

Brussels, 16th October 2019

#WorldFoodDay 2019:

Our renewed commitment to foster healthy diets for #zerohunger world

Today, 16th October, consumer co-operatives grouped in Euro Coop are happy to join the celebrations around the globe to honour **World Food Day**. This year, we have the great opportunity to highlight in particular the crucial role healthy eating plays in building a **#zerohunger** world. To improve the quality of our food and the overall nutritive value of our diets, it is key to carry out **further research** about what prevents our current food system to work in a suitable manner and act consequently. Consumer co-operatives have been long working on this most topical issue. As food retail is our main area of activity, we are continually engaging in a process of **business improvement** aimed at making our supply chains better from a qualitative standpoint, ensuring the products we market are fairly sourced and priced, nutritious and environmentally sustainable to the best possible extent.

Great examples are our **Coop own-brand products**, which represent in many cases the state-of-the art in terms of qualitative, nutritional and sustainability standards.

Of course, as major business players, we do operate in a complex and multi-layer system, reason why it is of paramount importance that every actor in the food supply chain, as well as public authorities, looks in the same direction to bring about the needed change. Global institutions, national governments, private business and civil society groups should all be equally involved in creating a **vision for change** which factually contributes to shaping better food systems to the benefit of all.

By increasing the supply of locally sourced, healthy and nutritious food, producers and retailers are in a favorable position when it comes to facilitating consumers' contribution to **shift towards more sustainable food systems**. Guaranteeing the affordability of and access to sustainable food is also a prerequisite to fighting the social-economic **discrimination** we observe today around this issue: as reported by the [recent OECD data](#) the highest rates of **obesity** are indeed found in the lowest income sections of population. This is the result of current **pricing policies** that allow ultra-processed and highly caloric foods to be the cheapest option available to consumers.

In this context, consumer co-operatives represent an excellent example of how an **ethics-based and value-driven business approach** successfully influences consumers' practices, as well as the entire community. Consumer co-operatives prioritize the wellbeing of their consumer-members and utilize profit in achieving it. This has been implemented in a multitude of actions to encourage healthy habits and to prevent and address overweight and obesity.

[In line with FAO's call for action for World Food Day 2019](#), our members have diversified their initiatives from different angles: **product reformulation, food labelling, responsible advertising and marketing** and, most importantly, **education campaigns** about the benefits of consuming local, various, sustainable and nutritious foods.

There is a wide consensus that **food environment** and **lack of proper information** can also have a negative effect on consumers' diets, especially when it comes to children. In this regard, particular attention should be put into school meals schemes, as well as in recognizing the role families have in improving **food education**. National governments can support this change by designing strategies that ensure consistency with other sectorial policies and put the implementation and enforcement of national dietary guidelines at their core. This would translate into a revision of the rules applying to **public procurement** and measures to support **local farmers**.

Internationally, co-operation between countries needs to focus on bringing forward practical policy guidance on **food security** and **nutrition**. Therefore, continuing the dialogue and promoting knowledge sharing remains of utmost importance for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information, please contact:

Giulia Tarsitano

Food Policy Manager

gtarsitano@eurocoop.coop

tel: + 32 2 285 00 74