost multilateral policy platform on food systems; calls on the Commission to promote the global transition towards sustainable food systems and food security in all the relevant international forums, including the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit;
18. Stresses how important it is to share modern technologies and expertise with developing countries and train local and European farmers in order to help them implement innovative agricultural practices, as the agricultural sector is crucial for food security and employment in those regions;
19. Recalls that progress still needs to be made for sustainable fisheries partnership agreements to become truly sustainable; highlights that these agreements must be in line with the best scientific advice available and must neither threaten the small-scale fisheries sector in third countries nor undermine local food security;
20. Stresses the urgent need to strengthen the position of farmers in the market chain; points out that one of the measures needed is to provide (institutional and financial) support to help agricultural producers organise common economic structures such as cooperatives, organisations and groups that will increase the economic viability, competitiveness and profitability of farms, and enhance the process of creating SMEs, especially micro-enterprises in rural areas, thereby strengthening entrepreneurship;
21. Stresses the need for the EU to champion human rights and the right to food as a central principle and priority of food systems and as a fundamental tool to transform food systems and ensure the rights of the most marginalised to access nutritious foods;

stresses the importance of including steps to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas;

22. Calls for the EU to pay particular attention in its cooperation with developing countries to stepping up the fight against deforestation around coastal areas, including the clearing of mangrove, which is particularly affected by agricultural activity;
23. Is disappointed that the publication of such a key document for the agri-food sector as the Farm to Fork Strategy was not preceded by a thorough assessment of the impact of its introduction on the individual agri-food branches in the short, medium and long term;
24. Calls on the Commission to carry out a comprehensive impact assessment of the various agricultural objectives and reduction targets laid down in the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy;
25. Recalls that on a global level around 15 % of the fish caught every year are caught illegally; recalls that illegal fishing represents a major environmental threat to global marine resources and an economic and security threat to coastal communities, particularly in developing countries; stresses, in this regard, the importance of the 'green alliances' which the EU wants to build with developing countries in order to support food security and ensure biodiversity conservation in the context of trade agreements;
26. Recalls that there is but one ocean and that, in terms of the services it provides to all humanity, it is a common good; recalls that Part 12 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea confers on states sovereign rights over their exclusive economic zones; recalls, however, that this does not relieve states, and consequently national actors acting at sea, of their responsibility for the preservation of marine and coastal ecosystems; stresses, in this regard, the importance of ensuring a more responsible and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources and of stepping up the fight against illegal practices in the waters of developing countries.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	13.4.2021
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 23 -: 1 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Hildegard Bentele, Dominique Bilde, Udo Bullmann, Catherine Chabaud, Antoni Comín i Oliveres, Ryszard Czarnecki, Gianna Gancia, Charles Goerens, Mónica Silvana González, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Pierfrancesco Majorino, Erik Marquardt, Norbert Neuser, Janina Ochojska, Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Michèle Rivasi, Christian Sagartz, Marc Tarabella, Tomas Tobé, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, Bernhard Zimniok
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Benoît Biteau

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

23	+
ID	Dominique Bilde, Gianna Gancia
NI	Antoni Comín i Oliveres
PPE	Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Hildegard Bentele, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Janina Ochojska, Christian Sagartz, Tomas Tobé
Renew	Catherine Chabaud, Charles Goerens, Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Chrysoula Zacharopoulou
S&D	Udo Bullmann, Mónica Silvana González, Pierfrancesco Majorino, Norbert Neuser, Marc Tarabella
The Left	Miguel Urbán Crespo
Verts/ALE	Benoît Biteau, Erik Marquardt, Michèle Rivasi

1	-
ID	Bernhard Zimniok

1	0
ECR	Ryszard Czarnecki

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

16.4.2021

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNAL MARKET AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system (2020/2260(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Claude Gruffat

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committees responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into their motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the ambition of the Farm to Fork Strategy and its aim of establishing a sustainable, healthy and resilient food system that should provide food which is affordable and available to all consumers in the EU and that includes all players in the food supply chain, covering the production, transport, distribution, marketing and consumption of food;
2. Stresses that it is crucial to guarantee the environmental, social and economic sustainability of all measures announced in the strategy in order to secure food production capacity, supply levels and the availability of products, as well as to maintain the competitiveness of all actors in the single market and ensure that nobody is left behind in the transition towards a more sustainable food system; notes in this regard that its implementation must take into account the needs of the outermost regions;
3. Points out the economic and social added value of food in the EU, which not only entails providing citizens with a sufficient supply of healthy and affordable food, but also allows for business opportunities, employment and growth;
4. Underlines that the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy should be built on a science-based approach focused on coherent and evidence-based policy instruments;
5. Calls on the Commission to adopt a holistic and comprehensive approach and to carefully assess the global short-term and long-term impact of the Farm to Fork Strategy



and its targets on the functioning of the single market, including the consequences for the supply and demand balance, price fluctuations, affordability for consumers, profitability for producers, competitiveness, performance and analysis of the cost-effectiveness of the transition, among others, taking into account the positive and negative externalities of sustainable food production;

6. Shares the view that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of securing a robust, sustainable and resilient food system that functions in all circumstances, and one which is capable of ensuring access to a sufficient supply of affordable and local food for European consumers; stresses the need, in this respect, to preserve the smooth functioning of the single market, and in particular the movement of foodstuffs, including during health crises; stresses, too, that the pandemic should also be seen as an opportunity to build a sustainable and resilient food system and not as an excuse to scale down ambitions, given that sustainability and health are interconnected issues;
7. Considers that promoting healthy and sustainable food consumption calls for changes in food consumption patterns and in the production, processing and distribution of food products, along with the consequences that these changes have for supply and demand, the internal market and the ecological footprint; recalls that the transition towards sustainability will represent a game changer in fostering renewed competitiveness for all actors involved in the EU food chain;
8. Recalls, at the same time, the importance of a European self-sufficiency that meets the food production needs of EU citizens in terms of quantity and quality;
9. Considers that consumers should not be solely responsible for making this transition, but that there is a need for measures that are coherent from one policy to another (agriculture, trade, environment, health, education, competition, etc.) and for a series of complementary regulatory measures;
10. Stresses that a successful European food system needs to avoid overlaps and discrepancies among existing environmental and food-related EU policies; asks, therefore, that the Commission review overall consistency among the different policy tools on a regular basis;
11. Notes that, in general, Europeans' diets are not in line with the recommendations for healthy eating, which do not preclude any food, provided that it is consumed in the right amount and at the right frequency, and that it is accompanied by adequate physical activity; stresses the need, therefore, for a shift in consumption patterns towards a more balanced diet with fewer ultra-processed products, and less sugar, salt and fat; calls on the Commission to produce European guidelines for sustainable and healthy diets, which bring clarity for consumers and help Member States to prepare and implement their national food plans;
12. Believes that the change in diets should not negatively affect supply and consumer choice; considers that informed consumer choice is key to the transition to a sustainable food system;
13. Considers that the successful promotion of healthy and sustainable food consumption

requires financial support, enhanced food and nutrition education, training and information for all European consumers;

