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The current context in the world and in Europe is getting worst day by day with the second wave of COVID-19. The economic and social disruptions caused by the pandemic is devastating. The latest report of the European Food Banks Federation, [European Food Banks today: commitment, creativity, and openness to change](#), released in September 2020, highlights a 30% increase in food demand coming from new targets of poverty: jobless people, families with children, and elderly people living alone.

In this complex situation, the European institutions are trying to accelerate and conclude many **political agreements to repair the economic and social damage brought by the pandemic, kick-start European recovery, and support both European economies and societies**. As President Charles Michel remembered on his speech on 27 October:

"We must act swiftly and determinedly (...) Common sense dictates that, more than ever before, we in Europe must act as one, through unity and solidarity."

As the current long-term EU budget is running out on 31 December 2020, the EU needs a **new budgetary planning horizon for the next seven years**. The **European Commission** has thus presented plans for the next Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 in May 2018.

The second wave of COVID-19 is now upon us. Once again, the whole of Europe is affected. Within the space of just a few weeks, the situation has escalated from worrying to alarming. Now we must avoid a tragedy.

Charles Michel, President of the European Council
27 October 2020
[full speech](#)

The **European Parliament** has adopted its position in November 2018 and re-confirmed it in October 2019. The **European Council** has reached a [political compromise on 21 July 2020](#), to which the European Parliament reacted [immediately](#). **Trilateral negotiations between Parliament, Council and Commission have started on 27 August.**

“It is still possible, and very much in the interest of EU citizens, to make every effort to come to an agreement as soon as possible, but the conditions are not there yet. Parliament stands ready to take all the steps necessary to come to a satisfactory agreement”, the negotiators concluded.

The implementation without any delay of all the EU programs for the period 2021-2027 (such as the ESF+) depend on this agreement.

To have updated information on the EU long-term budget, please click [here](#).

FOCUS 1 / Is the COVID-19 pandemic turning into a European food crisis?

At the end of August 2020, an interesting article was published on the **European Journal of Public Health**¹. This article explores how, soon after the first cases and indications of the Coronavirus pandemic hit Italy, panic buying, and stockpiling food led to almost empty supermarkets. This could be observed not only in Italy, but soon all over Europe. But those that were already exposed to food insecurity could not afford to hoard food.

On 30th March, Pope Francis noted: *“We’re beginning to see people who are hungry because they can’t work and pleaded for help”*. COVID-19 did not only put the economy under extreme pressure, but also increased possible food

insecurity in the long-run. This is mainly due to the fact that food shortages lead to an increase on prices, which constrains economically deprived people even more and that in addition to the food available is unequally distributed. Rising numbers in Food Bank beneficiaries during times of crises confirm this.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to rethink the agricultural and food system in Europe and, especially, in relation to quality and secure food and working conditions in the sector. We cannot miss this opportunity.

To read the full article [here](#).

¹ European Journal of Public Health, Volume 30, Issue 4, V. Toffolutti, D. Stuckler, M. McKee



State of the Union 2020

16 SEPTEMBER / 2020

On 16 September 2020, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen gave her annual “State of the Union” speech. This year’s speech was of particular importance due to the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 and presented visions for a strong recovery towards a greener, digital, and more resilient post-Covid EU.

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said: *“It is a period of profound anxiety for millions who are concerned about the health of their families, the future of their jobs or simply just getting through until the end of the month. The pandemic – and the uncertainty that goes with it – is not over. And the recovery is still in its early stage. We know change is needed – and we also know it is possible. It is about making systemic modernisation across our economy, society, and industry. **It is about building a stronger world to live in.***

Our current levels of consumption of raw materials, energy, water, food, and land use are not sustainable. We need to change how we treat nature, how we produce and consume, live and work, eat and heat, travel, and transport.”

The pandemic has shown that a strong social market economy is needed more than ever. The Commission has already introduced a short-term working scheme (**SURE**) to avoid mass unemployment during the pandemic and will put forward a legal proposal to support Member States to set up a frame for **minimum wages** to ensure that work in the EU is decent.

