

TOWARDS A COMMON AGRI-FOOD POLICY

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS PAVING THE WAY TO SUSTAINABILITY





The Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition Foundation (BCFN) is a multidisciplinary centre for the analysis of the major global issues related to food, nutrition, agriculture and environment.

Created in 2009, the BCFN bridges science and society, bringing experience and expertise to the debate in an effort to end the paradoxes of our planet, where obesity and food waste happen despite widespread hunger and malnutrition.

Awareness raising and continuous dialogue within economic, social, environmental and scientific spheres represent critical first steps towards achieving long-term change. The BCFN delivers concrete recommendations and proposes solutions to respond to these urgent challenges and improve food system along the food supply chain - from farm to people. We are convinced that these issues must become priorities in the agendas of decision makers and opinion leaders around the world. We are eager to play an important role and to propose sustainable solutions for the future of our planet.

BCFN POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE OF AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS

In September 2015, 193 world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which describes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 corresponding targets to achieve by 2030 to end poverty, protect the planet and establish prosperity and peace. For the first time, the global community agreed to work together on the same agenda to address common challenges and build a sustainable future.

Three years on, we continue to live in a world where a third of food is wasted as nearly one billion people are hungry. Meanwhile, the crises of overweight and obesity continue to spread. At the same time, too many men and women live in poverty and hunger, with more and more people forced to leave their homes.

BCFN strongly believes that, in order to implement Agenda 2030, more sustainable agri-food systems are crucial. Producing healthy, nutritious and affordable food for all, preserving biodiversity, safeguarding traditions and values of local communities can positively affect our societies, our health and our environment. For these reasons, we encourage the EU to go towards a revolutionary approach in its current agricultural reform agenda.

We ask the EU to look at the Mediterranean region, promoting rural development in such a way as to provide a global model for regional cooperation. Greater attention to the agri-food sector in an innovative multi-stakeholder approach, as a lever for sustainable development, can stimulate prosperity and stability in the entire Euro-Mediterranean area.

1 BUILD A SUSTAINABLE AGRI-FOOD POLICY

- Moving from a "Common Agricultural Policy" to a "Common Agri-Food Policy".
- Opening up participation to young and women in the agri-food system.
- Identifying best practices and effectively monitor progress.

2 BUILD THE MEDITERRANEAN MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- Incorporating regional cooperation and territorial specificities into agri-food and development policies.
- Dedicating appropriate funding to sustainable rural development.

3 AGRI-FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES FOR SUSTAINABLE MIGRATION

- Starting at home by adopting a "sustainability first" principle across all EU policymaking.
- Acting short-term, thinking long-term – avoid a crisis-based approach to migration in favour of building a real partnership approach.
- Raising awareness of illegal exploitation of migrants in EU agriculture.

From a region to the world – the step is big but necessary.

Challenges and opportunities in the agri-food system require a global reflection. We urge the EU and neighboring countries to work together towards the creation of **an Intergovernmental Panel on Food and Nutrition**. Global action will help achieve the SDGs.

BCFN makes 3 major commitments:

- 1 Support the creation of an **"Intergovernmental Panel on Food and Nutrition"**.
- 2 Support **smart policymaking with research, analysis and case collection** on the nexus among migration, sustainable agri-food systems and rural development.
- 3 Promote **high quality, knowledge-based education for global citizens and especially youth** on food and nutrition issues.





THE CHALLENGE

World food systems are facing unprecedented challenges: climate change, natural resource management, agricultural productivity, urbanization and population growth. The UN expects the global population to climb to 9.8 billion in 2050 and over 11 billion in 2100. Already hunger and undernutrition are widespread – how can our food production and our planet keep pace with the growing demands for food and fresh water? All the while, a 2013 study showed that over 40 percent of global crop production is sent to feed animals or produce biofuels while one third of food is wasted. The ecological and human consequences are tantamount to self-destruction. To echo the words of French President Emmanuel Macron, “we have no Planet B”.

It is evident that something must change. In the November 2017 EU Communication on the “Future of Food and Farming”, the European Commission recognises problem areas of EU food systems, but frames the discussion in terms of evolution. In its current form, the May 2018 proposal for reform of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a missed opportunity for a much-needed revolution. It remains too focused on agriculture and fails to take a truly comprehensive approach to the agri-food system. Of the nine sub-objectives of the proposal, only one – “address societal expectations on food and health” – mentions food. Sustainable food and nutrition remain an adjunct to agricultural policy instead of being recognised as integral parts of a holistic Common Agri-Food Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS ENVISAGE A REFORM OF THE EU COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP) TO ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE AGRI-FOOD POLICY THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SDGS.

● ***Moving from a “Common Agricultural Policy” to a “Common Agri-Food Policy”***

This change would rebalance the priorities of the CAP to appropriately address health, nutrition and environmental sustainability alongside agriculture. This integrated approach to food and farming would correctly reflect the interdependence of healthy nutrition and sustainable agriculture. A concrete step would be to expand the proposed “eco-scheme” to reward performance not just in relation to environmental and climate targets, but also nutritional targets, e.g. producers that increase the availability and access to nutritious foodstuffs.

