



**EUROPEAN
YEAR OF
YOUTH**

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2022 is the European Year of Youth

Following the proposal by the European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen, 2022 has been announced as the [European Year of Youth](#).

In cooperation with European Parliament and the Member States, this year has been marked as opportunity of engagement with young people in the aspects of education, training, employment, as well as civic and political participation.

Throughout the year, the Commission is planning a list of activities to engage with young people in Europe. In addition, earlier this month, the Commission has announced that **environmental sustainability** should be at the core of EU education and training systems.

Therefore, in the International Day of Education on 24 January, under the current French Presidency of the EU, the French EU Youth Conference has been taken place discussing two themes: "Inclusive societies" and "A green and sustainable Europe".



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
**ARTISANAL FISHERIES
AND AQUACULTURE**
2022



FAO has declared 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the UN has declared 2022 to be the **International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture**. The FAO designates each year to have particular themes in order to promote their objectives in relation to these topics – 2021 was the **International Year of Fruits and Vegetables**. By focusing on artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, the FAO hopes to draw more international focus to the **challenges these industries are facing in relation to climate change**, and the **important role they play in providing nutrition to communities and nations**. Across both of these themes, particular attention will be paid to the most vulnerable rural areas and ensuring their views and needs are heard.

The year will seek to emphasise the dual importance small-scale artisanal fisheries and aquaculture have in relation to climate change, both as a **sustainable method of food production, and as a uniquely vulnerable sector**. The Global Action Plan for this year (**IYAFA GAP**) will focus on raising awareness of the importance of these sectors at a global and regional level; strengthening research to support policy making in support of artisanal fisheries and aquaculture; empowering stakeholders to engage as equal partners in decision-making processes; and building partnerships at all levels.



French Presidency's food priorities focus on sovereignty and sustainability

On 1 January 2022, France took over the **rotating presidency of the Council of the EU**. While food-related policies feature in the **French presidency's programme** for the next six months, these are expected to be considered from a **sovereignty and sustainability** perspective. In particular, agriculture is likely to be a key topic in the context of the upcoming presidential elections. Under its Council presidency programme, France articulated **three priorities on food**:



FRANCE22
FRENCH PRESIDENCY
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION

1. Firstly, it wants to advance the EU's work on **reciprocal environmental and health production standards** regarding trade with third countries, known as 'mirror clauses'. This is aimed at cracking down on lower level standards of imported products, which do not have to comply with EU-equivalent regulation.
2. Secondly, France wishes to foster **a low-carbon agriculture**. In effect, it envisages to introduce, amongst others, Europe-wide low-carbon labels.
3. Lastly, under the Farm to Fork Strategy, the presidency would like to **accelerate the agroecological transition and reduce the use of pesticides**. This also aims at ensuring the EU's food 'sovereignty'.

Aside from a commitment to reduce food waste in its organisation of events, Paris is not expected to make the issue a policy priorities during the presidency.



Leadership changes in the European Parliament

On 18 January 2022, Maltese MEP **Roberta Metsola** was elected as **President of the European Parliament**. Metsola won the majority of MEPs' votes in a contest with other two candidates, Alice Kuhnke (Greens/EFA, SE) and Sira Rego (The Left, ES). Metsola, representing the centre-right European People's Party (EPP), will lead the Parliament for the next two-and-a-half-year term.

The new role for Metsola will include dealing with the delicate balance of power between political parties as well as to lead on wide-ranging legislative dossiers. Metsola has been previously involved in the Parliament's [Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety](#) (ENVI) taking part in the food safety in agricultural products discussions. As a President, Metsola has indicated her working priorities stressing that the EU needs to play a leading role in the green and digital transition.

We congratulate President Metsola for her new role. Today she receives an important legacy from former President Sassoli. Furthermore, she will lead the European Parliament, the only EU institutions directly elected by citizens, in a critical period as we emerge from a devastating pandemic.”, Jacques Vandenschrik, President of European Food Banks Federation. “We send her our best wishes to carry on President Sassoli’s work. As European Food Banks Federation we ensure our support by continuing our daily activity which contributes to aid the most vulnerable in the EU whilst preventing that good food becomes waste.”