14. Notes that the cost of food products for consumers, a lack of knowledge, unclear information and a limited choice of products are some of the obstacles to more sustainable food; approves the strategy's aim of ensuring 'that ultimately the most sustainable food also becomes the most affordable'; suggests, therefore, that prices need to fairly reflect the long-term costs for consumers and producers; calls on governments, the Commission and relevant stakeholders to make consumers aware that having more sustainable food is not necessarily more expensive;
15. Highlights the utmost importance of fostering the engagement and cooperation of all actors in the food supply chain in the assessment, implementation and monitoring of this strategy, to ensure effective collective action towards a just transition; stresses that this process should entail a more equal redistribution of value among all operators in the food supply chain, strengthening farmers' bargaining power and, in particular, improving market relations between small businesses and producers and wholesale and retail companies;
16. Stresses that the Farm to Fork Strategy must take a stronger regional approach, taking into account the specificities of production in those Member States where there is a risk of food production moving to third countries; calls on the Commission to monitor the delocalisation of production to third countries closely and to step up its support for small producers, regional food systems and, where possible, short supply chains, which can be a source of fresh, sustainable, affordable and high-quality products for consumers;
17. Stresses that the different actors in the food production chain have to be supported in order to increase the availability and affordability of healthy and sustainable food options; takes the view that legislation on European public food procurement should foster local, high-quality food supply systems for public institutions, which would also be very positive for consumers, farmers and rural areas; suggests integrating into green and sustainable public procurement more flexible criteria for the introduction of local and regional products, including organic products, traditional specialities guaranteed (TSGs), products with a protected designation of origin (AOP) and products with a protected geographical indication (PGI), particularly by adopting the zero-kilometre principle in school canteens; recommends further support to national and local innovative public food procurement policies;
18. Urges the Commission to encourage partnerships between operators in the food supply chain, notably among farmers; stresses the need to promote sustainable production methods and circular business models, such as packaging-free shops, based on social innovation and the social economy, for example mono- or multi-stakeholder cooperative schemes acting in the interests of producers and consumers, and to ensure that they can function and grow in all Member States; highlights equally the importance of promoting producer organisations, inter-branch networks and business networks in the food processing and retail sector, including specifically for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, in order to involve them in this transition and reduce the negative impacts for those who commit to this approach;

19. Calls on the Commission to make an assessment of the changes in consumer behaviour, such as in the online purchasing of food products;
20. Recalls that the EU food sector is characterised by a very high presence of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which despite their efforts face many barriers to improving their sustainability performance, such as a lack of information, access to financial resources and technical skills; stresses the need to conduct consultations and impact analyses on the measures envisaged for SMEs and cooperative systems; calls on the Commission, therefore, to ensure that all actions under the Farm to Fork Strategy enable a transition that creates real opportunities and a level playing field, provides enough flexibility, and further reduces and simplifies unnecessary administrative burdens for micro and small food businesses, as well as for social economy enterprises; stresses, in this regard, the utmost importance of providing concrete measures for the just transition, such as further support in the management of EU funding, improving capacity building and delivering significant resources for the effective use of innovative and digital solutions, in order to strengthen the competitive position of such businesses in the EU food system;
21. Calls on the Commission to make it easier for quality products from micro-enterprises to access local markets;
22. Supports the establishment of a governance framework and a clear code of conduct for food and retail businesses as regards responsible business and marketing practices, in order to raise awareness among businesses of the importance of sustainability, health and the fight against food waste and ensure that they are held accountable, given their influence on consumer choice; considers that an evaluation of the rules is necessary to reduce the marketing and advertising to children of foods and beverages that are high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS);
23. Insists that the code of conduct must be accompanied by a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism; calls for a fair distribution of added value in the food supply chain;
24. Stresses that the framework should take account of the environmental, economic and social sustainability of all players in the supply chain and urges the Commission, in this regard, to ensure the effective implementation of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (Directive 2005/29/EC)<sup>1</sup> and Directive 2019/633/EC<sup>2</sup>;
25. Considers that these initiatives should be sufficiently and properly defined and adjusted to the size and type of the businesses concerned, and should recognise existing best practices and the commitments already achieved by European companies; welcomes the steps taken by the Commission to lend particular support to the implementation of sustainable business practices by SMEs and to develop both initiatives with all relevant stakeholders;
26. Welcomes the Commission's initiative to promote healthier and more balanced diets by introducing nutritional profiles, accompanied by mandatory and harmonised labelling of

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 111, 25.4.2019, p. 59.

the nutritional value of foods on the front of packaging, which are based on sound, independent and the most up-to-date scientific research, which facilitate consumers' understanding and enable them to be correctly informed, and at the same time which contribute to the reduction of a population's diseases and ensure a healthy generation; stresses the importance of informing consumers and making information clearer, notably by using a tool that is easy to understand, as well as taking into consideration the needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities and the elderly;

27. Points out there are several front-of-pack nutritional labelling schemes in use in Member States, while underlining the benefits of harmonised labelling for the functioning of the internal market and for the information and understanding of consumers;
28. Stresses that, given its negative effects on health, the obesity phenomenon affecting nearly half of all adults in the EU requires more decisive action towards more balanced diets; recognises that nutritional labelling on the front of pre-packed foods has been identified by international health experts, particularly those from the World Health Organization, as one of the tools in helping consumers to make informed and healthier food choices, by enabling them to compare the nutritional value of products so that they can make informed purchasing decisions;
29. Notes the view of consumers that the existing regulatory framework does not fully allow for clear and easily understandable information on the nutritional value of products and therefore welcomes the Commission's intention to explore and propose new ways to improve food nutrition labelling;
30. Asks the Commission to explore the need to apply specific conditions to and exemptions for certain food categories or foodstuffs, such as olive oil, for those covered by the PDO, PGI and TSG labels, and for single-ingredient products; highlights the need for suitable and tailored measures to support micro, small, medium-sized and social economy enterprises when implementing such labelling;
31. Considers it essential to respond to the growing and insistent demands of consumers, which have been relayed on numerous occasions by the European Parliament, for better information about the origin of the food products they purchase by considering the introduction of mandatory country-of-origin labelling for certain food products, including honey, seafood and ingredients used in processed products, with full respect for the integrity of the internal market and on the basis of a proper impact assessment; considers, further, that this labelling could be broadened to cover animal welfare, sustainability and pesticide residue levels, without resulting in over-labelling which could confuse consumers; asks the Commission, therefore, to work in close cooperation with the European Food Safety Authority to this end; stresses that imported products which do not meet European environmental or health standards threaten consumer health and create unfair competition for European producers;
32. Welcomes the Commission's intention to develop a new framework for sustainable food labelling; calls on the Commission to define the methodology and specify which dimensions of sustainability would be covered;

