



**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**A Farm to Fork Strategy
for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system**

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1. NEED FOR ACTION

The **European Green Deal** sets out how to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, by mapping a new, sustainable and inclusive growth strategy boosting the economy, improving people's health and quality of life, caring for nature, and leaving no one behind.

The Farm to Fork Strategy is at the heart of the Green Deal. It addresses the challenges of sustainable food systems in a comprehensive way, recognising the inextricable links between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet. The Green Deal marks a paradigm shift, moving the focus from food production and agriculture to food systems, embracing sustainable consumption and production patterns, processing and marketing, correcting imbalances, harnessing the power of digital technologies and connecting the economy to climate, the environment and health. The Farm to Fork Strategy is an integral element of the Commission's Agenda to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The COVID-19 pandemic brings to the fore the importance of a **robust and resilient food system** that continues to function in all circumstances, capable of ensuring access to a sufficient supply of affordable food for citizens. It clearly shows that sustainability, including our capacity to ensure food security, is rooted in our ability to deliver simultaneously on the environmental, economic, health and social objectives of the Green Deal.

The pandemic and its economic consequences are imposing new and unprecedented challenges on all actors in the food supply chain. Farmers, fishers, food processors, transporters, retailers and other food chain actors are playing a key role in ensuring that food supply disruptions are minimal in this period of crisis. However, it also puts the spotlight on dependence of our food infrastructure on a well-functioning regulatory and policy framework and effective EU wide coordination for in particular external and internal borders, the internal market, transport and labour, which is currently tested and strained.

European food is safe, plentiful, nutritious and of high quality. This is the result of years of EU policymaking to protect human, animal and plant health, and of the efforts of our farmers and fishers. However, climate change, biodiversity loss and the pollution and degradation of land and sea are a reality around the globe. Extreme weather events, which are set to become much more common as temperatures rise¹, severely affect agriculture, forests, soils, fisheries and aquaculture, including through the spread of animal and plant diseases and invasive alien species.

Food systems are responsible for approximately 29% of the world's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions², have a profound effect on biodiversity, water, air, soil, and carbon sinks, and are one of the principal causes of resource depletion and the degradation of landscapes and natural ecosystems. Livestock supply chains account for 14.5% of global GHG emissions³. In the EU, 68% of the total agricultural land is used for animal

¹ European Political Strategy Centre (2018), *10 trends reshaping climate and energy* and IPBES (2019), *Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services*.

² Based on IPCC (2019), *Special report on climate change and land*.

³ FAO (2013), *Tackling climate change through livestock – a global assessment of emissions and mitigation opportunities*.

production (two-thirds of which is grassland)⁴ and nearly 70% of all agricultural GHG emissions come from the animal sector⁵. In addition, the manufacturing, processing, retailing, packaging and transportation of food make a major contribution to air, soil and water pollution and GHG emissions⁶.

To deliver on the Green Deal, food systems urgently need to become sustainable and operate within planetary boundaries. They need to *'deliver food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised'*⁷. While food security and safety are cornerstones of our food system, as has once again become evident in the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, **sustainability** has become another key objective.

The Climate Law⁸ sets out the objective for a climate neutral Union in 2050. Innovative, efficient and sustainable production methods, together with smart, informed consumer choices, can lead to reduced emissions and externalities in agriculture and the downstream food value chain. Maintaining and increasing the natural carbon sink of forests, soils, rivers, seas, oceans and farmland and coastal wetlands is equally crucial.

While the EU's transition to sustainable food systems has started in some areas⁹, there is still a need to reduce dependency on **pesticides and antimicrobials, reduce the use of fertilisers, increase organic farming, improve animal welfare, and reverse biodiversity loss.**

Decisive policy impetus is required for accelerated, irreversible change addressing diverse challenges across sectors, regions and Member States. **Farmers, fishers and aquaculture producers have a pivotal role** to play in making food systems sustainable, not least because their economic future is at stake. They are key **part of the solution**, but require the right incentives and support throughout the transition. Other actors along the value chain, including manufacturers, retailers and food services, also bear a significant share of the responsibility and need support and incentives for delivering change towards a fairer, more efficient food system.

Food insecurity and malnutrition remain an issue. Globally, over 820 million people currently suffer from hunger, and in total about 2 billion people experience moderate or severe food insecurity, putting them at greater risk of malnutrition and poor health¹⁰. The COVID-19 outbreak could double number of people suffering acute hunger¹¹. As the

⁴ Eurostat, 2019 : 39.1 million hectares of cereals and oilseeds and 70.7 million hectares of grassland on 161 million hectares of agricultural land.

⁵ EEA (2019), *Annual European Union greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2017 and Inventory report 2019*. These figures do not include CO₂ emissions from land and land use change.

⁶ Joint Research Centre (2017), *Consumer footprint – basket of products indicator on food*.

⁷ FAO (2018), *Sustainable food systems: concept and framework*.

⁸ Commission proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law), COM(2020) 80 final, 2020/0036 (COD).

⁹ Since 1990 in the EU, GHG emissions from farming have been cut by 20% and nitrate levels in rivers have been reduced by 18%. Sustainable fisheries management has allowed fish stocks to grow by 30% over the last 15 years. Source: European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, *Challenges for agriculture and rural areas: Environment and climate dimensions* (https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/key_policies/documents/env_background_final_en.pdf).

¹⁰ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2019), *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns*.

¹¹ 2020 edition of the Global Report on Food Crises. FAO, WFP and other organisations

world's population is projected to grow to around 9.7 billion in 2050 – unless action is taken to change consumption patterns and curb food waste – food availability would need to increase by 50% (from 2012 levels) by 2050 to meet demand¹². Combined with an expected increase in energy crops, this is projected to lead to an increase in cropland area at the expense of forest and other natural land, notably in Sub-Saharan Africa¹³.

