

# EIT Food **FutureFoodMakers**



**A manifesto** for the food system



# A manifesto for the food system from the EIT Food FutureFoodMakers

Shaping the healthy and sustainable food system we all need

Join the conversation



#FutureFoodMakers

# Introduction

**The future of our food is at risk.** We continue to produce dangerous levels of greenhouse gas emissions, while diet-related diseases are a leading cause of mortality globally. We live in an increasingly unstable world where global temperatures continue to rise, leading to extreme weather events and changing climates, and we are faced with increasing socioeconomic and health challenges such as mass displacement and food and water insecurity. Our food system is structured around an unsustainable, linear 'take, make, use, dispose' model and the nutritional value of our food is often sacrificed for price, accessibility and convenience. Furthermore, consumer choices are impacted by a lack of options and confusing information.

However, 2021 has been a landmark year for the food system. With COVID-19 impacting our everyday way of life, we saw food system stakeholders come together like never before. They collaborated to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on food supply and availability and create solutions to embed resilience within the food sector and beyond.

COP26 finally took place in Glasgow, UK, and the UN held its first ever summit on food systems. It is clear the time for change is now, and we - the next generation of leaders, decision makers and consumers - deserve a say on these changes and what our future food system should look like. It is time for young people to be heard.

That's why EIT Food launched the FutureFoodMaker initiative. As the world's largest and most dynamic innovation community, EIT Food accelerates innovation to build a future-fit food system, and fully support the role of young people in this transition. Their aim is to ensure that the voices of our generation are heard by the stakeholders in the food system now, so we can play a key part in building the future we are going to inherit.

Generation Z will continue to grow and will represent a huge proportion of the world's population in the coming years. Our need for more sustainable food consumption cannot be ignored and we should not leave the future of our food system to others. We need to drive change ourselves! We are calling on all young people to shape the decisions that define our future: increase your knowledge, put pressure on policymakers, and use your consumer power wisely to influence retailers and producers. We all need to take responsibility for our food system.

## It is clear the time for change is now



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**The Menu for Change represents our views on how the decision makers of today should be working to secure our food, our food system, and our future.**

**We are the EIT Food FutureFoodMakers.** We represent young people from countries across Europe and, after our applications were shortlisted and selected by a judging panel of food system experts and stakeholders, we came together to identify our concerns, hopes and priorities for the future of food to create this manifesto for the food system - the Menu for Change. Read more about us [here](#).

# Our calls to action

We have six priority calls to action for European food sector stakeholders:



**1. Target 25% of EU agricultural land to be managed under regenerative practices** by 2030 and develop a training body to support existing and new farmers in the transition to regenerative farming



**2. Define uniform EU nutrition and labelling guidelines** which are easy and accessible, meet individuals' needs and include the environmental impact of food products



**3. Develop an inclusion policy** that considers the effects of regulations on food costs among vulnerable populations and the provision of vouchers for nutrient-rich foods



**4. Develop an EU-wide true cost of food policy** that mandates the calculation of the true cost of foods produced by medium-large corporations and multinationals through the implementation of life cycle analysis and impact assessments



**5. Tackle food waste in supermarkets and through development of the Bioeconomy strategy** by creating supermarket reduction monitoring plans that feed into the EU-wide food waste monitoring programme and accelerating the development of substitutes to fossil fuel-based materials that are biobased, recyclable or biodegradable at EU level



**6. Include the nutritional, health, and environmental implications of food in education curriculums** for children, as well as provide support and resources for parents and teachers on healthy and sustainable diets.



◀ **Figure 1:** This diagram illustrates the interconnected nature of our calls to action. The goals are all important as individual elements, but heavily rely on each other as tools to be achieved. The food system's complexity is reflected and considered through this approach in our calls to action.

Within these six calls to action exists a universal need for social justice and inclusion. Transitioning to a better, more resilient European food system requires urgent change and innovation across the food value chain - from farmers, manufacturers, and retailers to governments, NGOs and consumers. And with these changes, we must ensure no one is left behind and everyone's voice is heard.

Read the details of our calls to action and recommendations in the Menu for Change below.

# 1. Target 25% of EU agricultural land to be managed under regenerative practices by 2030

Agricultural production uses almost 40% of land in the EU<sup>1</sup> with approximately 20 million jobs dependent on the agricultural sector<sup>2</sup>. Globally, agriculture also accounts for approximately 8.5% of greenhouse gas emissions<sup>3</sup> and unsustainable practices have led to widespread soil degradation, with 80% of areas moderately or severely eroded being agricultural lands or natural grasslands<sup>4</sup>. This erosion in turn leads to carbon loss, biodiversity loss, and increased flooding risks.

Currently, the European Commission's [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) sets a goal for 25% of agricultural land to be organic by 2030. In 2019, approximately 8.5% of land was classified as organic<sup>5</sup>. Despite the Commission focusing on soil restoration in the [EU Soil policy](#), "at EU level, there is no binding overarching framework that strategically defines policy priorities or parameters for soil protection<sup>6</sup>."