The Commission is also dedicated to the objectives of the **European Green Deal**.

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen continued: *“The European Green Deal is our blueprint to make that transformation. At the heart of it is our mission to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. But we will not get there with the status quo – we need to go faster and do things better. We looked in-depth at every sector to see how fast we could go and how to do it in a responsible, evidence-based way. We held a wide public consultation and conducted an extensive impact assessment.*

On this basis, the European Commission is proposing to increase the 2030 target for emission reduction to at least 55%.”

The Commissioner concluded reminding us of the many things we may have forgotten or taken for granted. In fact, she reminded how linked our economies are and how crucial a fully functioning Single Market is to our prosperity and the way we do things.

To read the full speech, please click [here](#).

European Commission report on European and Social Developments (ESDE)

16 SEPTEMBER / 2020

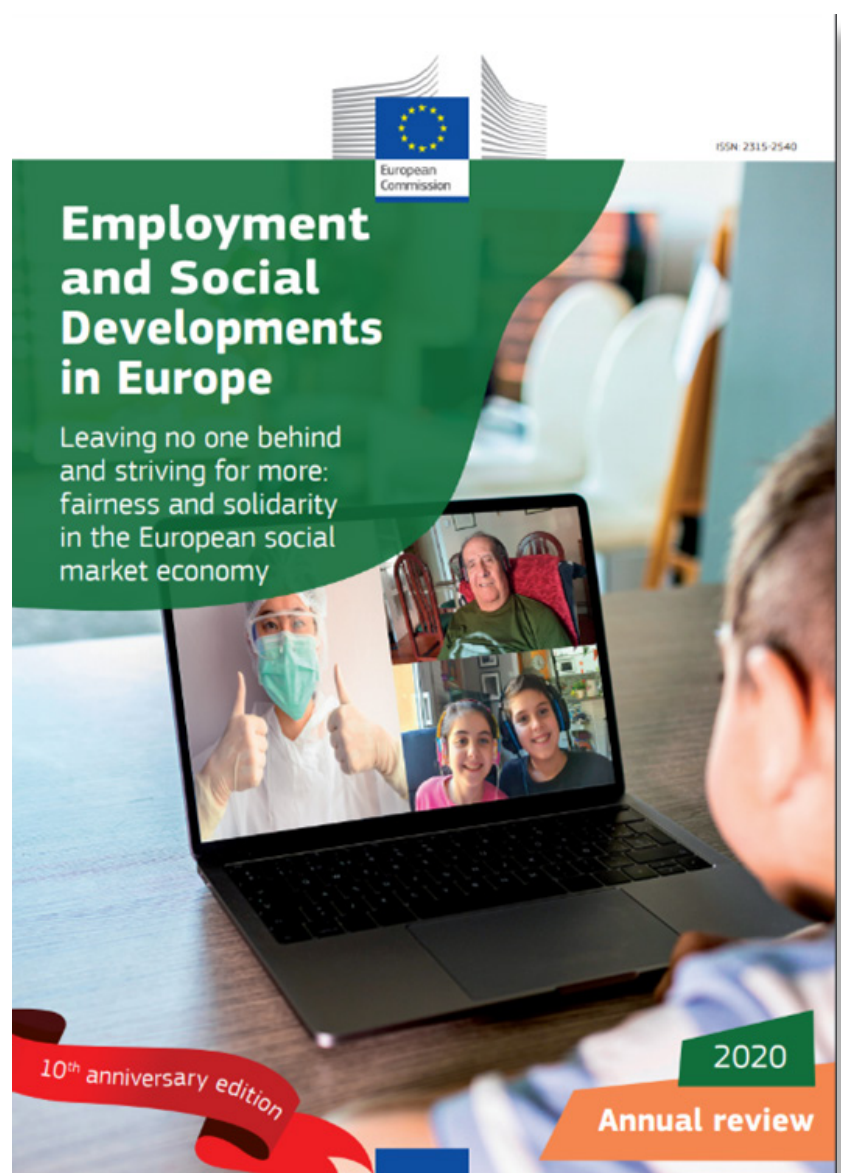
This year's [Commission report on European and Social Developments](#) (ESDE) focuses on the topics of **fairness** and **solidarity** – both more important than ever in the light of the current pandemic.