33. Stresses that Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011<sup>3</sup> requires that where the origin of a food is given and is different from that of its primary ingredient, the origin of the primary ingredient must also be given or at least indicated as being different to the origin of the food; points out that in practice that means that products whose primary ingredients are not locally or regionally sourced can be marketed as such if the origin of said non-local primary ingredients is indicated in small print; underlines that there is an imbalance between the visibility of marketing practices that use national, regional and local names and symbols for products whose primary ingredients are not nationally, regionally or locally sourced, and EU labelling requirements; considers this to be potentially misleading and detrimental to the right of consumers to be properly informed; calls on the Commission to rectify that imbalance;
34. Welcomes the Commission's announcement that it will revise the food contact materials legislation to improve consumer safety and public health;
35. Welcomes the Commission's intention to propose legally binding targets to reduce food waste in the EU; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to clarify the current EU rules on date marking with regard to 'use by' and 'best before' dates in order to prevent and reduce food waste and food loss and provide more clarity, consistency and understanding among consumers; asks the Commission, in this regard, to promote a multi-stakeholder approach to empower consumers and encourage the food industry to implement practical solutions to accelerate the battle against food waste; notes that measures envisaged for this purpose and waste management should not entail disproportionate costs and unnecessary administrative burdens that smaller businesses are unable to comply with; notes that Parliament is eagerly awaiting the reference scenario for reducing food waste throughout the EU;
36. Supports the Commission in its efforts to combat food fraud and counterfeiting, which misleads consumers and distorts competition in the internal market, and considers it essential to make the penalties imposed on fraudsters more dissuasive, to dedicate sufficient resources so that effective and efficient checks on product quality conformity can be stepped up, including during the pandemic, to properly staff competent authorities and customs authorities, and to continue strengthening exchanges of information in the single market; asks for improved enforcement of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011, to be supported by legal definitions at EU level of the concepts of 'food fraud and crime' and 'counterfeiting' as misleading practices which could be considered fraudulent;
37. Reiterates that dual quality in food products is unacceptable and needs to be fully counteracted in order to avoid discriminating against and misleading European consumers; considers, therefore, that the Food to Fork Strategy must include provisions to prevent a double standard in food quality, and to this end calls on the Commission to monitor the situation on the market closely and propose targeted legislation where necessary; stresses, furthermore, the role of consumer organisations in identifying these misleading practices;
38. Stresses that the significant divergences in controls of products from third countries and in customs procedures and sanctions policies at the EU's points of entry into the

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<sup>3</sup> OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

customs union often result not only in food supply chain distortions, but also in considerable health and safety risks for consumers in the single market; underlines that a coordinated and harmonised approach as regards unfair competition practices and the need for food standards and practices applied equally at all entries of the EU, with due regard for the precautionary principle, is of vital importance with a view to ensuring an uninterrupted flow of supplies of foodstuffs in all Member States, while respecting a high standard of security checks that can detect and prevent sanitary, phytosanitary and biological risks posed by third-country imports;

39. Insists that the Commission ensure that custom controls throughout the EU follow the same standards, by means of harmonised and standardised controls, in coordination with Member States and in full compliance with the principle of subsidiarity; urges the Commission, furthermore, to increase cooperation, at EU and international level, between relevant competent authorities so as to guarantee harmonised and uniform controls at all points of entry into the Union and thus ensure the traceability of all food products;
40. Calls on the Commission to ensure, through a proactive trade and customs policy, that food products imported into the single market comply with strict European food safety regulations in order to protect the competitiveness of European businesses, especially SMEs, and the integrity of the single market;
41. Asks the Member States for more effective implementation of Directive 2005/29/EC, in order to better address the problem of misleading and unsubstantiated environmental claims in food, as well as when concluding distance contracts in online markets, so as to make it easier for consumers to identify environmentally friendly products; suggests that this would not discriminate against enterprises that have made commendable efforts with regard to the environment.



## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	14.4.2021
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 40 -: 1 0: 3
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Andrus Ansip, Pablo Arias Echeverría, Alessandra Basso, Adam Bielan, Biljana Borzan, Vlad-Marius Botoș, Markus Buchheit, Anna Cavazzini, Dita Charanzová, Deirdre Clune, Carlo Fidanza, Evelyne Gebhardt, Alexandra Geese, Maria Grapini, Svenja Hahn, Virginie Joron, Eugen Jurzyca, Arba Kokalari, Marcel Kolaja, Kateřina Konečná, Jean-Lin Lacapelle, Maria-Manuel Leitão-Marques, Morten Løkkegaard, Adriana Maldonado López, Antonius Manders, Beata Mazurek, Leszek Miller, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Anne-Sophie Pelletier, Miroslav Radačovský, Christel Schaldemose, Andreas Schwab, Tomislav Sokol, Ivan Štefanec, Róza Thun und Hohenstein, Kim Van Sparrentak, Marion Walsmann, Marco Zullo
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Clara Aguilera, Jordi Cañas, Claude Gruffat, Sylvie Guillaume, Jiří Pospíšil, Barbara Thaler

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

40	+
ECR	Adam Bielan, Carlo Fidanza, Beata Mazurek
ID	Virginie Joron, Jean-Lin Lacapelle
PPE	Pablo Arias Echeverría, Deirdre Clune, Arba Kokalari, Antonius Manders, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Jiří Pospíšil, Andreas Schwab, Tomislav Sokol, Ivan Štefanec, Barbara Thaler, Róza Thun und Hohenstein, Marion Walsmann
Renew	Andrus Ansip, Vlad-Marius Botoș, Jordi Cañas, Dita Charanzová, Svenja Hahn, Morten Løkkegaard, Marco Zullo
S&D	Clara Aguilera, Biljana Borzan, Evelyne Gebhardt, Maria Grapini, Sylvie Guillaume, Maria-Manuel Leitão-Marques, Adriana Maldonado López, Leszek Miller, Christel Schaldemose
The Left	Kateřina Konečná, Anne-Sophie Pelletier
Verts/ALE	Anna Cavazzini, Alexandra Geese, Claude Gruffat, Marcel Kolaja, Kim Van Sparrentak

1	-
ECR	Eugen Jurzyca

3	0
ID	Alessandra Basso, Markus Buchheit
NI	Miroslav Radačovský

### Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

22.4.2021

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety  
and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system  
(2020/2260(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Izaskun Bilbao Barandica

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Fisheries calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committees responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into their motion for a resolution:

- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 on a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system (COM(2020)0381),
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, and amending Council Regulations (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1005/2008, and Regulation (EU) No 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control (COM(2018)0368),
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC as regards rates of value added tax (COM(2018)0020),
- having regard to the Commission draft initiative on a contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security as envisaged in the proposed Farm to Fork and Sea to Fork Strategy under the European Green Deal, in particular its pledge to build on the lessons learned from past crises, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled ‘EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives’ (COM(2020)0380),
- having regard to Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine

environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive)<sup>1</sup>,

- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 19 October 2020 on the Farm to Fork Strategy,
- having regard to Scientific Opinion No 3/2017 of the High Level Group of Scientific Advisors of the Commission Scientific Advice Mechanism of 29 November 2017 entitled ‘Food from the Oceans: How can more food and biomass be obtained from the oceans in a way that does not deprive future generations of their benefits?’,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 May 2016 on traceability of fishery and aquaculture products in restaurants and retail<sup>7</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 30 May 2018 on the implementation of control measures for establishing the conformity of fisheries products with access criteria to the EU market<sup>8</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 May 2018 on the optimisation of the value chain in the EU fishing sector<sup>9</sup>,
- having regard to its position adopted at first reading on 4 April 2019 with a view to the adoption of a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) No 508/2014

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> OJ L 257, 28.8.2014, p. 135.

<sup>7</sup> OJ C 76, 28.2.2018, p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> OJ C 76, 9.3.2020, p. 54.