In the EU, 33 million people¹⁴ cannot afford a quality meal every second day and food assistance provided by the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) is essential for part of the population in many Member States. Moreover, the challenge of food affordability risks growing during an economic downturn. While about 20% of the food produced is **wasted**¹⁵, **obesity** is also rising. Over half of the adult population are now overweight¹⁶, contributing to a high prevalence of diet-related diseases (including various types of cancer) and related healthcare costs. Overall, European **diets** are not in line with recommendations and the 'food environment'¹⁷ is such that the healthy option is not always the easiest. If European diets were in line with dietary recommendations, the environmental footprint of food systems would also be significantly reduced.

Nevertheless, citizens' **expectations** are evolving and driving significant change in the food market. People are paying more and more attention to environmental, health and ethical issues¹⁸. Even as societies become more urbanised, people want to feel closer to their food, having it fresh, less processed and sustainably sourced. And the calls for shorter supply chains have intensified during the current outbreak. Consumers expect **transparency** throughout the supply chain, to be sure that they are buying healthy food from a healthy planet. Food processors and retailers play a key role in meeting the demand.

In recent years, consumer trust has been eroded through deliberate violations of food supply rules. Achieving a sustainable food system therefore requires a zero tolerance policy on **food fraud**.

The EU is the biggest importer and exporter of agri-food products and the largest seafood market in the world. However, imports of certain commodities may be associated with negative environmental and social impacts in the countries in which they are produced, including deforestation, air and water pollution, and substandard labour conditions (*inter alia* as regards workers' safety). Therefore, efforts to tighten sustainability requirements in the EU food system should be accompanied by policies that help gradually **raise standards globally**, in order to avoid the externalisation and export of unsustainable practices.

¹² FAO (2018), *The future of food and agriculture – alternative pathways to 2050*.

¹³ IPCC (2019) and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2017), *The Global Land Outlook*.

¹⁴ Eurostat, EU SILK (2018), https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_mdes03&lang=en.

¹⁵ EU FUSIONS (2016), *Estimates of European food waste levels*.

¹⁶ Eurostat, Obesity rate by body mass index, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_02_10/default/table?lang=en.

¹⁷ The 'food environment' is the physical, economic, political and socio-cultural context in which consumers engage with the food system to make decisions on acquiring, preparing and consuming food (HighLevel Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (2017), Nutrition and food systems).

¹⁸ Europeans have a high level of awareness of food safety topics. Most frequently reported concerns relate to antibiotics, hormones and steroids in meat, pesticides, environmental pollutants and food additives. Source: Special Eurobarometer (April 2019), *Food safety in the EU*.

All citizens and operators across value chains, in the EU and elsewhere, should benefit from a **just transition**, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the unfolding economic downturn, with global repercussions on investment capacity and purchasing power. A shift to a sustainable food system can bring environmental, social and health benefits, offer economic gains and generate a “bounce forward” out of the current crisis onto a sustainable path. At global level, it is estimated that food and agriculture systems in line with the SDGs would deliver nutritious and affordable food for a growing world population, help restore vital ecosystems and could create new economic value of over €1.8 trillion by 2030¹⁹. Ensuring a sustainable livelihood for primary producers, who still lag behind in terms of income, is essential for the success of the transition. For example, the average EU farmer currently earns around half of the average worker in the economy as a whole²⁰. Research, innovation, nature-based and fossil fuel-free solutions, digitalisation, technology, knowledgesharing and financial investments will provide solutions that deliver better environmental and health-related results and higher profits, and open up new business and job opportunities.

A sustainable food system will be instrumental in delivering the climate and environmental objectives of the Green Deal, reducing pollution to non-harmful levels for people and ecosystems, and halting biodiversity loss through a resilient circular economy, while reinforcing EU’s **competitive sustainability**. This Strategy supports the transition by putting the emphasis on new opportunities for citizens and food operators alike.

2. THE WAY FORWARD

Against this background, the EU’s goals are to reduce the **environmental and climate footprint** of the food system and strengthen its **resilience**, leading a **global transition** towards competitive sustainability from farm to fork and tapping into **new opportunities**. This means:

- ensuring that food production, transport, distribution, marketing and consumption have a neutral or positive environmental impact, preserving and restoring the land and sea-based resources on which the food system depends; helping to mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts; protecting land, soil, water, air, plant and animal health; and stopping the loss of biodiversity;
- ensuring food security and public health – making sure that everyone has access to sufficient, nutritious, sustainable food that upholds high standards of safety and quality, plant health, and animal health and welfare, while meeting their dietary needs and food preferences; and
- preserving the affordability of food, while generating fairer economic returns in the supply chain, fostering the competitiveness of the supply sector, promoting fair trade, creating new business opportunities, while ensuring integrity of the single market and occupational health and safety.

The sustainability of food systems is a global issue and food systems will have to adapt taking into account the diverse challenges they face. In championing the global transition, the EU can claim sustainability as its trademark and set global standards. To achieve a fair, healthy and **environmentally-friendly** food system, we need to take an

¹⁹ Business & Sustainable Development Commission (2017), *Better business, better world*.

²⁰ CAP Context indicator C.26 on Agricultural entrepreneurial income (https://agridata.ec.europa.eu/Olik_Downloads/Jobs-Growth-sources.htm).

integrated approach covering the entire food chain from farm to fork. To that end, key targets in priority areas are set for the EU as a whole. To ensure a fair transition, different starting points and differences in improvement potential between Member States should be duly recognised.

In order to **accelerate and facilitate** this transition, through a systemic and structured approach, and ensure that all foods placed on the EU market become increasingly sustainable, the Commission will propose a **legislative initiative for a framework for a sustainable food system** before the end of 2023. This over-arching framework will provide a basis to ensure policy coherence at EU and national level, mainstream sustainability in all food-related policies and strengthen the resilience of food systems. As part of this initiative and following broad dialogue and consultation, the Commission will consider establishing common definitions and general food sustainability principles that will guide broader policy and legislative developments in the future. Combined with labelling on the sustainability performance of food products or other incentives, the framework will provide a concrete means for operators to benefit from sustainability practices and will gradually raise **sustainability standards**.