The report analyses which measures facilitate social fairness and solidarity, not only in times of crises, but also in relation to structural changes, such as ageing population and digital and green transformations. Findings include that minimum wages and income enhance social mobility in the EU, as well as the fact that short-term working schemes protect jobs efficiently. Social dialogue and collective bargaining have an immense influence on fairness at work and it is clear that social investments, especially in people and skills are a crucial part of a social market economy.

Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit said:

*“The ESDE report shows that **strengthening social fairness is key to overcoming the crisis. This requires putting people front and centre. To ensure resilience, solidarity and cohesion, the EU’s response has to prioritise employment, reduce inequalities and ensure equal opportunities.** The effective implementation of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) will serve as our guide.”*

To read the full report click [here](#).





European Research & Innovation Days

22 SEPTEMBER / 2020

The conference explored alternative models for a new multi-objective food systems economy that can meet the European Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy objectives (introductory remarks from John Bell, Director Healthy Planet, DG Research & Innovation at European Commission).

Johan Swinnen, Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute, remarked that Covid-19 mostly disrupted labour-intensive food systems and the impact was higher in countries of the global south and more severe for poor people.

While there is a lot of private spending and innovation on R&D happening, public spending needs to increase significantly, since there has been a massive underspending before the pandemic. It is now crucial to research how disrupted our food systems are and create respective evidence-based policies.

Silke Thiele, CEO at Institute of Food Economics and Consumption Studies added that currently, access to unhealthy and sustainable food is restricted, especially people with low economic possibilities are impacted from health issues, such as obesity and other related diseases.

Government regulations based on scientific research, that target inequalities in health, information asymmetries and other market externalities are needed. They should analyse which measures and designs are most effective, including tailored actions to address different market failures, one important one might be school education.

Ana Moragues, a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Barcelona added that Covid-19 showed how insecure our food systems are. We need to build a flexible food infrastructure, including social and digital dimensions and start re-evaluating our concept of justice in relation to economic, cultural, and political dimensions of food systems. Covid-19 showed that bold actions are possible, this needs to be used now to push transformative action. R&D is central to this agenda and needs to be scaled up, since it helps to identify synergies, dependencies and distributes knowledge and values within our food systems.

To have more information on the Research & Innovation Days visit the [dedicated website](#).



Agriculture and Fisheries Council Conclusions on the Farm to Fork Strategy

19-20 OCTOBER / 2020

During the Agricultural and Fisheries Council (19-20 October 2020), European ministers **adopted Council conclusions on the Farm to Fork Strategy**, focusing on ensuring “sufficient and affordable food while contributing to EU climate neutrality by 2050 and ensuring a fair income and strong support for primary producers”.

For the first time, the entire food system is taken into account as a whole – from producers to consumers. It is a solid starting point and we are looking forward to working altogether the coming years towards a truly sustainable and fair food system in Europe and beyond.

Julia Klöckner
Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture of Germany

The Council also adopted a **general approach on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**, which includes that 20% of direct payments are ring-fenced to the introduction of eco-schemes and that small farmers will still be subject to higher environmental standards, but with simplified control mechanisms. This aims to ensure reaching environmental goals, while providing sufficient flexibility to Member States and taking into account their respective farming conditions and traditions.

For more information on the results of the Council visit the dedicated [website](#) or read this background [brief](#).

You can find the F2F conclusions in English [here](#), the text will be available in all EU official languages soon.