<sup>9</sup> OJ C 76, 9.3.2020, p. 2.

of the European Parliament and of the Council<sup>10</sup>,

- having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal<sup>11</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 25 November 2020 on a New Industrial Strategy for Europe<sup>12</sup>,
- A. whereas the aim of the Farm to Fork Strategy is to contribute to the European climate change agenda, protect the environment, ensure the position of products in the value chain, and encourage the consumption of sustainable and healthy foods;
- B. whereas the fishery and aquaculture sectors are an integral part of the EU food system whose resilience and sustainable development depend on the work and contributions of European fishers and fish farmers, as they play a key role in supporting the environmental, economic and social dimension of coastal, island and many inland communities;
- C. whereas the unprecedented public health crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic will have repercussions for trade and the market, and has come as a serious blow to fishers throughout Europe; whereas despite the health risks and the low price of fish, European fishers have continued to work and distinguish themselves as key workers, with the crisis highlighting the importance of fisheries and aquaculture in ensuring access to food; whereas the EU has provided a short-term response such as more flexible access to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and State aid approval, together with more long-term support as outlined in the Recovery Plan for Europe; whereas the Commission's intention to present a contingency plan to ensure food supply and food security across the EU in times of crisis is to be welcomed;
- D. whereas it is necessary to enforce the competition and social economy rules under the common market organisation (CMO), whose principles date back to 1970, and to update its framework with specific programmes and financial instruments to provide non-discriminatory market access to self-employed workers in small-scale fisheries in order to empower their organisations, which create significant social value by efficiently concentrating the marketing of their products; whereas such self-employed workers were excluded from COVID support under Regulation (EU) 2020/560<sup>13</sup>, despite proving to be very important for society during the pandemic, and had to face health risks as an essential sector in the EU food system and price decreases owing to the closure of the hotel, restaurant and catering (HORECA) channel;
- E. whereas in different Member States there are different traditions and customs with regard to nutrition and the use of available biological resources, including fish, shellfish and molluscs; whereas this should be taken into account when drawing up policies, recommendations and strategies that impact the economically important or traditionally

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<sup>10</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2019)0343.

<sup>11</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2020)0005.

<sup>12</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2020)0321.

<sup>13</sup> Regulation (EU) 2020/560 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2020 amending Regulations (EU) No 508/2014 and (EU) No 1379/2013 as regards specific measures to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in the fishery and aquaculture sector, OJ L 130, 24.4.2020, p. 1.

- used species of fish and non-fish products in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors;
- F. whereas overfishing and bycatches of sensitive marine species results in the degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems and leads to biodiversity loss;
- G. whereas although the EU fisheries, aquaculture and processing sectors subscribe to the highest marketing, environmental, sustainability and social standards, reviewing and approval is needed to ensure environmental and social sustainability throughout the entire value chain, including on labour rights, animal health and welfare; whereas these sectors provide high-quality seafood products, playing a fundamental role in ensuring food security and the nutritional well-being of the population; whereas it is of the utmost importance, therefore, to assess the position of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the internal market and the imports of their products in order to achieve a fisheries model that reflects the balance between the three key dimensions (environmental, social and economic) proposed in the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals;
- H. whereas while very high, marketing standards in the EU, including environmental, sustainability and social standards, only apply to 75 % of landings in the EU and to less than 10 % of imports (as fillets and frozen fish are excluded), which results in a large number of imported products falling short of the rigorous norms and standards with which the EU-based sector must comply, creating an uneven playing field and putting EU producers at a competitive disadvantage;
- I. whereas the excessive use of pesticides in agriculture also has adverse effects on aquatic flora and fauna;
- J. whereas fishers' associations such as guilds are key players in the food systems of some Member States, where they operate as not-for-profit public law and social economy entities representing the fisheries sector and work together with the public administration, performing functions of general interest for the benefit of maritime fishing and workers in the fisheries sector, as well as discharging business functions, marketing products and providing advisory and management services;
- K. whereas in its 2020 report on the state of world fisheries and aquaculture, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization acknowledges the key role played by fisheries in global food security, while recalling that the biggest threat to its contribution is overfishing and that the sustainable exploitation of fish stocks has the potential to increase the productivity of fisheries;
- L. whereas in order to reduce food waste, the logistics and infrastructure in the value chain need to be improved to optimise the use of all catches and sustainability of the food system;
- M. whereas a holistic approach is needed to the various EU strategies and policies associated with the Farm to Fork Strategy;
- N. whereas the general market concentration and the tendency of large retailers to conclude agreements that are at times unfair to primary producers have a negative impact on small-scale fishing;



- O. whereas the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) include, among others, supplying the EU market with foods of high nutritional value, reducing the EU market's dependence on food imports, and ensuring that food reaches consumers at reasonable prices; whereas the ongoing pandemic has made it even more apparent that the EU needs to be able to fully guarantee food security for its citizens and reduce its reliance on food imports from third countries;
- P. whereas fisheries and aquaculture products are an important source of protein and an important component of a healthy diet; whereas more than half of the adult population of the Union is overweight, which is contributing to the high prevalence of diet-related diseases such as cardiovascular disease and increasing healthcare costs; notes that the consumption of fish and aquaculture produce in the EU varies greatly across the Member States;
- Q. whereas compared with other animal proteins, fish caught in the wild has the lowest environmental impact as it lives in the wild and does not require the use of land, artificial feeding, a water supply, or antibiotics or pesticides for its production, and therefore represents the perfect option for animal proteins in terms of food security and climate protection;
- R. whereas fishers tackle all types of marine waste by fishing for marine litter – be it actively or passively – and assisting with litter from other vessels, which helps to improve the marine environment and the sustainability of the sector;
- S. whereas the work of fishers and ongoing efforts to implement the CFP brought about improvements in EU fish populations and delivered other positive results through efficient, science-based fisheries management focused on sustainability, responsible fisheries, and minimising the impact of commercial fisheries on ecosystems, and founded on ambitious, internationally agreed management targets; whereas there are still environmental parameters that require further efforts in order to be improved;
- T. whereas the fisheries sector has for a long time helped to provide European consumers with high-quality products that meet high nutrition and food safety standards, and is now a global leader in terms of sustainability;
- U. whereas fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fishing fell by 18 % between 2009 and 2018; whereas although the energy efficiency of the EU's fishing fleet – tonnes of fish per litre of fuel – has increased over the years thanks to the adaptation of new technologies and improvements in fish stocks, fisheries will still face difficulties on account of climate change, of which it is a victim rather than a cause, as demonstrated by the many natural phenomena such as water temperature increases which have had and will continue to have an extremely negative impact on the profitability of the sector;
- V. whereas in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 on the CMO in fishery and aquaculture products, it is essential that consumers are informed, through marketing and educational campaigns, of the value of eating fish and the wide variety of species available, as well as of the importance of understanding the information contained on labels; whereas country of origin information and the traceability of fishery products are clearly in the interests of EU consumers, but existing EU legislation does not require the origin of the final prepared or preserved product to be indicated, even though this is

mandatory for the catching sector; whereas information on traceability and sustainable production is therefore lost in the food value chain;

