



Your FEBA EU Monitoring 29 February 2020

EUROPEAN COMMISSION Speeches



Source: European Commission - Press Releases

Subject: Commissioner Kyriakides - Speech: Workshop on sustainable food

Date: 3 February 2020

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to join you at the Commission's workshop on sustainable food systems. After many weeks of talking about it, I must say I'm quite impatient to get started on this part of the policy. Today's meeting will discuss many of the themes this Commission will revisit time and again over the course of its mandate. It will provoke many questions, highlight many of the challenges, but, I hope, also open the door to some of the answers.

I'm very grateful so many of you could join us and I look forward to meeting you more often – as we develop and deepen our discussions – in the coming months. Sustainable food systems are our future. Environmentally, socially and economically, the future of our planet – our future - depend on them.

When President von der Leyen took office, she set an ambitious agenda for a stronger, greener, and more democratic Europe. We already heard a few words about the Green Deal. But I want to reiterate the message: sustainable economies and equal, inclusive societies depend on efficient and affordable food systems. We have a duty to deliver on these goals.

We all know that current production and consumption patterns can't continue. In 2050, nearly 10 billion people will live on the earth – five times more than one hundred years ago today. Current production systems are responsible for significant carbon emissions, contributing to global warming and climate change. They overburden the environment – yet they also under deliver on our social objectives. 36 million EU citizens can't afford a quality meal every other day.

Over half the EU's adult population is now overweight -- meaning higher levels of diet-related diseases and healthcare costs. They're inefficient and unethical: Europe currently wastes a fifth of the food it produces. And citizens' expectations are increasing: they want higher standards, greener guarantees, better animal welfare – but at the same time, food must remain affordable.

The pieces of the puzzle no longer fit together – threatening social cohesion, environmental sustainability and economic success. These challenges aren't limited to Europe. But Europe has a major part to play. It can lead the global transition to more sustainable food systems, building on its rich and proud agri-food heritage, and its global reputation for safe, nutritious, and high quality food. This is a global leadership role that this Commission is willing to take on. The new Farm to Fork Strategy that I will present in spring will be key in this endeavour.

It is an essential part of the European Green Deal and though its focus will be the food chain, its impact will extend much further.

It will contribute to our broader circular economy and biodiversity objectives, support a more inclusive society, and more efficient health systems and economies.

It must support change at every stage of the food chain, from our farmers and fishermen, through to marketing, consumption and end use.



Within moments of accepting this job, I was pressed for more details of what the strategy would include. I listen to all the input we get with great interest, but I also want to set the basic principles by beginning with a dose of realism:

First, that we must be ambitious, but we need to prioritise – work out what's most important and move to the top of our priority list.

Second, that we need to accept some compromise and balancing of interests is necessary.

And third, that we don't need to reinvent the wheel: we can build on what we've got – and we should extend and upgrade where possible. So with those principles in mind, what is on my priority list so far?

First, it's to maintain food safety. This is a non-negotiable that will – and must – remain our primary objective in all our policies. Number two is a reduced dependency on pesticides and fertilisers, both of which are a major concern for our citizens. And here, I am convinced that we can set ambitious targets. This will reduce the associated risks, help protect and restore our ecosystems, and contribute to the EU's aim for zero pollution. In parallel, we should aim to increase the amount of land under organic production. Number three is antibiotics. I want to reduce the use of antimicrobials in farm animals, to preserve their effectiveness in humans and animals in years to come. This is an important part of an integrated "one health" approach. Fourth, is support for technology, innovation and research. We need to look into new farming methods and techniques, create new solutions and opportunities at all stages of the food chain.

Five is better consumer information and clearer labelling, helping citizens to buy into healthier and more sustainable lifestyles. These are some of my priorities – and I look forward to hearing yours. Success in all of these areas implies partnership: building synergies between policies and bringing different sectors together. The Common Fisheries Policy and Common Agricultural Policy are key tools to support primary producers and ensure they receive a fair wage.

Further along, we need to work with the processing and retail sectors -- on transport, storage, packaging and food waste to promote efficiency and reduce the environmental footprint here.

In terms of next steps, dialogue is key.

Today's workshop is an important opportunity to share your ideas and priorities. Later, there will be an exchange of views on the possible legislative and non-legislative actions the strategy could include. It will also touch on the challenges and trade-offs that might be required.

In the coming months, the consultation process will continue -- with fellow policy makers, and experts in food safety and public health, environment, climate, agriculture, fisheries, and industry.

Citizens and consumer groups will also have their say and I am already meeting many of them to hear their input.

I want all stakeholders to feel some ownership over the parts of the strategy most relevant to them. Their contribution, your contribution, is essential to get the balance right.