To increase the sustainability of agriculture, we call on **European Commission-level policymakers and National policymakers** to:

- Establish an EU soil regeneration policy that mandates:
  - » The development of regional or municipal five-year roadmaps for the implementation of regenerative practices and stimulation of community-supported agriculture
  - » Annual monitoring of regenerative practice implementation
  - » Provision of regional funds for transition to regenerative practices and related innovation (e.g., Agriculture 4.0).
- Establish an EU training body that:
  - » Trains existing farmers as well as the next generation of farmers to engage in regenerative agricultural practices by providing affordable, inclusive and regional training opportunities, including programmes for citizens interested in setting up farming activities in their local area. The training body should have a comprehensive syllabus that includes:
    - Regenerative practices for crop production
    - Regenerative livestock production
    - Holistic decision making
    - Farming with nature
    - Business planning
    - Community engagement
    - Opportunities in Agriculture 4.0 (e.g. AI, robotics and smart farming).



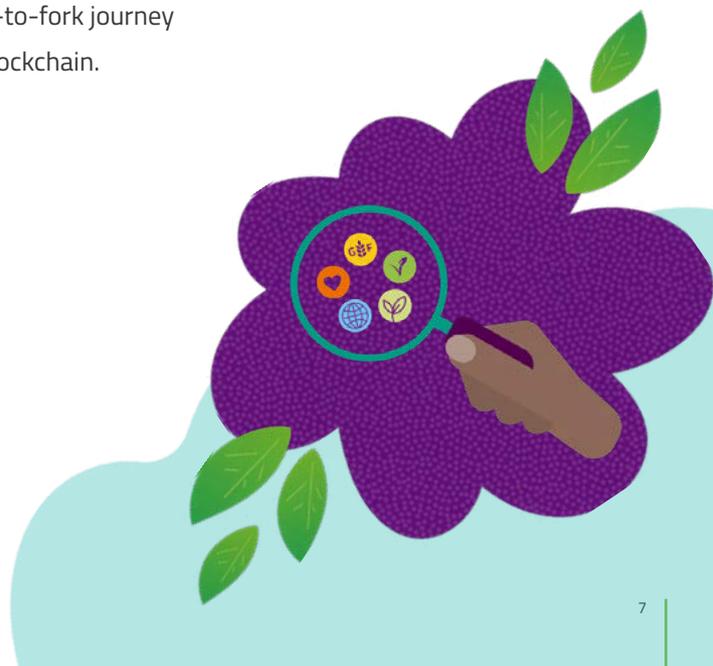
## 2. Define uniform EU nutrition and labelling guidelines

In 2017 32% of deaths in Eastern Europe, 27% of deaths in Central Europe and 15% of deaths in Western Europe were linked to dietary risks<sup>7</sup>. Although all European countries deal with similar issues, there are different nutrition guidelines in each country, such as the daily recommended limit for sugar being 25g in Malta compared to 50g in Germany. This does not give a clear message to the overall European population, leading to 75% of young people in Europe saying they need clearer advice on how to eat a healthy, balanced diet<sup>8</sup>.

Food labelling is an effective way to communicate with consumers and encourage change in food buying behaviours. In fact, nearly eight in 10 young people (78%) would like food labels to have information that goes beyond just ingredients<sup>9</sup>.

To ensure the accessibility of health, nutrition and sustainability information, we call on **European Commission-level policymakers and Health agencies** to:

- Define EU nutrition guidelines that are easy, accessible, and sustainable, while based on Dietary Reference Values to meet individual needs. These guidelines should be created by EU nutrition and public health experts and consider that different regions have different diets based on tradition, culture, local ecosystems and foods. The guidelines could be informed by the [Planetary Health Diet from the EAT Lancet Commission](#)
- Emphasise a predominantly plant-based diet within these guidelines and set uniform limits and recommendations for foods such as sugar, salt, saturated fat, meat, fish, dairy, fruit and vegetables and fibre
- Introduce a specific EU-wide front-of-pack labelling system that provides accessible information on the nutritional value of the food product
- Include environmental impact in labelling guidelines and policies. Environmental labelling trials such as the [Foundation Earth project](#) could be supported by the EU and expanded to more EU countries to encourage further uptake and research
- Develop a QR code labelling strategy that is accessible to everyone with educational resources and transparent details about the farm-to-fork journey of the food product, using technologies such as blockchain.



### 3. Develop an inclusion policy to support vulnerable communities and improve food accessibility

Approximately 3 billion people worldwide lack the financial means to access the 'least-cost' healthy diet recommended by national governments<sup>9</sup>. Factors such as origin country, family stability, economic power and education level are all barriers to good health, and therefore increase the concentration of diet-related illnesses and non-communicable diseases in underprivileged communities.

To increase inclusion and support for vulnerable populations, we call on **European Commission-level policymakers** to:

- Develop an inclusion policy that considers the effects of regulations on food costs among vulnerable populations, paying special attention to more discriminated collectives such as economically at-risk families and individuals, children, the elderly and indigenous communities
- Create a voucher distribution initiative for nutrient-rich foods which can be used to support hungry, food insecure and vulnerable populations
- Focus on community-based health interventions such as communal gardens which provide education programmes to support these groups towards healthier habits.