2.1. Ensuring food security

A sustainable food system must ensure sufficient and varied supply of safe, nutritious and affordable food to people at all times, not least in times of crisis. Major global events which affect the sustainability of food systems do not necessarily stem from the food supply chain itself but can be triggered by political, economic, environmental or health crises. The current COVID-19 pandemic – although not linked to food safety– can place both food security and livelihoods at risk.

As the virus spreads and measures are taken to curb its progress, the food value chain – due to its complexity and the number of actors involved – is disrupted in different ways. While food supply in general may not be immediately affected, many challenges impact on the functioning of food systems and relate in particular to: supply chain logistics and transport (e.g. possible restrictions affecting movement of workers, food and/or animals, sourcing of seeds and other inputs); labour force capacity (linked to personnel availability and (occupational) health and safety issues); lower demand for certain types of food (due to uncertainty and increased precautionary behaviour or product perishability); slower production and/or more limited distribution due to measures taken to guarantee health standards; reduction of outlets implying reduced sales opportunities for some producers (e.g. closure of open air markets and restaurants where fresh products are sold or consumed). If unchecked, such disruption can lead to increased food prices putting at risk vulnerable groups both in- and outside the EU, in particular those suffering from hunger or malnutrition and relying on external assistance for provision of food. Farmers, fishers and businesses across the food supply chain may also face severe economic difficulties, and even business failure. In addition, official controls may also be impacted by national restrictions, with possible repercussions on the compliance with EU standards.

In order to mitigate risks linked to crisis situations threatening sustainability of food systems, it is necessary to reflect on the overall resilience of our European strategic value chains to better protect Europe from similar disruptions in the future. Pro-active measures must be taken in close cooperation with all players. The Commission will step up its coordination of a common European response to crises affecting food systems in order to ensure food security and safety, reinforce public health and mitigate their socio-economic

impact in the EU. As regards the COVID-19 crisis, the Commission works to ensure that anticipating and addressing food systems challenges are part and parcel of the EU's overall response covering areas such as: provision of coherent guidelines to Member States on border measures to protect citizens' health while allowing the free flow of essential goods; setting up a €37 billion Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative to provide, for example, liquidity to small businesses; provision of scientific advice from relevant EU agencies (e.g. European Food Safety Authority - EFSA, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control - ECDC) to help inform crisis management measures related to the food supply chain; coordination of crisis management response in Member States including provision of consistent, science-based information to help address citizens' concerns regarding the safe handling and preparation of food; coordinating with Member States to ensure a functioning single market for goods by creating "Green Lanes" to ensure uninterrupted cross border trade, including for food products; adopting a Temporary Framework for state aid under which farmers can benefit from a maximum aid of €100,000 per farm, food processing and marketing companies can benefit from a maximum of €800,000 and undertakings in the fisheries and aquaculture sector can receive a maximum amount aid of €120,000. Finally, there are measures under the current European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) that are available immediately to Member States and the Commission issued guidance in this respect.

Building on its existing policies, long-term sustainability of food systems requires monitoring preparedness and resilience to be able to respond to future crises and challenges. To this end, the Commission proposes to establish an **EU Food Security Observatory**. The Observatory will improve our knowledge base, monitor and report on the Union's capacity to assure the availability of food supplies, as well as food affordability, covering food production and critical supply infrastructure, providing transparency, coordination and support to decision-making in times of food security challenges. The Commission will continue coordinating global crisis response through such instruments, including the international interagency platform Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) set up in the wake of the 2008 and 2010 food price hikes by the G20 and the FAO. Indeed, maintaining sustainable trade relationships also plays a very important role in this regard.

Drawing on the lessons learned, the Commission will assess the resilience of the food system as regards food security and develop a **contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security** during crisis of any nature.

Overall sustainability of the food system is crucial as ever – as in the long-term perspective resilience is not possible if the system is unsustainable. Long-term food security depends on the sustainable and efficient use of natural resources and the protection of ecosystems.

2.2. Ensuring sustainable food production

To achieve sustainability, farmers, fishers and aquaculture producers need to transform their production methods, making the best use of nature-based, technological, digital, and space-based solutions to deliver better environmental results, increase climate resilience and reduce the use of inputs (e.g. pesticides, fertilisers). These solutions require human and financial investment, but also promise higher returns from for instance the direct marketing and sale of high value-added products. New business models, better advice, knowledge transfer, and suitable pricing signals will improve primary producers'

working methods and increasingly put them at the centre of a resilient value chain that promotes the circular use of natural resources and supports them in managing risks.

Agriculture is about to see major changes and the EU needs to support its farmers to make this transformation, especially its young farmers. The Commission's June 2018 proposal for the reform of the **common agricultural policy (CAP)**²¹ aims to help farmers to achieve sustainability through a more results-oriented model, better use of data and analysis, improved mandatory sustainability standards and new voluntary measures. The implementation of the future CAP will take place in the form of 27 different CAP Strategic Plans, one for each Member State. These plans will be programming instruments²² where Member States will present their proposed interventions to achieve specific CAP objectives. CAP Strategic Plans will be assessed and formally adopted by the Commission and, once established, Member States will annually report on the progress made in the implementation using a system of common indicators.

The new '**eco-schemes**' offer a major stream of funding to support the uptake of sustainable practices, such as precision agriculture, agro-ecology, agro-forestry and organic farming. The Commission and Member States should pay particular attention to the implementation and resourcing of eco-schemes in the Strategic Plans. In that context (and more generally), the Commission will work with the co-legislators to ensure that the Green Deal ambition is fully reflected in the new CAP legislation. In particular, it will support the introduction of a minimum ring-fencing budget for eco-schemes and an obligation for Member States to take the Green Deal targets into account when drawing up their Strategic Plan. This means that Member States will be required to set explicit national values for the targets set in this Farm to Fork Strategy. Based on these values, the Member States would then design, in their CAP Strategic Plans, appropriate interventions and their expected use by farmers, so that the CAP can, in each Member State, contribute effectively to this new ambition. Moreover, the Commission will make individual recommendations to each Member State as regards the nine specific objectives of the CAP, before the draft Strategic Plans are formally submitted. These will ensure that the Member States' Strategic Plans take a concerted and ambitious approach in line with the Green Deal and this Farm to Fork Strategy, including on climate and environment, pesticides, fertilisers, antibiotics and organic farming.