Good food is far more than simply having something to eat. It's a reflection of how we look after our environment, our animals, our fellow citizens, how we preserve our heritage and plan for the future. I am realistic: there will be some difficult discussions ahead.

But I am also optimistic: there is already a broad consensus on the direction we need to take and this is very encouraging. Our vision for food systems is positive. We share a common desire to create opportunity and build security for the future. Let's build on this consensus in the next few months: understand the challenges and expectations, and define a path that works for everyone.

The Farm to Fork Strategy must deliver sustainable food systems, and ensure everyone benefits.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT Written Answers



Source: European Parliament



Subject: Reducing poverty in the European Union

Date: 4 February 2020

Question for written answer E-003898/2019 to the Commission Rule 138 Viktor Uspaskich

Subject: Reducing poverty in the European Union

I am deeply concerned that 112.8 million people in the EU are still at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The persistently high number of people at risk of poverty in the EU each year shows that non-binding legal instruments, such as the Europe 2020 strategy or the Council recommendations, are not a sufficient basis for effective action against poverty in the EU. Not only does this exacerbate existing inequalities between Member States, it also does not look very good in the eyes of third countries.

I believe that a way should be found to ensure that EU citizens are not treated differently in the same community. I am convinced that a universal basic income should be established to help keep people out of poverty in the EU.

Could the Commission say how it plans to tackle poverty in the EU?

Answer given by Mr Schmit on behalf of the European Commission

According to the most recent Eurostat data(1) , in 2018, the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU was 110 million, following steady decline for a sixth consecutive year. Countries with very high levels registered the most significant decrease, showing that upward social convergence is taking place.

Addressing poverty requires a multidimensional approach, mobilising an array of policies. The European Pillar of Social Rights, which was proclaimed at the highest level by all EU institutions in 2017, states that 'everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits ensuring a life in dignity at all stages in life, and effective access to enabling goods and services', as well as incentives to (re)integrate the labour market. This underlines the importance of implementing the Pillar, a shared responsibility that will require further action at EU level, as well as by Member States, social partners and local actors.

EU funding, namely the European Social Fund, is increasingly mobilised to support the implementation of the Pillar rights and principles. At least 25% of the funding is proposed to be earmarked for social inclusion in the next Multiannual Financial Framework. The Commission also takes action through the European Semester process. It provides comprehensive coverage of poverty issues in the Joint Employment Report and Semester country reports, supported by a benchmarking framework on minimum income² . In 2019, 14 Member States received country specific recommendations to address poverty.

1. Eurostat: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/t2020_50&lang=en

2. See Joint Employment Report 2019 - link [here](#)

EU STAKEHOLDER Press Releases



Source: EU Stakeholder - Press Releases

Subject: Stakeholders - Open letter to President Michel on the MFF negotiations

Date: 14 February 2020

Please click [here](#) to access the open letter by the Presidents of the four biggest political groups in the European Parliament - the EPP, the S&D, Renew Europe and the Greens/EFA - to the President of the European Council Charles Michel ahead of the special meeting of the European Council on the Multiannual Financial Framework on 20 February 2020.



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT Research Papers



Source: European Parliament - Research Papers

Subject: EPSR - The European Council and the 2021-27 Multiannual Financial Framework

Date: 18 February 2020

EU Heads of State or Government met on 20 February 2020 for a special European Council meeting to discuss the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Both the [Sibiu Declaration](#) of EU Heads of State or Government and the [2019-24 Strategic Agenda](#) state that *'the EU must give itself the means to match its ambitions, attain its objectives and carry through its policies'*.

Following an initial informal discussion in February 2018, the European Council has touched regularly upon the MFF negotiations at its meetings over the last two years. Until now, however, the EU Heads of State or Government have not really attempted to reach an agreement. Most recently, in December 2019, the incoming President of the European Council, Charles Michel, was given a mandate *'to take the negotiations forward with the aim of reaching a final agreement'*. This confirms the European Council's central involvement in the MFF negotiations, as was the case for the agreement in 2013 on the 2014-2020 long-term budget (see [The European Council and the Multiannual Financial Framework, EPSR](#)). This briefing will examine the discussions in and conclusions of the European Council over the past two years, outline the main topics debated and present the diverging views of the various players involved.

Please click [here](#) to access the paper.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT EP Register



Source: European Parliament - Written answers

Subject: Tonnes of food wasted each year accelerating global warming

Date: 21 February 2020

Question for written answer E-003722/2019 to the Commission Rule 138 Daniel Buda

Subject: Tonnes of food wasted each year accelerating global warming

According to a recent UN report, around one-quarter of the planet's non-glacial soil has suffered the ill-effects of human activity. Ecosystems are being irreversibly undermined by the increased intensity and frequency of droughts, floods and heatwaves brought on by global warming. Deforestation is one of the root causes of global warming, weakening the soil's capacity to absorb carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and prevent the accumulation of greenhouse gases.