The BCFN hopes the Commission will maintain the spirit of “Common” in Agri-Food Policy, avoiding internal fragmentation in order to ensure a coherent approach. BCFN questions the extent to which the Commission should assign powers of implementation to Member States: while the reformed CAP should indeed facilitate flexibility in response to national and regional contexts, this should only be achieved under the broader principle of a unified partnership approach towards the broader aims of nutritional sustainability under a truly “common” policy.

● ***Opening up participation to youth and women in the agri-food system***

The CAP reform proposes additional support for young farmers, but there is more to be done. The EU needs an active, innovative and sustainable rural fabric to support food security in Europe, and will need to incentivize young small-holders, and in particular women, to enter and stay in the EU agri-food sector. We recommend the EU go beyond income support for farmers under 40 years old. The key principle here is access. Policy initiatives must include mechanisms to improve young farmers’ access to knowledge and information, to technological innovation, to finance (particularly EU funding), and to markets and supply chains. Access under these headings will form the foundation of an important capacity-building exercise, which will also need to be reflected institutionally. Overall, this focus on young farmers and women can serve as inspiration for third countries where the youth population is considerably larger.

● ***Identifying best practices and effectively monitoring progress***

The Food Sustainability Index (FSI) compares data from countries on three broad indicators of food loss and waste, nutritional challenges, and sustainable agriculture. The FSI demonstrates clearly that certain Member States outperform others in addressing agricultural challenges. A similar heterogeneity can be seen across the other two pillars dealt with by the Index – food loss and waste, and nutritional challenges. Reliable indicators to measure and assess progress are imperative to compare strengths and weaknesses – but also to encourage best practices, and to spread proven solutions in sustainable agriculture among Member States and to bring external solutions from non-EU countries to the EU.

Though Eurostat data shows that the EU has made progress against all of the SDGs, the statistics show that not all SDGs could be measured because appropriate indicators were lacking. The BCFN recommends the development of clear indicators and benchmarks to measure progress made towards achieving the SDGs.



THE CHALLENGE

The Mediterranean region provides a compelling case study of current global food and nutrition challenges. First, the region is in the midst of a nutritional transition, as eating habits shift away from the traditional Mediterranean diet, globally recognized as a model for healthy living and environmental sustainability.

Second, environmental and geopolitical pressures compromise agriculture sustainability and food security, increasing competition for natural resources and putting agriculture at risk. Finally, the stark economic, social and political gap between and within Mediterranean countries – exacerbated by the recent economic crises – makes them a hotspot for migration, which requires appropriate policy interventions and cooperation in the region, both before people leave origin countries and after they have arrived in destination countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS AIM TO PUT THE EU IN A POSITION TO FOSTER TRUE RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN, AND GIVEN THE PARTICULAR STRAIN ON THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION, A MORE FRUITFUL EU-AFRICA RELATIONSHIP.

- ***Incorporating regional cooperation and territorial specificities into agri-food and development policies***

EU agriculture and development policies can neither be one-size-fits-all, nor can they be fragmented. In the case of Southern Europe, the clear logic is to incorporate a Mediterranean approach which complements the “European” dimension of both policy streams. For instance, Spain and Italy will often have more in common and more to share with their counterparts in northern Africa or Turkey than with farmers based in Latvia. We recommend more recognition of regional synergies in the CAP, as well as a review of how development policy can foster regional partnerships and integrative food policies that span the full value chain.

- ***Dedicating appropriate funding to sustainable rural development***

Though the 2021-2027 EU budget proposal for “Neighborhood and the World” increases the budget by 26% compared to 2014 – 2020, it consolidates all external action into one single instrument. The Commission believes this will bring more coherence. BCFN welcomes simplification provided that the EU does not fail to meet its commitments regarding development aid under the SDGs and divert its attention away from long-term development aims and instead towards funding the short-term goal of stopping migration. The EU should continue to invest in the economic and human development of countries of origin, investing in education, research and innovation as well as the development of sustainable agri-food supply chains.



THE CHALLENGE

The past years have seen a significant change in terms of both the number and mode of arrival of migrants in Europe, peaking in 2015, when 1.25 million asylum requests were registered by EU Member States. Migration has become a mainstay in the debate among private citizens and heads of state alike but to date EU migration policy has tended to take a short-term approach focused on the emergency response.

We propose to refocus the conversation to investigate and address the “push and pull” causes of migration that lead people to leave their homes. Evidence shows that food, nutrition and the environment matter in this context and there is great interdependence among food systems, the environment and migration flows. BCFN would therefore like to see a re-centring of the discussion to pay due attention to food security, nutrition and climate change as push factors for migration, and conversely the untapped potential of food value chains to overcome these push factors and support rural development to allow people in countries of origin to flourish.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS ENCOURAGE THE EVOLUTION OF THE EU RESPONSE TO MIGRATION, TAKING IT BEYOND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TO ADDRESS THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND FOOD-RELATED DRIVERS OF MIGRATION.