An example of **new green business models** is carbon sequestration by farmers and foresters. Farming practices that remove CO₂ from the atmosphere contribute to the climate neutrality objective and should be rewarded, either via CAP payments or via other public or private initiatives (carbon market²³). As announced in the new Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP)²⁴, the Commission will develop a regulatory framework for the certification of carbon removals based on robust and transparent carbon accounting to monitor and verify the authenticity of carbon removals. Other examples

²¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/natural-resources-and-environment>

²² The interventions include actions funded with the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (direct payments and sectorial programmes) as well as the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (rural development interventions).

²³ Robust certification rules for carbon removals in agriculture and forestry are the first step to enable payments to farmers and foresters for the carbon sequestration they provide. Member States could use these rules to design CAP payments based on the carbon sequestered; moreover, private companies could also be interested in purchasing such certificates to support climate action, thus providing an additional incentive (on top of CAP payments) to farmers and foresters for carbon sequestration.

²⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A new Circular Economy Action Plan For a cleaner and more competitive Europe, COM/2020/98 final.

include the production of organic fertilisers and biogas, including biomethane, from agriculture waste and residues, such as manures.

The use of **chemical pesticides** in agriculture contributes to soil, water and air pollution, biodiversity loss and can harm non-target plants, insects, birds, mammals and amphibians. The Commission will take action to reduce the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides by XX% and the use of high-risk pesticides by XX% by 2030. It will revise the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive, enhance provisions on integrated pest management and promote greater use of safe alternative ways of protecting harvests from pests and diseases. Agricultural practices that lead to a reduction of use of pesticides will be supported through the CAP. The different starting points of Member States will also be taken into account. The Commission will also facilitate the placing on the market of plant protection products containing biological active substances and reinforce the environmental risk assessment of pesticides. It will act to curb delays in the authorisation process. The Commission will also propose changes to the 2009 Regulation concerning statistics on pesticides to overcome data gaps and promote evidence-based policymaking.

The direct **energy use** of the European agriculture and forestry sectors amounts to some 3% of the total EU final energy consumption²⁵. More than half is based on fossil oil and petroleum products²⁶, much of which is used to fuel mobile machinery. Electrification and hybridisation is already emerging as a solution to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy use and reduce carbon emissions. The Commission will take action to speed-up market adoption of this and other energy efficiency solutions in the agriculture and food sectors under the clean energy transition sub-programme of the future LIFE Programme.

The **excess of nutrients** in the environment (especially of nitrogen and phosphorus), stemming from the fact that not all nutrients used in agriculture are effectively absorbed by plants, is a major source of air, soil and water pollution and climate impacts²⁷, and has reduced biodiversity in rivers, lakes and wetlands²⁸. Pollution of inland waters and seas due to the overuse of fertilisers can also cause economic and social harm by contributing to, for instance, fish stocks collapse. The Commission will act to reduce nutrient losses by at least XX% which will result in the reduction of use of fertilisers by at least XX% by 2030. This will be achieved by implementing and enforcing the relevant environmental and climate legislation in full, by identifying with Member States the nutrient load reductions needed to achieve these goals, by putting forward specific actions in the integrated nutrient management action plan to address nutrient pollution at source, and by managing nitrogen and phosphorus better throughout their lifecycle. The Commission will also work with Member States to extend the application of precise fertilisation techniques and sustainable agricultural practices, notably in hotspot areas of intensive livestock farming and of recycling of organic waste into renewable fertilisers.

²⁵ Eurostat, Share of energy consumption by agriculture in final energy consumption, EU-28, 2007 and 2017 (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Agri-environmental_indicator_-_energy_use)

²⁶ Eurostat, Share of fuel type in energy consumption by agriculture in 2017 (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Figure2_Share_of_fuel_type_in_energy_consumption_by_agriculture_2017_EU-28.png&oldid=453500).

²⁷ The use of nitrogen in agriculture leads to the emissions of nitrous oxide to the atmosphere. In 2017, N₂O emissions from agriculture accounted for 43% of agriculture emissions and 3.9% of total anthropogenic emissions in the EU (EEA (2019), Annual European Union greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2017 and Inventory report 2019).

²⁸ OECD (2019), *Accelerating climate action: refocussing policies through a well-being lens*.

These will be done including by means of measures in the CAP Strategic Plans such as the Farm Sustainability Tool for nutrient management²⁹ and of EU space technologies (Copernicus, Galileo).

Agriculture is responsible for 10.3% of the EU's GHG emissions and nearly 70% of those come from the animal sector³⁰ which mainly consist of non-CO₂ GHG methane and nitrous oxide. To help reduce the environmental and climate impact of **animal production**, the CAP will accompany the transformation to sustainable livestock systems by supporting innovative solutions and requiring sustainable production practices. The Commission will also facilitate the placing on the market of sustainable and innovative feed additives that help reduce the associated GHG footprint and water and air pollution. It will examine EU rules to reduce the dependency on critical feed materials (e.g. soya grown on deforested land) by fostering EU-grown plant proteins as well as alternative feed materials such as insects, marine feed stocks and by-products from the bio-economy³¹. Furthermore, the Commission will propose to stop stimulating production or consumption of meat. In this context, a review of the EU promotion programme for agricultural products will be conducted, with a view to enhancing its contribution to sustainable production and consumption in line with the political priorities of the Commission. It will also strictly assess any proposal for coupled support in Member States' Strategic Plans from the perspective of the need for overall sustainability.

Antimicrobial resistance linked to the excessive and inappropriate use of antimicrobials in animal and human healthcare leads to an estimated 33,000 human deaths in the EU every year³², and considerable healthcare costs. The Commission will therefore take action to reduce sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by XX% by 2030. The new regulations on veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed provide for a wide range of measures to help achieve this objective.