European Food Banks: concrete answers for the new food system

The European Food Banks Federation welcomes the Farm to Fork Strategy because, especially in light of the crisis generated by COVID-19, it will allow us to address the important challenges faced by our food systems from production to consumption, including food redistribution, and will enable progress toward the SDGs of the Agenda 2030.

We firmly believe that today the Farm to Fork Strategy is an opportunity to rethink the agri-food supply chain in the light of the disruptions caused by COVID-19 and move towards a sustainable food system. By doing so, we can achieve the goal to prevent food waste while reducing emissions and environmental impact, creating business opportunities and alleviating food insecurity in Europe.

Read [here](#) the position paper on the Farm to Fork Strategy.

2021 Commission work programme

From strategy to delivery

20 OCTOBER / 2020

On 20 October 2020, the Commission adopted its [2021 work programme](#), designed to make Europe healthier, fairer and more prosperous, while accelerating its long-term transformation into a greener economy, fit for the digital age. It contains new legislative initiatives across all six headline ambitions of **President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines** and follows her first [State of the Union Speech](#).

While delivering on the priorities set out in this work programme, the Commission will continue to put all its efforts into managing the crisis, and into making Europe's economies and societies more resilient.

More information [here](#).



2.

INTERNATIONAL CORNER

2020 Global Report on Food Crisis

29 SEPTEMBER / 2020

Reducing food losses and waste is essential in a world where the number of people affected by hunger has been slowly on the rise since 2014.

According to the newly published [2020 Global Report on Food Crises](#), 135 million people in 53 countries worldwide suffer from acute hunger and food insecurity, without taking into account the effects of COVID-19. In 2019 about [8.9% of the world population were undernourished](#). In 2018, 109.2 million people were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU, which is equivalent to 21.7% of the EU population. [33 million people in the EU could not afford a quality meal every second day](#).



At the same time tons and tons of edible food are lost and/or wasted every day. In total, [1.3 billion tonnes of food](#), valued at \$400 billion per year are wasted globally. This is about one third of food produced for human consumption.

By including food loss and waste and sustainable diets in revised climate plans, policymakers can improve their mitigation and adaptation from food systems by as much as 25%.

Inger Andersen
Executive Director of UNEP

In the EU, around 88 million tonnes of **food waste are generated annually with associated costs estimated at 143 billion euros. According to the FAO, around 14% of food produced is lost between harvest and retail globally.**

Food loss and waste also puts unnecessary pressure on the natural resource base and on the environment, depleting the natural resource base and generating greenhouse gases.

This became even more evident during the global COVID-19 pandemic, that was a global wake-up call on the need to transform and rebalance the way our food is produced and consumed.

- To read the **full article** about the first International Day of Food Waste and Loss published by the FAO, please click [here](#).
- To download the **full report**, please click [here](#).

The Nobel Peace Prize 2020 to the World Food Programme

9 OCTOBER / 2020

The UN World Food Programme (WFP), which provides lifesaving food assistance to millions across the world – often in extremely dangerous and hard-to-access conditions – has been awarded the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize.

The agency was recognized *“for its efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict”*, said Berit Reiss-Andersen, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

Its efforts focus on emergency assistance, relief and rehabilitation, development aid and special operations. Two-thirds of the work is in conflict-affected countries where people are three times more likely to be undernourished than those living in countries without conflict.

Global food insecurity aggravated by COVID-19

Praising the work of the UN agency, the Nobel Committee chair highlighted its role in boosting resilience and sustainability among communities by helping them to feed themselves.

CONGRATULATIONS TO WORLD FOOD PROGRAM ON RECEIVING THE 2020 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE. In the face of the pandemic this is an outstanding recognition of the inestimable value of food and food security. Providing assistance to increase food security not only prevents hunger but is essential to strengthen social cohesion and foster solidarity in our communities. As European Food Banks Federation we renew our commitment to contribute to food security recovering and redistributing good and safe food to over 45,000 charities helping 9.5 million deprived people in Europe.