1. Stresses that the CFP and a functioning system of governance of Europe's seas are an integral part of the EU food system and supply chain and closely interact with the European health and environment pillars that are at the heart of the Farm to Fork Strategy; expresses great disappointment at the lack of prominence and ambition for the contribution and potential of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the Farm to Fork Strategy; stresses that this lack of ambition makes it more difficult for the Union to achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal and warns that it will lead to fewer opportunities and less income for EU fishers, aquaculture producers and workers along the fish and seafood supply chain; calls for the strategy to be expanded to a Farm to Fork and Sea to Fork Strategy, and for its title to be officially renamed 'A Farm to Fork and Sea to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system';
2. Stresses that the current strategy should be integrated with a cross-cutting approach to fisheries that considers the main EU legislation on the subject and in the light of the strategy's objectives, taking due account of the three pillars of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental – to ensure that the future food system is fairer, healthier and more respectful of the environment; urges the Commission to pay due attention to the specific nature of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in any future legislative proposals, strategies or guidelines it may draw up as a result of the strategy and to fill the gap with appropriate additional initiatives;
3. Stresses the importance of ensuring coordination and mutual support between all Green Deal initiatives and between the objectives of the Union and the Member States in relation to food security, climate change, marine natural resources and sustainable fisheries management, among others;
4. Recognises that fisheries are one of the most efficient and climate-smart systems that ensures healthy and sustainable food while guaranteeing a dignified existence for fishers in the EU;
5. Welcomes the Commission's recognition of key workers during the COVID-19 pandemic; stresses that fishery workers, not just agri-food sector workers, fall within this category; calls on the Commission, therefore, to step up its efforts to improve the position of European fishers in the value chain by enhancing workplace health and safety, guaranteeing them a decent wage and protecting their freedom of movement, especially in times of crisis;
6. Underlines the close relationship between fishing activities and the conservation of biodiversity and highlights the negative impact of unsustainable fishing on biodiversity; stresses, however, that only sustainable fishing can limit the negative impact on species, habitats and ecosystems, as well as the effects of climate change;
7. Stresses that in order to fully and effectively achieve the strategy's objectives, an extensive preliminary socio-economic impact assessment is needed to consider all the possible repercussions of the proposed measures on the EU's coastal communities and on the productivity and competitiveness of its fisheries; stresses, furthermore, that the transition to a sustainable model of production and consumption should happen

gradually and in a manner commensurate with the capabilities of the EU fishing industry;

8. Stresses that the transposition of fair and acceptable principles very often risks creating onerous and excessive practices that are difficult for fishers to apply, without ever really achieving the objectives that these principles set out to achieve; stresses, therefore, that the strategy's proposals should not pose excessive financial or bureaucratic burdens for operators in the fisheries sector;
9. Agrees with the Commission on the need to ensure that the key principles enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights are respected, especially with regard to precarious, seasonal and undeclared workers; stresses, to this end, that practical steps should be taken in order to meet this need, through greater cooperation with EU bodies for social dialogue, such as the EU Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries, when drawing up legislative initiatives to achieve the strategy's objectives;
10. Stresses that promoting healthy and sustainable diets as part of the strategy and the EU's climate change strategy should privilege the consumption of EU fisheries and aquaculture products, as they are an important source of protein with a small carbon footprint and a crucial component of a healthy diet, and highlight the value of the work of fishers and women in the sector, and of aquaculture; recalls the potential of sustainable aquaculture and fisheries to create green jobs and considers that the ecological transition of food systems in general, and fisheries in particular, should take place in a way that ensures a fair income for the fisheries sector, strengthening its position in the value chain by encouraging grouping in guilds, cooperatives, associations or other organisations, and by conducting appropriate monitoring within the framework of Directive (EU) 2019/633 on unfair trading practices<sup>14</sup>;
11. Underlines the low environmental impact of fisheries in certain aspects and the healthy food production of the sector, since no artificial feeding, antibiotics, fertilisers or chemical pesticides are involved; highlights that thanks to its heart-healthy properties, the consumption of fish has great potential to address the European public health crisis with regard to the high prevalence of diet-related diseases, such as cardiovascular disease;
12. Observes that the CFP is the current legal framework for fisheries, which is aimed at providing healthy sea-based food in accordance with sustainable, social, economic and environmental principles for fisheries management, ensuring the sustainable exploitation of living marine biological resources, and restoring and maintaining the populations of the species caught above levels which can ensure the maximum sustainable yield, as well as ensuring profitability of fishing activities;
13. Stresses the important role that women play in processing, promoting and marketing the fish that is caught;
14. Highlights that the ongoing pandemic has demonstrated the need for the EU to improve

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<sup>14</sup> Directive (EU) 2019/633 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on unfair trading practices in business-to-business relationships in the agricultural and food supply chain, OJ L 111, 25.4.2019, p. 59.

and safeguard food security and food sovereignty in order to reduce its reliance on food imports from third countries; agrees with the development of a contingency plan to ensure the EU's food supply and food security in the event of future crises; recalls the CFP objective to contribute to the supply of highly nutritional food to the EU market and reduce the EU market's dependence on food imports; emphasises, in this regard, the need to move towards the intelligent integration of global, regional and local food systems, promoting short channels in the fisheries value chain in order to improve food security, in accordance with the principles of the single market;

15. Emphasises that the Biodiversity and Farm to Fork Strategies are two sides of the same coin; calls, therefore, for the formulation of impact assessments that identify the full costs of the Commission's biodiversity objectives in terms of the impacts of reducing fishing pressure and thus food production;
16. Emphasises that when implementing the objectives and measures proposed in the strategy and the transition to a sustainable food system, due attention must be paid to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of food systems and to the competitiveness of the European fisheries and aquaculture sectors, including a fair income for primary producers; stresses the importance of the constructive, effective and equal consultation of fishers and aquaculture producers and other relevant stakeholders representing the value chain in any decision related to the proposed Farm to Fork and Sea to Fork Strategy;
17. Invites the Commission and the relevant EU agencies, including the European Food Safety Authority, to assess whether algae can constitute a safe, healthy and sustainable source of food in the context of the Farm to Fork Strategy;
18. Welcomes the Commission's planned report on the functioning of the CFP, due to be published by 31 December 2022, which will need to focus on the risks triggered by climate change for the sustainability of species and the objective of achieving maximum sustainable yield; emphasises the need, however, for an overall approach to bring fish stocks to sustainable levels and restore marine and coastal ecosystems, which should also focus on the benefits and the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, including the effects of invasive alien species that threaten certain species of economic significance, making concerted efforts to reduce their impact; calls for this report to be followed up with legislative or non-legislative proposals and actions to better implement the objectives of the CFP in the light of the new challenges facing the fisheries sector and to address any shortcomings that prove to be significant;
19. Stresses the need for the Commission and the Member States to take the necessary action to improve the quality of EU waters and prevent toxic substances from entering the food chain; calls on the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to adopt a holistic approach to the marine environment and tackle the root causes of water pollution, including marine litter and urban and industrial waste water, and to put an end to practices that are harmful to the marine environment and human health;
20. Welcomes the role of the newly announced EU Strategic Guidelines for the Sustainable Development of EU Aquaculture for 2021-2030; emphasises the fundamental role of

aquaculture and the need for its development as a cornerstone in ensuring self-sufficiency of healthy food; calls for these guidelines to be swiftly adopted and implemented and underlines, in this regard, the need for specific guidelines for shellfish and inland aquaculture in order to provide direction for better management and increased sustainability, as well as more funding for these sectors under the new European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF);