Better **animal welfare** improves animal health and food quality, reduces the need for medication and can help preserve biodiversity. The Commission will revise the animal welfare legislation, including on animal transport and the slaughter of animals, to align it with the latest scientific evidence, broaden its scope, make it easier to enforce and ultimately ensure a higher level of animal welfare, also supported by the CAP Strategic Plans. The Commission will also consider options for animal welfare labelling. Using labelling to link production methods to (premium) consumer demand will enhance opportunities for farmers.

²⁹ As indicated in the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the Common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, COM(2018)392, 2018/0216(COD), in full respect of the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions – European Interoperability Framework – Implementation Strategy, COM(2017)134.

³⁰ EEA (2019), *Annual European Union greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2017 and Inventory report 2019*. These figures do not include CO₂ emissions from land and land use change.

³¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A sustainable Bioeconomy for Europe: Strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment, COM/2018/673 final.

³² Cassini et al., (2019) 'Attributable deaths and disability-adjusted life-years caused by infections with antibiotic-resistant bacteria in the EU and the European Economic Area in 2015: a population-level modelling analysis', in *Lancet Infect Dis*. Vol.106, issue 1, pp. 55-56.

Climate change brings new threats to **plant health**. The sustainability challenge calls for measures to protect plants better from emerging pests and diseases, and for innovation. The Commission will adopt rules to reinforce vigilance on plant imports and surveillance on Union territory. New innovative techniques, including biotechnology and the development of bio-based products, may play a role in increasing sustainability, provided they are safe for consumers and the environment while bringing benefits for society as a whole. In response to the request of Member States, the Commission is carrying out a study which will look amongst others at the potential of new genomic techniques to improve sustainability along the food supply chain.

Sustainable food systems rely on **seed security**. Farmers need to have access to a range of quality seeds for plant varieties adapted to the pressures of climate change. The Commission will take measures to facilitate the registration of seed varieties, including for organic farming, and to ensure easier market access for traditional and locally adapted varieties.

Organic farming is a practice that needs to be further promoted. It has a positive impact on biodiversity and consumers recognise its societal value. The well-established legal framework also supports a conversion to this type of farming. In addition to CAP measures supporting further uptake of organic farming, the Commission will take actions to help Member States stimulate overall demand for organic products and ensure consumer trust and uptake through for example promotion campaigns and green public procurement. In line with the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy, the aim is to reach XX% of agricultural area under organic farming by 2030.

Not only the land, but also oceans and inland waters need to be managed sustainably, avoiding over-exploitation or damage to ecosystems. Climate change affects the development of fish populations and causes their displacement. The shift to **sustainable fish and seafood production** must be accelerated in the EU. Economic data show that, where fishing has become sustainable, income has grown in parallel³³. The Commission will step up efforts to bring fish stocks to sustainable levels via the common fisheries policy (CFP) where implementation gaps remain (e.g. by reducing wasteful discarding), strengthen fisheries management in the Mediterranean in cooperation with all coastal states and re-assess, by 2022, how the CFP addresses the risks triggered by climate change. In addition, the proposed revision of the EU's fisheries control system³⁴ will contribute to the fight against fraud through an enhanced traceability system. The mandatory use of digitalised catch certificates will strengthen measures to prevent illegal fish products from entering the EU market.

Farmed fish and seafood (e.g. algae) generate a lower carbon footprint than animal production on land. The next Maritime and Fisheries Fund will spend over €1 billion to support sustainable seafood farming. The Commission will adopt EU guidelines on aquaculture to set out pathways for Member States' sustainable aquaculture development plans and promote the right kind of expenditure under the Fund. It will also provide

³³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the State of Play of the Common Fisheries Policy and Consultation on the Fishing Opportunities for 2020, COM(2019) 274 final

³⁴ 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/2018/368 final, 2018/0193(COD).

guidance on growing a sustainable and innovative algae industry with an adequate regulatory framework and well-targeted support.

Finally, to support primary producers in the transition, the Commission will clarify the **competition rules** for collective initiatives promoting sustainability in supply chains. It will also help farmers and fishers strengthen their position in the supply chain and capture a fair share of the added value of sustainable production by encouraging the use of the possibilities for cooperation within the common market organisations for agricultural products³⁵ and fishery and aquaculture products. To this end, the Commission will closely monitor the implementation of the Unfair Trading Practices Directive³⁶ by Member States to improve the sustainability of farmers and fishers when exposed to such practices imposed by stronger buyers. It will also work with co-legislators to improve agricultural rules that strengthen the position of farmers (e.g. producers of geographical indications), their cooperatives, collectives and producer organisations in the food supply chain.

2.3. Stimulating sustainable food processing, wholesale, retail, hospitality and food services practices

Food processors, food service operators and retailers have a profound effect in shaping the market and influencing consumers' dietary choices through the types and nutritional composition of the food they produce, their choice of suppliers, production methods and packaging, transport, merchandising and marketing practices. As the biggest global food importer and exporter, the EU food and drink industry also affects the environmental and social footprint of global trade.

Strengthening the sustainability of our food systems can help further build the reputation of businesses and products, create shareholder value, attract employees and investors, and confer competitive advantage, productivity gains and reduced costs for companies³⁷.

The food industry itself should show the way by increasing the availability and affordability of healthy, sustainable food options. To promote this, the Commission will develop an **EU code of conduct for responsible business and marketing practice** and a monitoring framework. The Code will be developed through a transparent and

³⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007 (OJ L347, 20.12.2013, p. 671) and Regulation (EU) 2017/2393 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2017 amending Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), (EU) No 1306/2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy, (EU) No 1307/2013 establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the framework of the common agricultural policy, (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and (EU) No 652/2014 laying down provisions for the management of expenditure relating to the food chain, animal health and animal welfare, and relating to plant health and plant reproductive material (OJ L 350, 29.12.2017, p. 15).

³⁶ Directive (EU) No 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).

