



EEB

European
Environmental
Bureau

Sustainable Food Systems



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Th role of the EU in fostering more
sustainable food consumption

November 9th, 2023
Isabel Paliotta



Who are we?

The EEB is Europe's largest network of environmental citizens' organisations – and the only one to work on such a broad range of issues.

Our 180 members from 38 countries have more than 30 million individual supporters.

We have over 40 years of EU environmental policy expertise.

Our vision

A better future where people and nature thrive together.

Our mission

We advocate for progressive policies to create a better environment in the European Union and beyond.



What is the role of the EU in the transition to sustainable food systems?

EU – can set the high-level priorities and objectives of the transition



Develop policies and regulatory context

To shape policy-making in all sectors of the food chain (primary production, food processing, storage, transport, retail...)



Initiate the transition



EU action on SFS – why is it important?

- ❖ Our food system: environmentally & socially disruptive, economically sustainable for few
- ❖ 30% global GHG emissions – agri-food; 970M tonnes EU soil lost/year; 49% EU cardiovascular disease – diets; 20-30% EU food – wasted
- ❖ Historical focus on production
- ❖ Existing EU food legislation (not an ‘EU food policy’): health & safety of processes and products
- ❖ Some important lessons learned:
 - ❖ GFL = framework in which all food-related policy making fits
 - ❖ EFSA was legally established by the GFL



EU action – a game-changer?

IF it's a system-changer

i.e.:

- ❖ Tackles the **whole food system**, not only making individual products and processes 'sustainable'
- ❖ Presents a **vision** for EU future food systems & lays out the policy building blocks for achieving it
- ❖ Focusses on **food environments** rather than **consumer responsibility**
- ❖ Takes on the current **governance system** and re-structures it to ensure fairness, inclusivity, participation
- ❖ Addresses the role of the **most powerful players** in the system (obligations, accountability, incentives)
- ❖ Envisions **mandatory measures** and accountable, transparent **enforcement mechanisms**



Consumption-side policy

- ❖ **Food environments**
- ❖ The complexity of consumer behaviour
- ❖ Beyond the consumer responsibility narrative
- ❖ Limited systemic relevance of labelling
- ❖ Acting on the **middle chain** (obligations, accountability, incentives)
- ❖ Public procurement
- ❖ The connection with MS – National Sustainable Food Plans?



Challenges

- Ongoing pushback from vested interests in the status quo
- Elections in 2024
- Political will to develop a framework that can actually deliver change
 - **Reluctance to act, F2F jeopardised**
- ‘Fortress CAP’
- Reluctance of some MS
- Risk of fragmented policy intervention (e.g. excessive focus on ‘catchy’ tools without affecting the overall system)





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Thanks for listening!

Keep in touch

 isabel.paliotta@eeb.org

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The EEB gratefully acknowledges the financial support from the LIFE Programme of the European Union. This communication reflects the organizers' views and does not commit the donors.