21. Underlines that the continued work on the proposed Farm to Fork and Sea to Fork Strategy should draw inspiration from and build on existing practices that already meet the current strategy's sustainability objectives, such as certain types of aquaculture management that also provide environmental and social services; calls on the Commission and the Member States to facilitate, encourage and provide adequate support for environmentally friendly aquaculture such as low-impact, closed-system aquaculture, algae, shellfish, pond fish farming or integrated multitrophic aquaculture systems as important parts of the circular economy and net contributors to excess nutrient transformation in high-quality protein;
22. Urges the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the plans for the sustainable development of aquaculture take account of the main barriers to the development of the potential of the sector and to recognise the need to allocate space to aquaculture through appropriate spatial planning; highlights the importance of a transparent and participative mechanism, in line with Directive 2014/89/EU on maritime spatial planning, for allocating space to all stakeholders in an equitable manner, including to existing and new fishing grounds and aquaculture farms; stresses that the development of aquaculture requires a solid, reliable and clear legal framework for the use of space and licenses that provides confidence and security for investment in the sector;
23. Welcomes the intention to promote organic aquaculture and emphasises the economic benefits of this for aquaculture producers given its ample untapped potential for development and growth; points out that the transition can be assisted through the EMFAF;
24. Stresses that it has long been common practice in the aquaculture sector to reuse unused (or usable) animal products for human consumption; points out that in the interests of a circular economy, considerable investment is needed to create synergies between aquaculture and food waste and support virtuous processes to reuse aquaculture waste (such as algae) for feeding fish;
25. Welcomes the Commission's intention to support green business models, such as those based on carbon sequestration, in order to make supply chains more sustainable; stresses, in this regard, that certain aquaculture practices, such as mussel or oyster farming, can be a successful model for the future in the context of the Emissions Trading System; calls on the Commission to invest in this type of green business in the light of the strategy's objectives;
26. Welcomes the Commission's intention to publish guidelines for sustainable food procurement in institutional catering and urges the Commission to include fisheries and aquaculture products in these guidelines;

27. Welcomes the Commission's intention to take action to accelerate the market deployment of energy efficiency solutions in the agriculture and food sectors; stresses, in this regard, that such actions should also take the aquaculture sector into account in order to deploy all potential forms of energy production involved in these types of farming and to promote a zero-consumption production system;
28. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement measures to improve water quality and disease control and limit stocking density in aquaculture production in the interests of human health and animal welfare;
29. Stresses that all too often organic products are put in a price bracket beyond the reach of most European consumers; stresses, therefore, the need to establish a fair price system at EU level for organic products so that they are no longer the privilege of a few, but can form the basis of healthy eating for all;
30. Welcomes the Commission's willingness to place a greater focus on investing in technology and green and digital practices, but expresses disappointment at the lack of any mention of fisheries and the aquaculture sector; stresses the urgent need to support fishers and actors in the fish product supply chain in the transition to more digital practices by investing heavily in training, and financing for digitisation and conversion to 'green' practices and tools;
31. Requests that the Commission and the Member States improve and streamline the labelling, including via digitally readable codes, of all fisheries and aquaculture products at EU level, whether fresh, frozen or processed or sold in restaurants and through both retailers and wholesalers, in order to ensure traceability on the place of origin, species and information on other aspects such as production methods, including from third country imports;
32. Stresses the need for a food traceability system in the EU that enhances the sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and responds to consumer demands by providing information on where, when, how and what fish has been caught or farmed, primarily to improve food safety but also to enable checks throughout the chain of both EU products and third country imports and combat fraud and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; calls for a coordinated approach to ensure consistency between different initiatives on this issue and to assess the costs and benefits of different options for consumers, producers and the internal market as a whole in line with the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making<sup>15</sup> in order to implement these objectives as efficiently as possible; believes that this system should involve all actors in the value chain so that they can collaborate with one other, using simple digital systems that are easy to use and do not entail excessive costs for operators, in particular small businesses;
33. Stresses that good traceability mechanisms on sustainability for all products sold on EU markets are essential to ensure transparency for consumers, the sector and the various administrations; welcomes the Commission's intention to support the implementation of the rules on misleading information as regards the sustainability of food products and to develop an EU sustainable food labelling framework and to achieve the targets of the

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<sup>15</sup> OJ L 123, 12.5.2016, p. 1.



Green Deal and the UN Sustainable Development Goals; stresses that this step will enhance the value of sustainable products and protect consumer rights; asks the Commission to develop guidelines on digital tools for consumer information transmitted through all links in the value chain, including existing platforms, with the aim of promoting interoperability and improving the efficiency of existing systems;

34. Requests that the Commission consider issuing environmental statements that meet robust, internationally recognised criteria, such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard No 14024, which should be based on a full life cycle assessment rather than any one aspect of sustainability and should be implemented by keeping the administrative and financial burden to a minimum, especially for small-scale fishers and SMEs; stresses, to this end, that the labelling must be objective, based on scientific data supported by rigorous independent verification, non-discriminatory with regard to the actual nutritional value of the foods, and able to provide exhaustive and specific information on the nutrients in the product based on the reference intakes of the average consumer, without misleading or influencing purchasing choices, in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011<sup>16</sup>; stresses, furthermore, that businesses also have a role to play in ensuring that the fisheries products they source are traceable to the point of origin, and in providing all the information that consumers need to be able to make well informed, healthy and green dietary choices;
35. Urges the Commission, in this regard, to introduce an obligation to inform consumers with labelling on origin and traceability for all prepared or preserved fish and seafood products such as crustaceans, molluscs and caviar and, in the interests of ensuring a level playing field, to evaluate the need to revise Regulation (EU) 1379/2013 on the CMO in fishery and aquaculture products and draw up a proposal, if appropriate;
36. Points out that different standards between products from the EU and third countries could put EU fisheries at a competitive disadvantage in the absence of a global convergence of sustainability standards; stresses, to this end, that the labelling and traceability rules for EU products should also be applied to imported products; stresses, moreover, the need to adjust the current legislation to require a declaration of origin of the final product from EU and third country products combined in production lines;
37. Emphasises the need for a harmonised EU legal framework to develop a mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling system at EU level, based on independent scientific evidence; urges the Member States to support the implementation of the future EU nutritional profiling system and to refrain from unilateral actions that could hinder the harmonisation of the Commission's efforts; calls on the Commission to consider the need to include changes in the algorithm for creating these nutritional profiles so that the presence of omega-3 is positively taken into account and the ratio of saturated to unsaturated fats is considered when attributing penalty points;
38. Points out that fish, crustacean and mollusc products can be protected through the European quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs; notes that in accordance with Article 32 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, Member States can also use the optional quality term 'product of island farming', including for fish, crustacean

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<sup>16</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

and mollusc products, in order to enhance the visibility of island-based producers; calls on the Member States to consider introducing additional regional designations for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, with a view to promoting the visibility of their producers and products that are not eligible for protection under the European quality schemes set out in Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012;

39. Welcomes the mandatory use of digitalised catch certificates;
40. Stresses the need to continue to promote the responsible exploitation of fisheries resources and to combat IUU fishing by strengthening the policy of sustainable fisheries agreements with non-EU countries for European vessels providing quality products;
41. Notes that the EU's fisheries, aquaculture and processing sectors already apply stringent environmental and social standards which will also be revised to ensure higher quality products; deems it is of the utmost importance, therefore, to apply the principle of reciprocity to fisheries products entering the EU market from third countries and to ban products deriving from IUU fishing;
42. Welcomes the zero tolerance approach to IUU fishing in the light of the global nature of this phenomenon and the need to adopt a consistent and coherent neighbourhood policy to fisheries management, while fully enforcing Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 on IUU fishing<sup>17</sup> (IUU Regulation); stresses, in this regard, that trade agreements signed with third countries should include chapters on sustainable fishing that are in line with the EU's sustainable development policies, the CFP and the provisions of the IUU Regulation; requests that EU fishers, fleets and SMEs operating in the seafood sector be given support to strengthen and improve their position in the value chain; recalls that autonomous tariff quotas must only be used where there is a lack of an adequate seafood supply for the EU market and cannot be exploited to put pressure on the supply and prices of EU producers;
43. Stresses that the EU should continuously monitor the efforts undertaken to combat IUU fishing by third countries that have been granted preferential tariffs for fisheries and aquaculture products; stresses that it is essential for the EU to make full use of the instruments at its disposal in accordance with the IUU Regulation, including the 'red card', if a country that has been granted preferential tariffs fails to comply with EU requirements on labour rights, sustainable fisheries and the traceability of fisheries products;
44. Stresses the need to ensure a level playing field for all fisheries and aquaculture products marketed in the EU regardless of their origin; calls on the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to ensure the implementation of current EU safety, hygiene and quality requirements, including marketing standards on all fisheries and aquaculture products in the internal market;
45. Recalls that progress still needs to be made for sustainable fisheries partnership agreements to become truly sustainable; highlights that these agreements must be in line with the best scientific advice available and must neither threaten the small-scale