Jacques Vandenschrik
President of the European Food Banks Federation

In addition, the elections have similarly marked the changes in the Parliament’s committees by renewing mandates of the current leadership. On 24 January 2022, the Parliament’s [Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development](#) (AGRI) re-elected Norbert Lins (EPP, DE) as committee Chair for the second half of the legislature. Lins has coordinated the Common Agricultural Policy and is expected to lead the further legislative negotiations within the AGRI alongside Benoît Biteau (Greens/EFA, FR), Daniel Buda (EPP, RO), Mazaly Aguilar (ECR, ES), and Elsi Katainen (Renew, FI) as AGRI Vice-Chairs.



Passing of David Sassoli

“... poverty should not be hidden, but rather tackled and wiped out. That the EU institutions must protect the most vulnerable and not add to their pain by expecting more sacrifices.”

David Sassoli, December 2021

This statement and underlying call for action were at the heart of the [Christmas message](#) of former EU Parliament President David Sassoli, who died on 11 January 2022 at the age of 65. Elected to this position in 2019, President Sassoli will be remembered as a passionate political leader and a proud European of strong beliefs and commitment. By means of his words and actions, he demonstrated his attachment to the common values of democracy, solidarity, equality, dignity, the rule of law, and fundamental rights that characterise the European Union.





European Commission report on structural and investment funds

On 21 December 2021, the European Commission published its annual **Summary Report on the Implementation of the Structural and Investment Funds** (ESI Funds). The report outlines the **results achieved** through the use of one of the main investment instruments under the EU budget. Over the seven-years period the ESI Funds amounted to **€461 billion** which, combined with national co-financing, brought an overall investment of **€640 billion**. These funds are intended to speed up the green and digital 'twin' transition, while ensuring **social, territorial, and economic cohesion**.

The ESI Funds comprise:

- the [European Regional Development Fund](#) (ERDF);
- the [European Social Fund](#) (ESF);
- the [Cohesion Fund](#) (CF);
- the [European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development](#) (EAFRD) and
- the [European Maritime and Fisheries Fund](#) (EMFF).

During the pandemic, both in 2020 and 2021, the funds were complemented and adjusted to respond to the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the EU put forward **the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative package** (CRII and CRII+), to support Member States to cope with the immediate effects of the crisis by re-allocating unspent Cohesion Policy funds to

The funds have been allocated for specific policy objectives.

Smart growth	€189 billion
Sustainable growth	€257 billion
Inclusive growth	€174 billion – of which €68 billion for social inclusion
Efficient public administration	€6 billion
Territorial and urban development	€31 billion
Territorial cooperation	€12 billion

priority areas, such as healthcare, short-time work schemes, and support to SMEs.

On top of that, supplementary resources have been added to the Cohesion Policy funding 2014-2020 via the [REACT-EU](#), a top up of €50.6 billion. These resources were intended to facilitate the recovery while supporting the green and digital transitions.



FEAD case studies 2021 – French and Lithuanian good practices

The European Commission published the **2021 FEAD Network Case Study Catalogue** on 6 January 2022 highlighting the diverse approach of different Member States using the [Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived](#) (FEAD) to help tackle the worst forms of poverty. This is the third edition

of the report, and it aims to inform decision makers in the process of developing future interventions to meet the food, clothing, and sanitary needs of the most deprived and help those suffering from social isolation. An important element of the case study catalogue is the emphasis on

collaboration between different actors (FEAD managing authorities, municipalities, Food Banks, and other NGOs) and the way different sources can complement each other. From 2021-2027, the FEAD will be integrated into the [European Social Fund Plus](#) (ESF+).

Many of the 21 case studies showcase the reaction to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March 2020, the Centre for Regional Universities and Schools (CROUS) in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region in France identified students in third-level education who were confined to their college rooms during the lockdown, unable to work or return to their families. Some of them sought the help of Food Banks and an organised effort quickly followed to intervene on 13 university campuses in the region (Bordeaux, Pau, Dax, Limoges, Poitiers, etc). The initiative was broadened in October 2020 to cover young people aged 15-30 and this new scheme "Rebound for youth" built on the foundations of the first actions distributing both food packages and basic hygiene products on a weekly basis. Between March 2020 and December 2021, the initiative distributed €1.350 million of food products.