## 4. Develop a true cost implementation system across the mass production food value chain by 2030

To achieve a more affordable and transparent food system, the true cost of food must be made visible. Currently, the environmental, social and human costs ('externalities') of food products are hidden from the consumers. They are hidden in costs such as taxes and subsidies, and in consequential costs such as biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, caused by poor practices within the food sector, and healthcare costs from unhealthy diets.

In fact, the cost of externalities is estimated to be more than double the price of the food we consume, meaning consumers are sometimes unknowingly paying more for their food<sup>10</sup>.

To improve transparency and allow consumers to make more informed food purchasing decisions, we call on **European Commission-level policymakers and National policymakers** to:

- Develop an EU-wide true cost of food policy that:
  - » Mandates the calculation of the true cost of food products produced by medium-large corporations and multinationals through the implementation of life cycle analysis and impact assessments
  - » Includes mechanisms that contribute to the mitigation of externalities and transition to improved practices or products, ensuring vulnerable social groups are not put at risk
  - » Provides a framework to ensure the quantification of externalities is accurate and consistent
  - » Mandates the establishment of national working groups to monitor, advise and advocate for true cost accounting implementation among businesses, and to support related educational activities for consumers.



# 5. Tackle food waste at sector level

More than one-third of all produced food in the world is lost or wasted<sup>11</sup>, yet rates of food production are sufficient to feed the 800+ million people that go hungry every year<sup>12</sup>. Effectively tackling food waste will simultaneously help to cut greenhouse gas emissions, preserve agricultural land, slow the destruction of nature, provide food security, and help achieve [SDG1 and SDG12](#).

Supermarkets and retail establishments are responsible for up to 13% of food waste globally<sup>11</sup> and, despite households generating approximately 61% of food waste<sup>11</sup>, supermarkets are often the point of contact to the food sector for consumers. This means supermarkets have a role to play in setting an example to consumers, but they can also influence up and down the food chain and therefore must work more towards reducing waste.

To reduce food waste and food loss, we call on **European Commission-level policymakers, European food retailers and Consumer champion organisations** to:

- Develop food waste reduction monitoring plans that feed into the European Commission's EU-wide food waste monitoring programme and [Waste Framework Directive](#). A supermarket scorecard system such as the Feedback [scorecard](#) could be implemented by the EU to help achieve this. The system could follow the hierarchy of zero food waste, measuring how much effort and resources are being put into waste reduction, food donations, composting, etc. and capitalise it in tax rewards or credits
- Accelerate the development of substitutes to fossil fuel-based materials that are biobased, recyclable or biodegradable in the timeframe of 2022-2025. Despite this being one of the 14 actions in the European Commission's [Bioeconomy strategy](#), more effort needs to be put into the promotion and investment of upcycling and reducing biowaste. In addition, this same strategy should be expanded to all European countries since only 11 have developed national bioeconomy strategies. This will ensure the problem of food waste is tackled in line with the EU's [plastics strategy](#) and [other regulatory frameworks](#).



## 6. Embed food within education, for all

The impact of nutrition on people's health as well as the impact of diet on the environment need to be viewed hand in hand. Therefore, recommendations (nutrition guidelines based on people's emission targets) should be made accessible to everyone.

To tackle health inequalities, we call on **Education authorities** to:

- Introduce the nutritional, health, and environmental implications of food as subjects in education curriculums for children. This should also include topics such as food waste, production, and processing. Education should be provided in interesting and engaging ways such as through excursions, common gardens, meetings with food industry professionals and cooking classes
- Ensure school canteens are closely aligned with the food education syllabus and are providing healthy foods that children can learn about and enjoy
- Provide up-to-date training and resources for teachers about food nutrition and sustainability, financed by national governments or the EU
- Ensure mental health is taken into consideration in food education. Healthy lifestyles are not limited to physical health, and this should be reflected in school syllabuses across Europe. This will help to prevent the early prevalence of eating disorders and body shape stigmas
- Provide education resources and support for parents on healthy and sustainable diets and food management.



# References

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## About the EIT Food FutureFoodMakers



**For more information contact:**  
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EIT Food is the world's largest and most dynamic food innovation community, accelerating innovation to build a future-fit food system that produces healthy and sustainable food for all.

Supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union, EIT Food launched the '[Our Food, Our Food System](#)' campaign in July 2021 to better understand the needs and demands of young people across Europe about the food system. Our aim with this campaign is to ensure that the voices of this generation are heard by the stakeholders in the food system now, so that they can have a key part to play in the future they will inherit.

With research revealing a lack of information, support and education, as well as a drive to work in food and to challenge the status quo of what a healthy, sustainable and trusted food system truly looks like, EIT Food appointed 10 18–24-year-olds from across Europe - the FutureFoodMakers – to put this research into action. They were selected by a panel of food system experts and stakeholders to come together and propose the changes they want to see at the [EIT Food Future of Food](#) conference using the Menu for Change.