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<sup>17</sup> OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 1.

fisheries sector in third countries nor undermine local food security;

46. Stresses the importance of increasing consumer awareness and calls for all imported fisheries products that enter the EU market to have to comply with internationally agreed minimum standards, as laid down in the International Labour Organization Convention C188 on Work in Fishing and implemented in the EU through Council Directive (EU) 2017/159<sup>18</sup>, in order to prevent EU citizens from consuming fish unaware that it was caught by vessels that do not respect minimum social conditions;
47. Urges the Commission to draw up a list of goods produced by child or forced labour and corresponding reports for use by EU policymakers and companies to conduct risk assessments, perform due diligence on supply chains and develop strategies to address child labour and forced labour; encourages the Commission to use the list as a tool to take action against non-compliant fishing vessels and non-cooperating third countries, similar to that laid down in Chapter VII of the IUU Regulation, in particular to restrict or block imports from fishing vessels or fishing nations (black) listed for serious labour abuses and failing to comply with basic human rights on board fishing vessels;
48. Underlines the importance of the new EMFAF for enabling sustainably managed seas and oceans, promoting the development of a sustainable blue economy, modernising the fisheries sector in line with the objectives of the CFP, creating new employment and income opportunities, supporting sustainable practices, favouring generational renewal, including for small-scale fisheries, which can curb depopulation in rural areas and on islands, and promoting the active participation of women, associations, including guilds such as *cofradías*, producer organisations and the retail sector; suggests that making use of EMFAF financing should provide economic incentives for fishers, aquaculture producers and workers across the supply chain who have already taken measures to limit their climate and environmental footprint; welcomes the Commission's intention to invest in research, innovation and technology and stresses that the EMFAF should also be used to support research and innovation programmes and projects aimed at reducing food waste and to promote a sustainable food system, including the creation of incentives for the digital transformation of the sector in all links of the value chain for fisheries and aquaculture products; stresses the need, moreover, to integrate existing European research and innovation programmes with the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity 2030 Strategies and the new EMFAF, and to fully involve the fisheries and aquaculture sector and other relevant stakeholders along the value chain in order to maximise potential synergies between different sectors;
49. Underlines the CFP aim of selective fishing and notes that the fisheries sector is investing in selective gear to this end; stresses that the Union should support and encourage these investments;
50. Stresses the need to improve the monitoring, control and enforcement of the CFP, including the full implementation of the landing obligation and the introduction of

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<sup>18</sup> Council Directive (EU) 2017/159 of 19 December 2016 implementing the Agreement concerning the implementation of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 of the International Labour Organization, concluded on 21 May 2012 between the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the European Union (Cogeca), the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and the Association of National Organisations of Fishing Enterprises in the European Union (Europêche), OJ L 25, 31.1.2017, p. 12.

electronic monitoring of vessels to improve food traceability;

51. Points out that the energy efficiency of the EU's fishing fleets has increased tremendously over the years thanks to the adaptation of new technologies; notes an improvement in fish stocks, especially in the North Sea, owing to the high standards with which the EU fishing sector has to comply;
52. Underlines the importance of small-scale coastal fishing and believes that this sector can significantly facilitate the transition to the sustainable management of fish stocks; calls on all the Member States to increase the percentage for the national quotas allocated to this sector accordingly;
53. Recommends that the EU institutions and all the Member States launch effective, appropriately funded and far-reaching educational awareness campaigns for consumers in order to bolster healthy and sustainable fish consumption, highlight the properties and benefits of fish products, and help consumers to choose wisely when buying fresh fish products; including by promoting the consumption of lesser known fish species; calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement initiatives to reduce food waste and other waste from EU fish and seafood markets;
54. Considers that one of the cornerstones of all campaigns to promote the consumption of seafood should be the sustainability of the practices used to procure it and the leading role of European fisheries in this area; stresses, moreover, that these campaigns should be promoted by working closely with trade associations and specific professional bodies, such as nutritionists, doctors and paediatricians, in order to take targeted and effective action to help European consumers;
55. Notes that the Commission's proposal for a directive on VAT rates envisages the use of indirect taxation to encourage the consumption of sustainable and healthy food products; calls on the Member States to make use of existing tools in this regard, such as reduced VAT rates and green public procurement;
56. Criticises the fact that the strategy fails to mention any of the problems derived from the pollution of seas in the EU with microplastics and nanoplastics, which poses a worrying threat to the health of European consumers; stresses the need to step up research and data collection concerning the impact of marine litter, nanoplastics and microplastics on fishery resources and human health, while promoting action to raise awareness among European consumers of the problem of plastic pollution;
57. Calls on the Commission to provide financial support and visibility to projects and initiatives aimed at shortening supply chains, promoting local food systems and sustainable seafood consumption and supporting small-scale fisheries;
58. Stresses that in order to fully adhere to the European circular economy and meet food waste reduction objectives, virtuous practices should be promoted and encouraged in fisheries, such as reusing products that have been caught that fall below the minimum conservation reference size for which a ban on discards applies;
59. Notes that by their very nature, a number of the animal welfare considerations in the Commission's strategy do not apply to the fisheries sector;

60. Underlines the necessity to establish better consultative methods for commercial organisations of small-scale fishers to allow them to take part in the relevant decision-making processes that have repercussions on their livelihoods, such as the social dialogue committees; highlights the importance, in this regard, of fair and balanced participation for small-scale fisheries, as representation on advisory councils and in other forums is insufficient; emphasises, in particular, the importance of equal and fair representation when implementing such international obligations as social and ecosystem management to ensure that it is feasible to implement them in all fleet segments;
61. Regrets the fact that while the strategy rightly highlights the role of farmers as custodians of the land, it does not accord the same recognition to European fishers, who should be regarded and recognised as the custodians of the sea and have a key role to play in achieving the strategy's objectives; expresses its disappointment, in this regard, that the strategy fails to ensure the involvement of representatives from the sector in institutional forums or encourage a bottom-up approach that fully involves European fishers in drawing up the rules that they have to apply; stresses the need for the fisheries sector to be fully involved in order to fully achieve the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy;
62. Stresses the need to encourage small-scale fishers to come together in associations, cooperatives and producer organisations to ensure that they have a better negotiating position with market suppliers and a better and stronger position in the food supply chain to guarantee them a fair income; stresses that associations such as the guilds in Spain (*cofradías*) should be recognised under EU law and be eligible to receive financial support on an equal footing with producer organisations; calls on the Commission to take action in this regard.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	19.4.2021
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 27 -: 1 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Clara Aguilera, Pietro Bartolo, François-Xavier Bellamy, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Rosanna Conte, Rosa D'Amato, Giuseppe Ferrandino, Søren Gade, Niclas Herbst, France Jamet, Pierre Karleskind, Predrag Fred Matić, Francisco José Millán Mon, Grace O'Sullivan, Manuel Pizarro, Caroline Roose, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Ruža Tomašić, Peter van Dalen, Emma Wiesner
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Benoît Biteau, Manuel Bompard, Nicolás González Casares, Valentino Grant, Petros Kokkalis, Gabriel Mato, Nuno Melo



## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

27	+
ECR	Bert-Jan Ruissen, Ruža Tomašić
ID	Rosanna Conte, Valentino Grant, France Jamet
PPE	François-Xavier Bellamy, Peter van Dalen, Niclas Herbst, Gabriel Mato, Nuno Melo, Francisco José Millán Mon, Annie Schreijer-Pierik
Renew	Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Søren Gade, Pierre Karleskind, Emma Wiesner
S&D	Clara Aguilera, Pietro Bartolo, Giuseppe Ferrandino, Nicolás González Casares, Predrag Fred Matić, Manuel Pizarro
The Left	Petros Kokkalis
Verts/ALE	Benoît Biteau, Rosa D'Amato, Grace O'Sullivan, Caroline Roose

1	0
The Left	Manuel Bompard

**Key to symbols:**

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

<b>Date adopted</b>	10.9.2021
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 94 -: 20 0: 10
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	<p>Mazaly Aguilar, Clara Aguilera, Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Álvaro Amaro, Eric Andrieu, Nikos Androulakis, Bartosz Arłukowicz, Margrete Auken, Carmen Avram, Simona Baldassarre, Marek Paweł Balt, Traian Bănescu, Aurélie Beigneux, Monika Beňová, Sergio Berlato, Alexander Bernhuber, Benoît Biteau, Mara Bizzotto, Malin Björk, Simona Bonafè, Daniel Buda, Delara Burkhardt, Pascal Canfin, Isabel Carvalhais, Sara Cerdas, Mohammed Chahim, Asger Christensen, Angelo Ciocca, Tudor Ciuhodaru, Nathalie Colin-Oesterlé, Ivan David, Paolo De Castro, Jérémy Decerle, Esther de Lange, Salvatore De Meo, Christian Doleschal, Herbert Dorfmann, Marco Dreosto, Cyrus Engerer, Eleonora Evi, Agnès Evren, Pietro Fiocchi, Luke Ming Flanagan, Andreas Glück, Catherine Griset, Francisco Guerreiro, Jytte Guteland, Teuvo Hakkarainen, Martin Häusling, Anja Hazekamp, Martin Hlaváček, Martin Hojsik, Pär Holmgren, Jan Huitema, Yannick Jadot, Adam Jarubas, Krzysztof Jurgiel, Jarosław Kalinowski, Elsi Katainen, Petros Kokkalis, Athanasios Konstantinou, Ewa Kopacz, Joanna Kopcińska, Gilles Lebreton, Peter Liese, Sylvia Limmer, Norbert Lins, Javi López, César Luena, Colm Markey, Fulvio Martusciello, Liudas Mažylis, Joëlle Mélin, Tilly Metz, Giuseppe Milazzo, Alin Mituța, Silvia Modig, Dolors Montserrat, Alessandra Moretti, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Ulrike Müller, Ville Niinistö, Maria Noichl, Ljudmila Novak, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno, Stanislav Polčák, Jessica Polfjård, Luisa Regimiento, Frédérique Ries, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Sándor Rónai, Rob Rooker, Bronis Ropė, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Anne Sander, Silvia Sardone, Petri Sarvamaa, Simone Schmiedtbauer, Christine Schneider, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Ivan Vilibor Sinčić, Annalisa Tardino, Nils Torvalds, Véronique Trillet-Lenoir, Petar Vítanov, Alexandr Vondra, Veronika Vrecionová, Mick Wallace, Pernille Weiss, Sarah Wiener, Emma Wiesner, Michal Wiezik, Tiemo Wölken, Anna Zalewska</p>
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Maria Arena, Manuel Bompard, Peter Jahr, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Michaela Šojdrová, Susana Solís Pérez, Marc Tarabella
<b>Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote</b>	Nicolas Bay

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

94	+
EPP	Bartosz Arłukowicz, Traian Băsescu, Alexander Bernhuber, Daniel Buda, Nathalie Colin-Oesterlé, Salvatore De Meo, Christian Doleschal, Herbert Dorfmann, Agnès Evren, Peter Jahr, Adam Jarubas, Jarosław Kalinowski, Ewa Kopacz, Peter Liese, Norbert Lins, Colm Markey, Fulvio Martusciello, Liudas Mažylis, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Ljudmila Novak, Stanislav Polčák, Jessica Polfjård, Luisa Regimenti, Anne Sander, Petri Sarvamaa, Simone Schmiedtbauer, Christine Schneider, Michaela Šojdrová, Pernille Weiss, Michal Wiezik
S&D	Clara Aguilera, Eric Andrieu, Nikos Androulakis, Maria Arena, Carmen Avram, Marek Paweł Balt, Monika Beňová, Simona Bonafè, Delara Burkhardt, Isabel Carvalhais, Sara Cerdas, Mohammed Chahim, Tudor Ciuhodaru, Paolo De Castro, Cyrus Engerer, Jytte Guteland, Javi López, César Luena, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Alessandra Moretti, Maria Noichl, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno, Sándor Rónai, Marc Tarabella, Petar Vitanov, Tiemo Wölken
Renew	Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Pascal Canfin, Asger Christensen, Jérémy Decerle, Andreas Glück, Martin Hojsík, Jan Huitema, Elsi Katainen, Alin Mituța, Ulrike Müller, Frédérique Ries, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Susana Solís Pérez, Nils Torvalds, Véronique Trillet-Lenoir, Emma Wiesner
Greens/EFA	Margrete Auken, Benoît Biteau, Eleonora Evi, Francisco Guerreiro, Martin Häusling, Pär Holmgren, Yannick Jadot, Tilly Metz, Ville Niinistö, Bronis Ropé, Sarah Wiener
ID	Teuvo Hakkarainen
The Left	Malin Björk, Manuel Bompard, Luke Ming Flanagan, Anja Hazekamp, Petros Kokkalis, Silvia Modig, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, Mick Wallace
NI	Athanasios Konstantinou

20	-
EPP	Álvaro Amaro
ID	Simona Baldassarre, Mara Bizzotto, Angelo Ciocca, Ivan David, Marco Dreosto, Sylvia Limmer, Silvia Sardone, Annalisa Tardino
ECR	Mazaly Aguilar, Sergio Berlato, Pietro Fiocchi, Krzysztof Jurgiel, Joanna Kopcińska, Giuseppe Milazzo, Rob Rooken, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Alexandr Vondra, Veronika Vrecionová, Anna Zalewska

10	0
EPP	Esther de Lange, Dolors Montserrat, Annie Schreijer-Pierik
Renew	Martin Hlaváček
ID	Nicolas Bay, Aurélia Beigneux, Catherine Griset, Gilles Lebreton, Joëlle Mélin
NI	Ivan Vilibor Sinčić

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour  
- : against  
0 : abstention