

Future
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2022 Evaluation

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2022 evaluation by the FutureFoodMakers

Introduction

We have experienced a turbulent year full of political, economic and environmental challenges. These challenges are magnified when we look through the lens of food systems: increasing food prices¹, supply chain disruptions and reduced harvests², to name a few. This spotlight on the fragility of our food system is an opportunity to amplify our voices and our demands for a sustainable food system. Combined with global momentum surrounding the climate crisis and distress caused by our continued reliance on increasingly costly and damaging fossil fuels, it is clear that the change we demand is not only important, it is inevitable. The questions that remain are how fast can we encourage the uptake of this change, and who will lead the charge?

The FutureFoodMakers is a group of youth representatives from across Europe, appointed by [EIT Food](#), the world's largest and most dynamic food innovation community, in 2021 to develop the Menu for Change manifesto outlining a set of clear actions to improve access to healthy, sustainable and affordable food. Now, our mission is to create sustainable change in the food system by raising awareness and stimulating youth-led activism. This report links with the Menu for Change and is intended to highlight the progress made in 2022 as well as to act as a reminder that there is still much work to be done.

In the year since the Menu for Change was published, we have seen some progress on almost all of the six demands that were put forward by the manifesto, but there is still much room to grow.

This report reviews and analyses each of the demands and provides details of the progress and updates we have seen, as well as what must still be addressed.

Our six demands were:

1. Target 25% of EU agricultural land to be managed under regenerative practices by 2030
2. Define uniform EU nutrition and labelling guidelines
3. Develop an inclusion policy
4. Develop a true cost implementation system across the mass production food value chain by 2030
5. Tackle food waste at sector level
6. Embed food within education, for all

On an overarching level, a key update that has the potential to stimulate systemic impact within the European food system is the publication of a proposal for a Legislative Framework for Sustainable Food Systems (FSFS) by the European Commission³. This framework could be the basis for ensuring the transformation of the European food system and that EU member states take a proactive role in supporting a sustainable transition. We hope to see the demands of the Menu for Change reflected in the FSFS framework and intend to follow its development closely.

[Read the Menu for Change in full here](#)

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

Since the release of the Menu for Change, the European Parliament has adopted a resolution on the “need for an urgent EU action plan to ensure food security inside and outside the EU”, responding to the Russian invasion of Ukraine which paused many sustainability initiatives. This included a “temporary derogation from the nitrogen directive to allow an increased use of nitrogen from animal manure⁴.”

Despite this setback, on 22 June 2022 the European Commission adopted a proposal to restore damaged ecosystems – the proposal of the Natural Restoration Law – which would require 80% of Europe’s habitat to be restored by 2050, covering 20% of areas by 2030. The proposal’s targets included increasing biodiversity and organic carbon in cropland mineral soils and biodiverse landscapes on agricultural land⁵.

Yet, EU financial support for agriculture is declining. The total value of EU agriculture is €414 billion, while the estimated cost of soil degradation is €50 billion. There are major gaps in funding as the total EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) budget for 2021–2027 is €387 billion⁶. It is clear that little attention is being placed on farmers and their financing plans in the EU. This could have negative effects on the agrifood value chain beyond the recent supply shortages.

There has also been limited work in farmer training from any EU training body. The European Commission has placed funding through a Erasmus+ Programme, the [RegAgri4Europe](#) project, a consortium of seven partners from Greece, Germany and Belgium to facilitate and accelerate the transition to regenerative food. Their course launched in April 2022 gave the opportunity to 30 learners to collaborate on putting regenerative thought into action⁷. Furthermore, EIT Food with the Regenerative Agriculture Revolution, supported 25 farmer-to-farmer trainings, helping 635 farmers. This initiative also enabled an app development which allowed to record and monitor metrics related to soil health, biodiversity and farm profitability.

Small private organisations are picking up more of the work. This can also be seen in partnerships, like the one [ReNature](#) has done, training farmers and partnering with local businesses through regenerative agriculture incubation programs. For example, [Ikbenboer](#), which occurred from March to October 2022 in the Netherlands on ten acres of land with a main commodity of wheat and a byproduct of beans⁸.

Due to growing consumer demand and holistic understanding of ecosystem development, many companies are implementing regenerative agriculture policies. Mars, McCain and fertiliser company Yara International, published an action plan on 3 November 2022⁹. In the beginning of 2022, Unilever committed to invest €100 million into companies working with regenerative agriculture.

However, the timeline for this fund has not been provided¹⁰. There is still a question on the efficacy of these organisations’ action plans and the flexibility implemented in their policies. While companies have been making headway in their goals, it is still in question whether the project plan will be implemented by 2030 to meet the FutureFoodMakers’ demand. Without more political support and annual monitoring programmes, there will be little to hold companies accountable.

Define uniform EU nutrition and labelling guidelines

The FutureFoodMakers called for uniform EU nutrition and front of packaging labelling guidelines that emphasise a plant-based diet and include the environmental impact of food products. Two promising practices from 2022 were the consideration of the Planetary Health Diet (PHD) from the EAT Lancet Commission within policy frameworks as well as the Foundation Earth environmental labelling project.