Jacques Vandenschrik
President, European Food Banks Federation

#WeAreFEBA #NobelPeacePrize

The COVID-19 crisis has also added to global food insecurity, she added, highlighting that there will likely be 265 million “starving people within a year”.

Only the international community can tackle such a challenge, she insisted, before highlighting the fact that WFP had helped millions of people in extremely dangerous and hard-to-reach countries affected by conflict and natural disaster, including Yemen, Syria and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

To read more, please access [here](#).



Impact of COVID-19 on people's livelihoods, their health and our food systems

Joint Statement by ILO, FAO, IFAD and WHO

13 OCTOBER / 2020

"The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating; tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million by the end of the year. [...] Nearly half of the world's 3.3 billion global workforce are at risk of losing their livelihoods. For most, no income means no food, or, at best, less food and less nutritious food."

"Now is the time for global solidarity and support We must recognize this opportunity to build back better. [...] We need to develop long-term sustainable strategies to address the challenges facing the health and agri-food sectors."

Read the full statement [here](#).

FOCUS 2 / International Day on Awareness on Food Loss & Waste – 29 September 2020

29 September 2020 marked the first ever observance of the **International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste**. The day's theme "Stop food loss and waste. For the people. For the planet" recognizes not only the fundamental role that sustainable food production plays in promoting food security and nutrition in a world where the number of people affected by hunger has been slowly rising since 2014, but also how food waste contributes to climate change.



Reducing food loss and waste requires the attention and actions of all, from food producers, to food supply chain stakeholders, to food industries, retailers and consumers. Action taken in observance of this new International Day can contribute to achieving no less than three Sustainable Development Goals: Goal 2 – [zero hunger](#); Goal 12 – [sustainable consumption and production](#) – and Goal 13 – [climate action](#).

The urgent need to reduce food loss and waste was underlined by **the findings of the latest UN report on**

[The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#), which states that nearly **690 million people are hungry, or 8.9% of the world population – up by 10 million people in one year and by nearly 60 million in five years.**

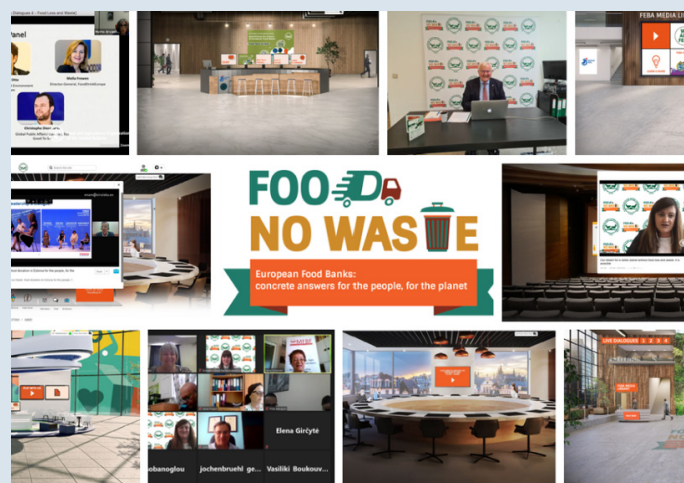
The Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) has come up with [15 tips](#) to help you reduce food waste and make not wasting food a way of life.

Visit [FAO's official page](#) for the Observance of the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste.

Food, No Waste! European Food Banks: concrete actions for the people, for the planet

On this unique occasion the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA) together with its membership, decided to organize a virtual event “Food, no waste! European Food Banks: concrete answers for the people, for the planet” to raise awareness on the importance of food loss and waste prevention and the key role played by European Food Banks.

