



The EU must stand by the Farm to Fork Strategy

Joint CSO statement (14 October 2021)

Today and tomorrow, [agri-food stakeholders meet](#) to discuss the progress made to date and the next steps in implementing the Farm to Fork Strategy, the **EU's blueprint for sustainable food and farming**.

The EU's food system is faced with multiple and interrelated crises affecting our health, environment and societal construct. The way we produce and consume food is driving climate breakdown and biodiversity collapse. Poor diet is a leading risk factor for ill-health among Europeans, especially affecting the most vulnerable social groups. Farmers and fishers themselves are hard hit by the current system. Many struggle to make a decent living from their work due to imbalances of power in supply chains and chronic overproduction in several sectors. Not to mention farmers and fishers in the global South and seasonal workers in poor working conditions, or rural communities affected by agricultural pollution. We and our fast-degrading natural world deserve better policies. **The European Commission's own [scientific advisors](#) found overwhelming evidence that "radical system-wide change is required, with 'business as usual' no longer a viable option."**

The Farm to Fork Strategy is the EU's first ever cross-cutting policy initiative set out to address the [entire food chain](#) in order to move towards a truly fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system. While not perfect, it is a welcome and major step forward, which Members of the European Parliament [must strengthen](#) even further when they vote on the Strategy next week.

We therefore strongly condemn the [coordinated efforts](#) of some industrial agri-food lobbies to discredit, delay, and weaken the Farm to Fork Strategy. The tactics deployed by these actors amount to disinformation and scaremongering and must be exposed as such. The so-called "impact assessments" promoted as justifications against key Farm to Fork objectives are riddled with [methodological limitations](#) which do not allow drawing any straightforward, scientifically-sound conclusions on the likely impacts of the Farm to Fork Strategy. The impartiality of most of these

studies is compromised by conflicts of interests, as the researchers were directly [funded by lobby groups](#). Using partial findings from these studies as arguments against the Farm to Fork Strategy is therefore highly misleading.

Much of the debate so far has crystallised around the aspirational targets laid down in the Farm to Fork Strategy for cutting back on agro-chemical inputs and antimicrobials and for moving towards more organic farming. Albeit insufficient on their own, **these aspirational targets are a vital element of the Strategy as they set the course for the transition towards sustainable food systems and will ensure that progress for getting there can be measured** along the way.

[Rather than futile debates](#) about whether to act, this is what everyone's attention should be focused on: how to deliver a just transition to truly sustainable, healthy, and fair food systems. Should we fail to ensure such a transition, and let climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity decline worsen, all of us will be affected – from the farm, to the fork.

Next week, it is up to Members of the European Parliament to put the EU on the right track. Civil society groups urge them to support an ambitious Farm to Fork Strategy that delivers for people and planet.

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1. ActionAid International
2. BEUC - The European Consumer Organisation
3. BirdLife Europe and Central Asia
4. ClientEarth
5. CFFA - Coalition For Fair Fisheries Arrangements
6. CiWF - Compassion in World Farming EU
7. CEO - Corporate Europe Observatory
8. ECVC - European Coordination Via Campesina
9. EEB - European Environmental Bureau
10. EHN - European Heart Network
11. EPHA - European Public Health Alliance
12. Eurogroup for Animals
13. Fair Trade Advocacy Office
14. Feedback
15. FIAN Europe
16. FOUR PAWS International
17. FoEE - Friends of the Earth Europe
18. Greenpeace European Unit
19. HEAL - Health and Environment Alliance
20. IFOAM Organics Europe
21. IATP Europe - Institute for Agriculture and trade Policy
22. PAN-Europe - Pesticide Action Network Europe
23. Urgenci
24. SAFE - Safe Food Advocacy Europe
25. Slow Food Europe
26. WWF European Policy Office
27. Zero Waste Europe