- ***Starting at home by adopting a “sustainability first” principle across all EU policymaking***

We recommend that the EU apply a principle of “sustainability first” in all policies, including in areas with an obvious potential to contribute to the SDGs (migration, environmental, energy and agricultural policy, research and innovation). For instance, “sustainability first” would require the EU to ensure coherence and cross-compliance between the CAP and other EU policies, combining human, economic, social and environmental considerations in a holistic and integrated approach, including innovation (e.g. adapting to changing climate realities), social cohesion (e.g. incentivising generational renewal among farmers) and social justice (e.g. protecting those vulnerable to exploitation).

The BCFN also sees an opportunity to expand the EU’s Better Regulation Guidelines by including an assessment on the impact of EU policies and laws on human mobility, so as to mainstream migration considerations in all policies.

- ***Acting short-term, thinking long-term – avoid a crisis-based approach to migration in favour of building a partnership approach***

There is a need to balance European policies that favour crisis management and integration in destination countries with policies that address the situation in origin countries, including sustainability failures. The development of sustainable, integrated, profitable and entrepreneurial agri-food value chains in the Mediterranean can play a major role in stabilising migration flows by providing new business opportunities, improving food security and rural development to shore up smallholders’ livelihoods and build better communities. EU development policy can do more to engage with countries of origin to share knowledge on topics such as innovation in agriculture, technology and access to finance. Specific areas for collaboration could include joint work to enhance distribution, logistics and proper refrigeration, youth employment or research and innovation programmes as well as women empowerment via targeted technical training or leadership opportunities.

- ***Raising awareness of illegal exploitation of migrants in EU agriculture***

The exploitation of migrants in the Mediterranean agricultural sector must be addressed by the EU. Specific programmes through the rural development pillar of CAP should provide an important source of funding in the fight against unethical practices, as can the full implementation of the EU Pillar of Social Rights.

Awareness should also be raised regarding the valuable contribution of migrant labour to Mediterranean agriculture. Normalising the presence of migrant labour will allow remittances to retain an important role in connecting the individual savings of migrants and development of the countries of origin and thus empower them as enablers of sustainable development. Through leverage schemes by EU and African national institutions, remittances - while continuing sustaining families in the country of origin - should also support specific projects on agricultural development.

BCFN COMMITMENTS

Both public and private actors must support the changes needed at home and globally to leverage and improve our food systems if we are to be successful in reaching the SDGs by 2030. In light of this reality, this section highlights ways the BCFN proposes to “walk the talk” and do its part to support a sustainable food future.

BCFN commits to:

- 1 Call for **structured UN action on Food and Nutrition**. Work towards a more sustainable global agri-food system is already happening at every level of government and in many different institutional forms, but in order to leverage the potential of a multidisciplinary dialogue, a global approach is needed to achieve the SDGs. The BCFN will support the establishment of an **Intergovernmental Panel on Food and Nutrition** at UN level, with the objective of establishing a **multistakeholder platform for dialogue** around sustainable agri-food systems. This platform would serve as a common Action Plan for all member states on Food and Nutrition-related aspects of the SDGs.
- 2 Support **smart policymaking with research, analysis and case collection** on the nexus between migration, sustainable agri-food systems and rural development, with the objective of developing sustainable agri-food systems that protect the environment, enable rural development in the Mediterranean region and find concrete solutions to the food-related root causes of migration.
- 3 Promote **high quality, knowledge-based education for global citizens and youth on food and nutrition issues**. The BCFN will use its communication channels and network to create awareness and to disseminate knowledge to both governments, people and future generations with the threefold objective of:
 - a) Uplifting the **Food Sustainability Index** as a reference tool for guiding the action of policymakers at a global, regional and national level;
 - b) Spreading the **MOOC “Sustainable Food Systems: a Mediterranean Perspective”** throughout university students and young professionals to mainstream sustainable actions;
 - c) Boosting youth participation, building on the experience of **BCFN Young Earth Solutions (YES)!** grant programme to support bright ideas to feed our planet.



DISCOVER BCFN INITIATIVES

FOOD SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

The study, developed in collaboration with the Economist Intelligence Unit, analyses how 34 among the world's leading economies are facing the challenge of sustainability as it relates to nutrition, agriculture and food waste.

foodsustainability.eiu.com

MOOC ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS: A MEDITERRANEAN PERSPECTIVE

The MOOC on "Sustainable Food Systems: a Mediterranean Perspective" has been developed in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Mediterranean with SDG Academy and The University of Siena, consists of a series of pre-recorded lectures, readings, quizzes, discussion forums. This course deals with environmental and climate-related challenges basing upon Mediterranean experience, how sustainable farming systems is being utilized as a roadmap for positive action and implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. Enroll on the website SDG Academy.

sdgacademy.org

BCFN YES! YOUNG EARTH SOLUTIONS

The competition, aimed at PhD students and post-doc researchers under 35, awards the best projects focusing on food system sustainability with a € 20,000 research grant lasting one year.

The BCFN YES! finalists then become BCFN Alumni: an international network of young researchers committed to raising awareness about food and nutrition.

bcfnyes.org



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