³⁷ For example, a study on the business case for reducing food loss and waste, carried out on behalf of the Champions 12.3 coalition, found a 14:1 return on investment for companies taking action to reduce food loss and waste. (WRI and WRAP (2017). *The Business Case for Reducing Food Loss and Waste*. Report prepared on behalf of the Champions 12.3 coalition. <https://champions123.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/report-business-case-for-reducing-food-loss-and-waste.pdf>)

participatory process, involving and building on the experience of all relevant stakeholders (food processors, retailers, consumer- and other civil society organisations).

In this regard, the Commission will seek timely commitments from food companies and organisations to take concrete actions on sustainability, focussing in particular on: reformulating food products in line with guidelines for healthy, sustainable diets; reducing their environmental footprint; adapting marketing and advertising strategies taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable; ensuring that food price campaigns³⁸ do not undermine citizens' perception of the value of food; and reducing packaging (cf. CEAP). Global food manufacturing and retail companies should take a leadership stance in helping the EU to reduce the overall environmental footprint of the food system. The Commission is also preparing an initiative to improve the **corporate governance framework** across industries and thereby including a possible requirement also for the food industry to integrate sustainability into corporate strategies.

To improve the EU's food environment and facilitate the shift to healthier diets, the Commission will set up **nutrient profiles** restricting the promotion (via nutrition or health claims) of foods high in fat, sugars and salt. It will propose banning added sugar in baby foods and explore the possibility of setting maximum levels of sugars, saturated fat and salt in certain processed food.

The Commission will take action to scale-up and promote sustainable production methods and **circular business models** in food processing and retail, including specifically for SMEs, in synergy with the objectives and initiatives put forward under the new CEAP. The deployment of a circular and sustainable EU Bioeconomy provides business opportunities, for instance linked to food waste valorisation.

Food packaging plays a key role in the sustainability of food systems. The Commission will revise the food contact materials legislation to improve food safety and public health (in particular in reducing the use of hazardous chemicals), support the use of innovative and sustainable packaging solutions using environmentally-friendly, re-usable and recyclable materials, and contribute to food waste reduction. In addition, under the new CEAP, it will work on a legislative initiative on reuse in food services to substitute single-use food packaging and cutlery by reusable products. The Commission will revise **marketing standards** to ensure the uptake and supply of sustainable agricultural, fisheries and aquaculture products and taking into account the possible impact of these standards on food loss and waste. It will also strengthen the legislative framework on **geographical indications** (GIs) to reinforce the sustainability of criteria for such indications.

2.4. Promoting sustainable food consumption and facilitating the shift to healthy, sustainable diets

Current **food consumption** patterns are unsustainable from both health and environmental points of view. While in the EU average intakes of energy, red meat, sugars, salt and fats continue to exceed recommendations, consumption of whole-grain cereals, fruit and vegetables, legumes and nuts is insufficient³⁹.

³⁸ Pricing strategies can play an important role in the transition to sustainable food systems; for example, marketing campaigns that advertise meat at very low prices encourage higher meat consumption.

³⁹ Willett W. et al (2019), 'Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems', in *Lancet*, Vol. 393, pp. 447–92.

Reversing the rise in overweight and obesity rates across the EU by 2030 is critical. Moving to a more plant-based diet and less meat will reduce not only risks of lifethreatening diseases such as cancer, but also the environmental impact of the food system¹⁰. The EU's 'beating cancer' plan will propose actions for cancer prevention, including the promotion of healthy diets.

The creation of a favourable **food environment** that makes it easier to choose healthy and sustainable diets will benefit consumers' health and quality of life, and also reduce health-related costs for society at large. To a great extent, consumers influence what food is produced, and how and where it comes from. Clear food information on sustainability can encourage consumers to choose, and operators to offer, sustainable food and healthy diets, thus creating a virtuous circle of demand for and supply of sustainable food. Food information is an integral part of the transition to sustainable food systems.

The Commission will therefore propose action to **empower consumers** to make healthy and sustainable food choices. It will propose the introduction of harmonised mandatory frontofpack nutrition labelling taking into account the diversity of diets and extend mandatory origin or provenance indication to milk, as well as milk and meat used as ingredients. Origin labelling will enable consumers to identify locally-produced food and stimulate short supply chains to the benefit of farmers. The Commission will also examine, in synergy with the CEAP, the possibility of harmonising voluntary green claims. It will propose a sustainable labelling framework covering the nutritional, climate, environmental and social aspects of food products. The Commission will also explore new ways to provide information to consumers through other means including digital, which will improve the accessibility of food information in particular for visually impaired persons.

To improve the **availability and price** of sustainable food and to promote healthy and sustainable diets in institutional catering, the Commission will determine the best modalities for setting minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable food procurement. This will help cities, regions and public authorities to play their part by sourcing sustainable food for schools, hospitals and public institutions. The Commission will lead by example and reinforce sustainability standards in the catering contract for its canteens. It will also refocus the EU school scheme on healthy and sustainable food, and strengthen educational messages on the importance of healthy nutrition, sustainable food production and reducing food waste.

Tax incentives can also encourage consumers to opt for sustainable and healthy diets. The Commission's proposal on VAT rates (currently under discussion in the Council) could allow Member States to make more targeted use of rates in this respect.

2.5. Reducing food loss and waste

Tackling food loss and waste is key to achieving EU climate action goals¹¹, prevention of food insecurity, environmental protection, sustainable agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, social objectives and a circular economy. It ties in with specific policies, e.g. on the recovery of nutrients and secondary raw materials, the production of feed, food safety, biodiversity, bioeconomy, waste management and renewable energy.

¹⁰ FAO and WHO (2019), *Sustainable healthy diets – guiding principles*.

¹¹ At EU level, food waste (all steps of the lifecycle) accounts for at least 227 million tonnes CO₂ eq. a year, i.e. about 6% of total EU emissions in 2012 (EU FUSIONS (2016). *Estimates of European food waste levels*).

Reducing food waste brings savings for consumers and operators (increasing supply chain efficiency and reducing waste treatment costs). Moreover, the recovery and redistribution of surplus food that would otherwise be wasted also has an important social dimension.