The virtual event was developed using an online 3D platform and consisted of 6 areas:



- ➔ A lobby to welcome participants with a help desk providing technical support;
- ➔ A FEBA Media Library to tell the story and activity of FEBA and share information at European level.
- ➔ A FEBA Data Centre to discover the impact of European Food Banks with report, videos, interactive games and quizzes, and a live chat with experts.
- ➔ An International Auditorium to attend 2 international online conferences organized by FAO and with the participation of FEBA President and FEBA Secretary General, in particular: FAO Brussels Office in the morning and FAO HQ in the afternoon. FEBA Secretary General was also invited as speaker for the event organized by FAO NY in the evening but it was not web streamed through the platform because, due to copyright, the event was targeted only to a US-based public. The international conferences were introduced by a video on the importance of the IDAFLW with the participation of FAO, FEBA, The Global FoodBanking Network, and General Mills Foundation.
- ➔ A Live Dialogues area for 5 workshops organized by Food Banks in Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden), and Malta to disseminate the EU guidelines on food donation and to discuss the main challenges and opportunities to foster food donation. In the afternoon, an online event convened by Champions 12.3 and The Global FoodBanking Network.
- ➔ A Meet the Food Banks area with 14 virtual stands of Food Banks proposing virtual tours of warehouses, videos, interactive games, reports and the possibility to interact via chat with Food Banks. The area included a virtual stand dedicated to future Food Bankers with interactive games and quizzes, videos, documents, and interaction via chat.

Visit [European Food Banks Federation's dedicated webpage](#) to relive the virtual event!

FOCUS 3 / World Food Day – 16 October 2020

Farm to Fork 2020 Conference

15-16 OCTOBER / 2020

The Farm to Fork conference with the topic “Building sustainable food systems together” brought together European stakeholders who aim to reshape the EU towards a more sustainable food system.

Frans Timmermans, European Commission Executive Vice-President opened the conference by underlining the urgent need to include and motivate farmers to produce ecologically sustainable and provide them with the necessary legislative support, tools and technologies.

What I fear most is paralysis [...] If we want this to be a success, the whole value chain, everybody, from the consumer to retailer to the producers, to the farmers, everybody needs to be a part of this shift and everybody needs to understand that one cannot succeed without the other.

Frans Timmermans
European Commission Executive Vice-President

Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety remarked that consumers want to have sustainable and healthy food choices and F2F Strategy presents specific strategies for that, which is why the Commission will propose a **sustainable food labelling framework**, which will integrate environmental, social animal welfare and other aspects.

Janusz Wojciechowski, European Commissioner for Agriculture said that the main challenge the Farm to Fork strategy addresses is to reduce the distance from producers to household to become more sustainable and less costly. Stakeholders from the European Parliament, national governments international organizations and corporations then discussed how to deliver the Farm to Fork strategy, for instance through labelling, consumer education and best practices across Member States.

The rest of the conference was split into different sessions, during the meeting on “Building an EU legislative framework for sustainable food systems”, stakeholders from international organizations, governments and corporations discussed what is needed to achieve sustainable food systems. The Commission will **propose a Framework for a Sustainable Food System (FSFS) before the end of 2030** to ensure coherence at EU and national level and mainstream and strengthen sustainability and resilience of food systems. The **FSFS will include common principles, general guidelines, requirements and responsibilities of all actors in the food system.**

You can find a recording of the full event [here](#).





Food2030 Conference: Transforming Food Systems through Research and Innovation

16 OCTOBER / 2020

The conference was hosted by the European Commission, FAO and the German EU Presidency and aimed at exploring the importance of research and innovation for creating sustainable, inclusive, resilient and healthy food systems and achieving the SDGs.

The event brought together European innovators, EU and national legislators and international and non-governmental actors.

After welcome remarks by the hosting institutions, innovators from across the EU presented their contribution to sustainable food systems.

For instance ByProFood, that aims to use side streams to produce food products, H2Grow, a project that helps grow food using hydroponic solutions in places where it is usually difficult to farm or Loewi, a company that makes affordable

and healthy diets accessible to everyone through data driven personalization.

Prof. Dr. Joachim von Braun delivered a key note speech on **how R&I can accelerate ongoing food systems transformation towards sustainability**, underlining that food systems must serve people and planet, that mobilizing R&D for reducing hunger, system transformation and sustainability requires action and that there needs for redesigning food and agriculture research government.