A Lithuanian example shows how food and/or basic material assistance can be accompanied by other measures to improve the integration of vulnerable citizens and develop their social skills. Between 2018 and 2020 using €900,000 funding [Maisto bankas](#), FEBA Member in Lithuania, the Red Cross, and several municipalities combined their efforts to provide food aid and complement this with offers of counselling on social care, financial planning, hygiene, etc. Recipients were also encouraged to participate in social projects such as cooking meals, sports and leisure activities for children, and training for women.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, information campaigns were organised to increase awareness of the safety measures and guidelines of the government. The accompanying measures to the food aid were selected through direct communication with the target groups and successes included unemployed people reintegrating into the social market, high-performing students in alternative care facilities becoming independent again, and children developing new skills.



Activity report on EU platform on Food Losses and Food Waste

On 17 December 2021, the European Commission published the [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste \(Platform FLW\) activity report](#). The Platform FLW has the overarching objective of **accelerating the EU's progress** towards the Sustainable Development Goal Target 12.3

SDG 12.3

The [Sustainable Development Goal Target 12.3](#) aims to halve per capita food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030, and reduce food losses along the food production and supply chains.

FEBA contribution

From 2016 to 2020, the quantity of food recovered and redistributed from FEBA Members in 29 European countries has increased of almost 60%.

For its new mandate (2022-2026), the [Platform](#) FLW brings together **EU institutions, Member States, international organisations (e.g. FAO), and 45 private sector organisations** – including FEBA. It is also organised in four sub-groups covering all aspects of action to prevent food losses and waste - food donation, food waste measurement, action & implementation, and date marking.

The Platform FLW will be a **key contributor to the development and implementation of the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#)**, in particular

its focus on reducing food loss and waste as part of an integrated food systems approach. Bringing together all the stakeholders in the value chain, the Platform – and its [recommendations for action in food waste prevention](#) – will play a central role in setting out the way forward to develop by the end of 2023 legally binding targets to reduce food waste across the EU, as well as a revision of EU date marking rules by the end of 2022.



UN annual statistical report - EU food security and nutrition

The [Food and Agriculture Organisation](#) (FAO) of the United Nations released its seventh [report](#) on the trends and progress towards the **UN Sustainable Development Goals relating to hunger, access to food, and malnutrition** (SDG 2.1 and SDG 2.2). The 2021 report looks back at 2020 data and focuses on Europe and Central Asia. Surprisingly this year, the report refrains from analysing the **underlying drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition**. Overall, the pandemic has had a deep and regretful impact on food security. In 2020 only, an additional 14 million people became moderately or severely food insecure in Europe and Central Asia (ECA), meaning they lack access to safe, nutritious, and adequate food. About 111 million people or 12% of the population is concerned. Severe food deprivation also rose by 44%, affecting from 15.8 to 22.8 million people.

The UN agency is nonetheless pleased to see **improvements around some forms of malnutrition**, including child stunting, child wasting, and low birthweight. The good news are however offset by alarmingly high and continuously **worsening levels of obesity** for both children and adults.

Despite the gradual improvements observed, progress against the 2025 target is increasingly getting out of reach. Child stunting (-40% target) has only gone down by 7.3% in the ECA, while anaemia in women of reproductive age (-50% target) is down by 17% to date.

Against all indicators, the EU27 had been making good progress since 2014, which have been partly offset by the pandemic. The report however highlights the **EU's lacune at protecting its own population against food deprivation** despite the sizeable COVID-19 fiscal support schemes. Indeed, the number of severely food insecure people increased at similar rates in the EU than in poorer Asian countries.

While the report is silent on food waste, **unfair allocation of resources and inequalities** are pointed as key drivers of the trends. It points to heart breaking realities taking place within the EU's borders and the inefficiency of government responses at safeguarding basic human rights.



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