The Commission is committed to halving *per capita* food waste at retail and consumer levels by 2030 (SDG Target 12.3) and taking more focused, joined-up action to reduce food loss across the supply chain. Using the new methodology for measuring food waste⁴² and the data expected from Member States in 2022, it will set a baseline and propose legally binding **targets** to reduce food waste across the EU.

The Commission will integrate food loss and waste prevention in relevant EU policies to achieve synergies and avoid conflicts wherever possible. Misunderstanding and misuse of **date marking** ('use by' and 'best before' dates) lead to food waste in the supply chain. The Commission will revise EU rules taking account of findings from consumer research. In addition to quantification of food waste levels, the Commission will investigate the extent and causes of food losses at the production stage. It will also explore ways of preventing such losses and identify opportunities for action, including making full use of resources from primary production. **Coordinating action** at EU level is essential to drive and reinforce action at national level. The recommendations of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste⁴³ will help show the way forward for all actors.

2.6. Combating food fraud along the food supply chain

Food fraud jeopardises the sustainability of food systems. It deceives consumers, preventing them from making informed choices, and undermines food safety, fair commercial practices, the resilience of food markets and ultimately the single market. A zero tolerance policy with effective deterrents is crucial in this regard. The EU will scale up its fight against food fraud to achieve a level playing field for operators and strengthen the powers of control and enforcement authorities.

The Commission will work with Member States, Europol and other relevant bodies to use comprehensive EU data on traceability and alerts to improve coordination on food fraud. It will also propose stricter dissuasive measures, better import controls and to strengthen investigative capacities of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in the area of food fraud, including in intra-EU crossborder matters.

3. ENABLING THE TRANSITION

1.1. Research, innovation, technology and investments

Research and innovation (R&I) are key drivers in accelerating the transition to sustainable, healthy and inclusive food systems and can help resolve tensions, develop and test solutions, overcome barriers and uncover new market opportunities⁴⁴. This is

⁴² Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/1597 of 3 May 2019 supplementing Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards a common methodology and minimum quality requirements for the uniform measurement of levels of food waste (OJ L 248, 27.9.2019, p. 77).

⁴³ https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/safety/docs/fs_eu-actions_action_implementation_platform_key_recommendations.pdf

why the Commission has devised several R&I programmes and other funding mechanisms that support the objectives of the Green Deal.

Under **Horizon 2020**, the Commission is preparing an additional call for proposals for Green Deal priorities in 2020 for a total of around €1 billion. Under **Horizon Europe**, it proposes to spend €10 billion on R&I on food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and the environment as well as the use of digital technologies (e.g. data, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, robotics) and nature-based solutions for agri-food. Horizon Europe programming will follow a food systems approach. A **partnership on safe and sustainable food system** for people, planet and climate will federate the R&I communities around food system transformation. One key area of research will relate to increasing the availability and source of alternative proteins such as plant, microbial, marine and insect-based proteins and meat substitutes. A **mission in the area of soil health and food** will aim to develop solutions for restoring soil health and functions. New knowledge and innovations will also scale up agro-ecological approaches in primary production. To speed up innovation on the ground and accelerate knowledge transfer, the Commission will strengthen the **European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability'** (EIP-AGRI) through collaborative R&I projects involving farmers, food entrepreneurs, consumers, advisors and researchers. In addition, the **European Regional Development Fund** will invest, through smart specialisation, in innovation and collaboration along the food value chains.

The Commission will expand analysis of satellite imagery and the use of artificial intelligence to allow for more precise farming operations and monitoring of the condition of farmland. These technologies can also improve traceability and controls in fisheries and aquaculture. In line with its longterm vision for rural areas, the Commission aims to accelerate the roll-out of fast broadband internet in rural areas to achieve the set objective of 100% access by 2025, so that technology and knowledge-based solutions can be developed. This will not only improve food system sustainability from farm to fork, but also boost farmers' incomes and make the countryside a better place to live and do business.

Investments will be necessary to encourage innovation and create sustainable food systems. Through EU budget guarantees, the *InvestEU* Fund⁴⁴ will foster investment in the agro-food sector by de-risking investments made in this area by European corporations and facilitate access to finance for small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) and mid-cap⁴⁵ companies. In 2020, the EU framework to facilitate sustainable investments (EU taxonomy⁴⁶) as well as the renewed strategy on sustainable finance will mobilise the financial sector to play a major role in the transition and to invest more sustainably, including in the agriculture and food production sector.

3.1. Advisory services, data and knowledgesharing, and skills

⁴⁴ Commission Staff working document – European Research and Innovation for Food and Nutrition Security, SWD 2016/319 and Commission FOOD 2030 High-level Conference background document (2016) – European Research & Innovation for Food & Nutrition Security.

⁴⁵ Established as part of the *InvestEU* programme as laid down in the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the *InvestEU* Programme, COM(2018) 4439, 2018/0229 (COD).

⁴⁶ Under the European Fund for Strategic Investment, 'mid-cap companies' mean entities with a number of employees ranging from 250 up to 3000 and that are not SMEs.

⁴⁷ EU taxonomy is an implementation tool that can enable capital markets to identify and respond to investment opportunities that contribute to environmental policy objectives.

Knowledge and advice are key to enabling all actors in the food system to become sustainable. Primary producers have a particular need for **objective, tailored advisory services** on sustainable management choices. The Commission will therefore promote **effective Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS)**, involving all food chain actors that generate, share, and use knowledge and innovation from farm to fork. In their CAP Strategic Plans, Member States will need to scale up support for AKIS and strengthen resources needed to develop and maintain appropriate advisory services needed to achieve the Green Deal objectives. The Commission will set up a European knowledge platform on the development of EU-grown plant proteins and alternative proteins, such as algae.

The Commission will propose legislation to convert its Farm Accountancy Data Network into the **Farm Sustainability Data Network** with a view to also collect data on the Farm to Fork targets and other sustainability indicators⁴⁹. The network will enable the benchmarking of farm performance against regional, national or sectoral averages. This will provide feedback and guidance to farmers on best practices to improve their economic, environmental and climate performance.