During the panel, the stakeholders discussed strategies, policies and tools and on how to deliver technical and social innovation and foster dialogues between all actors in food systems to make them future proof.

You can find the streaming of the full event [here](#).

FAO Celebrations for the World Food Day

16 OCTOBER / 2020

If there is one thing that this year has shown us, it is that basic needs, such as food need more protection than ever. While even before Covid-19, millions of people around the world suffered food insecurity, the pandemic only accelerated this, putting many more at risk. Its therefore even more evident, that access to nutritious and healthy food needs to be a global top priority in the response to the pandemic and after. **The World Food Day and the FAOs 75th anniversary** was an excellent opportunity to recall for **global solidarity and support for the most vulnerable** and the need to **transform our food systems so that they are sustainable resilient and deliver social protection to everyone**.

FAO Liaison Office in Brussels organized an online conference to celebrate the World Food Day together with the European Parliament Vice President Heidi Hautala, the Commissioner for Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski, FAO Director General Qu Dongyu, the WFP Director and more.

- Read more [here](#)

And the present moment [...] is again fraught with danger, complicated, and demands urgent action. As hunger grows once more, as the COVID-19 pandemic exposes the fragility of our food systems, history is calling upon us once more to rise to the challenge.

QU Dongyu
FAO Director-General

FAO HQ in Rome organized for the World Food Day an high-level conference with contributions from Qu Dongyu (FAO Director-General), His Holiness Pope Francis, Sergio Mattarella (President of the Republic of Italy), Antonio Guterres (UN Secretary-General), David M. Beasley (Executive Director, World Food Programme) and many others with a conclusive lecture – the role of Policy, Innovation, Bioeconomy and SDGs in Agri Food System Transformation by **Joachim von Braun**.



His Holiness Pope Francis said: “Regrettably, we have seen that, according to the latest FAO statistics, despite the efforts made in recent decades, the number of people fighting hunger and food insecurity has grown and is still growing, and the current pandemic will increase these figures still further. Hunger is not merely a disaster for humanity but also a disgrace, caused largely by the unequal distribution of the fruits of the earth, compounded by a lack of investment in the agricultural sector, the consequences of climate change and the increase in conflicts in various parts of the planet. What is more, tonnes of food is wasted. Faced with this reality, we cannot fail to respond or to act. We are all responsible.”

- Read the full speech [here](#).

Last but not least, **FAO New York**, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Programme (WFP), with the support of Canada, Italy, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, co-organized an event to champion global cooperation and solidarity in the face of the threats that COVID-19 is posing to food security and agricultural livelihoods.

- Read more [here](#).

For more information on the World Food Day celebrations, click [here](#). If you wish to listen to the speeches directly, click [here](#).

FOCUS 4 / International Day for the Eradication of Poverty – 17 October 2020

Intergroup on Eradication of Poverty - Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all

15 OCTOBER / 2020

In light of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October 2020), the [Parliament Intergroup \(IG\) Fighting against poverty](#) held a conference under this year's theme: "Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all".

After some welcome remarks by the chair of the IG, MEP Cindy Franssen, Olivier de Schutter, UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights presented his report on [social protection in times of COVID19](#). The report focuses on **how to deliver social protection without having anyone fall through the cracks**.

Testimonies from people experiencing poverty or working

with people who do, mainly focused on social protection, housing and energy issues. They expressed concerns that the Europe 2020 strategy is ending, which failed to reach the anti-poverty target and has not been evaluated yet.

Its successor, the [European Green Deal](#) needs to address poverty levels that will rise further due to the pandemic.

This was also supported by closing remarks from MEPs Marisa Matias, Pierfrancesco Majorino and Marie Toussaint who underlined the need for action and confirmed that the IG is looking at the invisibility and inaccessibility of rights, access to healthy food and is working on a resolution relating to a stable climate.

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This publication has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). 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.