

## Farm to Fork Strategy: EU's Ambition for Recovery, Growth, Health & Sustainability

Today, the EU Commission published the **Farm to Fork Strategy** (F2F), which is a long-term vision for the agri-food sector and an essential pillar for the success of the **EU Green Deal** and the UN SDGs. Euro Coop salutes policymaker's bold stance in support for promoting and implementing **sustainable food systems** and welcomes the level of transparency and participation which the Commission facilitated during the consultative process.

**Consumer co-operatives** have embedded at the core of their business model **values** and **principles** such as solidarity, economic participation, and concern for the community which are the building blocks of **sustainability** as per triple bottom line. Euro Coop and its members are therefore fully committed to contribute actively to the **implementation** of the F2F Strategy and by sharing their **century-long** experience of combining **social** and **environmental benefits** with **economic viability**.

F2F foresees **framework legislation by 2023** and **27 concrete actions** to address crucial issues affecting the production, distribution and consumption of food, as well as **empowering consumers** to make informed choices and promote healthy lifestyles.

Civil society organizations have been strongly advocating for the Strategy to set ambitious targets and measurable objectives to be achieved by 2030. It pledges a reduction of **chemical pesticides** by 50%, of sales of veterinary **antibiotics** by 50%, and an increase of **organically farmed land** between 8% to 25%. Moreover, the Strategy proposes harmonised **mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling by 2022**, albeit no specific methods will be singled out.

Most importantly, the Strategy aims to deliver an **integrated approach** to the relevant EU policies which are currently addressed in silos and to level out existing economic and social dysfunctions. In light of that, while it represents a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and necessary solutions, the future CAP will need to provide consistent and efficient tools to make this change happen.

Commenting on the EC Communication, Todor Ivanov, Secretary-General, stated *"climate change is not going anywhere so we must act together, now, not later. The Green Deal and F2F hold the ambition of a truly sustainable supply chain and consumer co-operatives have been long ready for this. Consumers must be protected, but also empowered, and no business holds a higher regard for that than co-operatives. We fully support **the introduction of an EU Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing Practice** as this measure will help the creation of a level-playing field. As food retailers owned by our consumers, we place great attention to ensuring **the ethical integrity and the sustainability of the supply chain**. This means investing into long-term, direct relationships with suppliers and ensuring the supply chain is as short as possible."*

The F2F, which was delayed due to COVID-19, has been revised to include considerations on the **resilience of our supply chain** and the lessons learnt from the pandemic. The EU Commission will increase coordination efforts to ensure the bloc has sufficient supplies to **avoid future crises**. These past months have clearly shown the fragility of a system that heavily relies on international movements of goods and workers for delivering food on the shelves of European supermarkets.

The Strategy also recognises food retailers have a great responsibility to ensure this transition by supporting and incentivising producers and consumers to embrace a paradigm shift towards sustainable practices. Because the co-operative model is founded on the active participation of the members in the governance, **consumer co-operatives are crucial partners for shaping food environments and influencing people's diets, supporting this new approach to "how Europeans value food sustainability"**.

Euro Coop particularly welcomes that "tailored solutions to help SME food processors and small retail and food service operators" have been foreseen, and in this context we encourage the EU Commission to **provide a dedicated support regime for facilitating the growth, development and diffusion of consumer co-operatives across the food supply chain**. Euro Coop also calls on the Commission to undertake an assessment study of existing and emerging alternative business models which are people-centered and to put in place specific mechanisms for fostering a robust stewardship at EU and Member-State level.

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**Contact:**

*Giulia Tarsitano – Food Policy Manager; [gtarsitano@eurocoop.coop](mailto:gtarsitano@eurocoop.coop)*

*Todor Ivanov – Secretary-General; [tivanov@eurocoop.coop](mailto:tivanov@eurocoop.coop)*

**Further readings:**

Our input to the F2F Roadmap consultation [here](#).

The Communication on the F2F Strategy [here](#).

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*Euro Coop unites 19 national organisations of consumer co-operatives in Europe, representing 30 million consumer-members, 7.000 local co-operatives, 700.000 employees and operating 94.000 points of sale. Consumer co-operatives are enterprises with a distinct model of ownership and governance, which, since 1844, have been operating according to the co-operative principles such as voluntary and open membership (Principle 1) and democratic member control (Principle 2) based on the rule of 1 member-1 vote. Being owned and managed by their members, consumer co-operatives have an inherent responsibility far-reaching past the cash register, such as care for the community (Principle 7) and all its social, economic and environmental facets.*