The common European **agriculture data space** will enhance the competitive sustainability of EU agriculture through the processing and analysis of production, landuse, environmental and other data, allowing precise and tailored application of production approaches at farm level. The **marine databases** will facilitate sustainable practices in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

The Commission will ensure that tailored solutions help **SME** food processors and small retail and food service operators to develop new skills and business models, while avoiding additional administrative and cost burdens. It will encourage through guidance how retailers, food processors and food service can adopt best practices on sustainability. The Enterprise Europe Network will provide advisory services on sustainability for SMEs and foster the dissemination of best practices.

As part of the EU skills agenda and the European education area, the Commission will also ensure equality of access to **education and training** to promote high quality and inclusive education and training for actors along the food supply chain. Lifelong learning opportunities (inschool education, professional and onthejob training) are critical in building people's knowledge and appreciation of the value of food and encouraging sustainable food consumption.

4. PROMOTING THE GLOBAL TRANSITION

In its international cooperation⁵⁰, the EU will support the global transition to sustainable agri-food systems in line with the objectives of this Strategy and in line with the SDGs. To that effect, the EU will develop **Green Alliances** on sustainable agri-food systems, including with Africa, the Overseas Countries and Territories, the EU neighbourhood countries and the Western Balkans region, responding to distinct challenges in different

⁴⁹ In full respect of the European Interoperability Framework (see footnote 26), including the Farm Sustainability tool for nutrients as included in the proposal for the CAP beyond 2020 (see footnote 26).

⁵⁰ The EU currently cooperates with more than 60 partner countries on agriculture, nutrition and food security and has committed EUR 9 billion in these areas in 2014-20; it has 13 Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements with third countries, and is one of the main providers of humanitarian food assistance.

parts of the world. The EU will also boost cooperation to alleviate food insecurity by strengthening resilience of food systems and reducing food waste.

The EU will focus its **cooperation** on agri-food research and innovation, with particular reference to climate change adaptation and mitigation; agro-ecology; sustainable landscape management and land governance; conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity; inclusive and fair value chains; nutrition and healthy diets; prevention of and response to food crises, particularly in fragile contexts and humanitarian crises; resilience and risk preparedness; integrated pest management; and animal and plant health and food safety standards, as well as sustainability of its humanitarian aid. The EU will build on ongoing initiatives³⁰, use multi-stakeholder and integrated approaches and integrate policy coherence for sustainable development in all its policies.

These actions will contribute to enhancing **biodiversity** in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy and to limiting the risk of emergence of possible future pandemics like COVID-19 through more sustainable agri-food systems and global restrictions of wildlife trade and consumption.

To reduce the EU's contribution to **global deforestation and forest degradation**, the Commission will: (i) propose regulatory and non-regulatory measures to minimise the deforestation risk associated with commodities placed on the EU market; and (ii) support partner countries on sustainable agriculture and through actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore forests. The Commission will also establish an EU Observatory on deforestation and forest degradation.

The EU will continue to **fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing** and overfishing, promote sustainable management of fish and seafood resources and strengthen ocean governance, marine cooperation and coastal management³¹.

The Commission will incorporate all the above mentioned priorities in the programming guidance for cooperation with third countries in the period 2021-2027.

Imported food must continue to comply with relevant EU regulations and standards as well as international commitments.

The EU will promote the global transition to sustainable agri-food systems in **international standard setting bodies**, relevant **multilateral fora** and **international events**³². It will seek to ensure the inclusion of ambitious sustainable food related provisions in all relevant EU bilateral agreements.

The Commission will reflect on how to take into account environmental aspects when assessing requests for **import tolerances** for substances no longer approved in the EU while respecting WTO standards and obligations.

As part of its general approach to **labelling** and combined with the legislative framework on sustainable food systems, the EU will promote appropriate schemes (including an EU

³⁰ E.g. the Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DESIRA) initiative.

³¹ Through the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements and our cooperation with third countries on IUU and on sustainable value chains in fisheries and aquaculture; cooperation is particularly relevant with countries affected by climate change.

³² Including notably the UN Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of the Parties, the Nutrition for Growth Summit in 2020 and the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021.

sustainable food labelling framework) to encourage trade partners to ensure that the food they export to the EU has been produced in a sustainable way.

To address the global threat of **antimicrobial resistance**, under the recently agreed veterinary medicinal products Regulation, products of animal origin imported into the EU must comply with strict requirements on the use of antibiotics.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this Farm to Fork Strategy is to make the EU food system a global standard for sustainability. The stakes are high. Food systems can be a driving force for sustainability. The European Green Deal is an opportunity to reconcile our food system with the needs of the planet and to respond positively to Europeans' aspirations for healthy, equitable and environmentally-friendly food. The development of an EU policy framework for sustainable food systems will be instrumental for this.

The transition to sustainable food systems requires a collective approach involving public authorities at all levels of governance (including cities, rural and coastal communities), privatesector actors across the food value chain, non-governmental organisations, social partners, academics and citizens.

The Commission invites the other EU institutions to endorse this Strategy and contribute to its implementation. All citizens and stakeholders are invited to engage in a broad public debate and to host debates in national, regional and local assemblies. The Commission's communication campaign on the Green Deal will contribute to a coordinated and impactful outreach to citizens on the Farm to Fork Strategy.

The Commission will ensure the implementation of this Strategy in close coherence with the other elements of the Green Deal, particularly the Biodiversity Strategy, the new CEAP and the Zero Pollution ambition. It will monitor the transition to sustainable food systems, including progress on the targets and overall reduction of the environmental and climate footprint of the EU food system. It will collect data regularly, including on the basis of Earth observation, to monitor environmental, health and economic impacts. The Commission will regularly assess progress and adjust actions if necessary. It will review this Strategy by mid-2023 to assess whether the action taken is sufficient to achieve the objectives or whether additional action is necessary.