Researchers are also recommending different food production methods in a bid to halt the increasingly rapid rise in temperatures over recent years. The most effective solutions would include cutting down on food waste, planting trees on farmland and proper soil conservation. While substantial European Union funding is being channelled into these recommended measures, they have to date proved unequal to the scale of the problem. To make matters worse, tonnes of food are being discarded while, at the same time, almost one billion people are going hungry.

What resources does the Commission have at its disposal to reduce food wastage and combat global warming?

Question for written answer E-003671/2019 to the Commission Rule 138 Ruža Tomašić



Subject: Minimising the amount of food waste

[World Food Day](#) and World Bread Day remind us of the fact that many people around the world do not have enough food. Conversely, a large amount of food ends up being thrown away. According to a Commission report, approximately 88 million tonnes of food are thrown away each year in the EU, which represents roughly 20% of the food that is produced, and the associated costs are estimated at EUR 143 billion. The sectors that play the largest role in the generation of food waste are households, catering and retail (70%), while the remaining 30% of food waste comes from food production and processing activities.

What additional plans does the Commission have in the fight to reduce food waste?

Answer given by Ms Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission

Food waste prevention was a priority area in the Commission's [Circular Economy Action Plan](#)¹ and all EU-level initiatives have been delivered.

In 2016, the Commission set up an [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste](#), which published, on 12 December 2019, [recommendations for action](#) at each stage of the food value chain, including households, catering and retail. The Commission has also adopted [EU guidelines to facilitate food donation](#) and the feed use of food no longer intended for human consumption as well as [legislation on measuring² and reporting of food waste in the EU](#), and it will consider proposing the establishment of a Union-wide target for food waste reduction. Further information on the EU-level initiatives can be found on the [Commission's website](#) dedicated to food waste prevention³.

As part of the [European Green Deal](#), the Farm to Fork Strategy will strive to stimulate sustainable food consumption, promote circular and sustainable bioeconomy business models and look at further actions to reduce food waste or transform it into valuable products.

Finally, under Horizon 2020 and the future Horizon Europe, the EU research and innovation framework programmes, the Commission continues to support research and innovation projects aimed at food waste reduction.

Moreover, the Commission's [Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived](#) (FEAD) contributes to alleviating the worst forms of poverty in the EU through the provision of non-financial assistance to the most disadvantaged persons in the EU. The assistance may take the form of food support and FEAD operational programmes may provide for the financing of food donations, whereby food is donated to a partner organisation and distributed to the most deprived persons free of charge.

The European Green Deal refers to the Farm to Fork Strategy, which aims to design a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system. In the context of this strategy, to be published in spring 2020, **the Commission will further pursue its work on food waste prevention, including aspects relevant for food donation.**

The Commission also supports the activities of the **European Food Banks Federation**.

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICES
Statement Text



¹ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Closing the loop, An EU action plan for the Circular Economy, COM(2015) 614 final, Brussels, 2.12.2015

² 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, 27.09.2019 p. 77.



Source: European External Action Services - Statement Text

Subject: World NGO Day: Statement by the HR/VP

Date: 27 February 2020

On world Non-Governmental Organisation Day, celebrated on 27 February, the European Union applauds the fundamental contribution made by civil society organisations to the promotion of human rights, good governance, democracy and the rule of law. As such, they are key partners for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We are witnessing an unprecedented crackdown on civil society in many countries - restrictive legislation on foreign funding, restrictions for registration or association of civil society organisations, anti-protest laws, gagging laws, laws that criminalise online dissent and expression, the blocking of access to websites and social media and, in some cases, violent attacks and harassment. This trend needs to stop.

The EU is committed to the protection and empowerment of civic actors, including human rights defenders, and to the promotion of space for civil society. We will continue to meet with human rights defenders, monitor their trials, visit them in detention, and raise their cases with governments. The EU also supports key international actors, such as UN Special Rapporteurs on human rights defenders, freedom of association, and freedom of expression. The EU is the world's largest donor to civil society. The European Instrument for Democracy and Human rights (EIDHR) is one of the largest EU instruments dedicated to supporting civil society. Testament to its importance, the European Commission has proposed to keep its level of funding under next financial framework at a high level, with €1.5 billion for 2021-2027. This instrument facilitates direct cooperation with isolated or marginalised civil society actors, including through the allocation of direct grants to those operating in particularly difficult human rights and democracy contexts. Since 2005, the EU has supported more than 30, 000 human rights defenders. Today and every day, the EU stands up for a strong and pluralistic civil society. We will continue to promote a safe and enabling environment, in which civil society can operate free from hindrance and insecurity.



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For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>.

The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.