During 2022, the Nutri-Score Scientific Committee said it would reconsider the Nutri-Score algorithm to give a better nutrition evaluation¹¹, while the need for alternatives to current food labelling as well as the weight it adds to consumers' decisions were addressed in the "Politics meets Nutrition Science" roundtable in October 2022, hosted by the European Parliament¹². The European Commission was expected to propose solutions for a harmonised EU front-of-pack labelling (FOPL) by the end of 2022, but pushed it back to 2023 – without a set date¹³. Foundation Earth wrapped up a pilot project, backed up by EIT Food to develop a PEF-aligned assessment and scoring method at the end of 2022, which will be released in the first quarter of 2023¹⁴. However, the Foundation Earth 2022 overview reinforced FOPL to be a desirable consumer tool for receiving environmental information¹⁵.

The future for food labelling looks at inclusion of origin information, alcoholic beverage labelling and digital labelling as the areas of action for 2023, while sustainable food labelling is not yet on the list of priorities¹³, presumably due to a lack of definition on the standards. The FutureFoodMakers will continue to push this demand and stand by the right of the consumer to decide on their shopping cart based on its environmental impact.

As per nutrition trends, the inclusion of environmentally conscious recommendations has increased. While Denmark was one of the first countries to release guidelines in 2021 focused on climate (advertised as "good for health and climate")¹⁶, other countries joined this conversation in 2022, including Spain¹⁷, while Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden will do so in 2023 with the Nordic Nutrition Recommendations (NNR)^{18 19}.

The need to preserve cultural identities serves as a sticking point when establishing recommendations as some of them might not align with environmental responsibilities, for example with Germany's dairy daily recommendations²⁰. Nonetheless it is crucial to keep working on wider guidelines that include the planet's wellbeing in their considerations.



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

Amidst numerous mounting crises and their harrowing effects on the world's most vulnerable, inclusion has become the issue dominating public discussions on food security. Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, the strain left on supply chains and production led to a dramatic rise in global poverty and inequalities²¹. This situation demanded urgent intervention by the European Union to protect vulnerable groups. Yet the crisis only increased in urgency when, in February 2022, Russia launched its attack on Ukraine. Russia and Ukraine together account for close to one third of the world's wheat and barley exports and two thirds of global sunflower oil export, while Ukraine is also a key exporter of maize²¹. Food insecurity has reached new heights as a result. As of November 2022, a record number of 205 million people worldwide were affected by severe food insecurity²². In 2022, the EU responded by mobilising €900 million in international humanitarian food assistance – an increase of around 55% compared with the previous year²².

The consumer price inflation rates for food and non-alcoholic beverages in the European Union were up to 17.3% in October 2022²³. At the time, Baltic countries were being hit hardest by inflation overall, expecting to see living standards decrease as food and energy prices rise further²⁴. All across Europe, citizens, especially of vulnerable, lower-income groups, are being forced to make cutbacks to prioritise basic necessities.

Energy prices are also skyrocketing, resulting from the EU's dependence on Russian gas and Russia's weaponisation of its gas and oil resources. 40% of the EU's natural gas is supplied by Russia, 27% of oil imports and 46% of coal imports²⁵. Without these supplies, energy in the EU becomes scarce and expensive. This impacts agriculture due to its use in fertiliser manufacture. This also pushes an ever-rising number of vulnerable households into energy poverty: a dangerous circumstance in which the affected are often forced to choose whether to heat their apartments in the cold winter months or feed their families²⁶.

National governments have announced first aid packages for their citizens, with measures including price caps, one-off payments, discounts on energy bills and tax reductions. Many EU countries such as Poland, Italy and Germany have issued one-off payments to households to support lower-income households with paying their bills²⁷. Other governments, including Croatia²⁸ and Hungary²⁷ have introduced price caps on essential food products, such as flour, eggs and milk. Moreover, France has announced "emergency food aid" in the form of €100 food vouchers for low-income households²⁹. Such measures contribute to the protection of vulnerable populations, yet they are not enough to make a long-term, sustainable difference to their lives and well-being.

While this opportunity provides a great example for how voucher distribution can be implemented to support the hungry, the EU needs to step up to introduce meaningful food price caps, food vouchers for vulnerable, low-income households as well as long-term relief for households facing poverty. The response to the war provides short-term solutions, while underprivileged communities will continue to face diet-related illness regardless of political circumstances. More work must be done to protect vulnerable populations through policies that holistically analyse food costs and provide support for those at risk.



Implement True Cost Accounting for the mass production value chain by 2030

In 2022, in the EU within this demand, there was more focus on developing a frameworking to calculate externalities, or the impacts that businesses have on the environment. This could lead to the adoption of True Cost Accounting (TCA) of medium-large corporations and multinationals in the food industry. TCA includes the full cost of production and is only implemented on a voluntary basis.

On 1 September 2022, [PLAN'EAT](#), a four-year Horizon Europe project, was launched. The project aims to improve food systems across Europe³⁰ through nine collaborative spaces of stakeholders. It consists of 24 partners who will analyse the patterns of various population groups that will be "mapped and monetised" in relation to environment, economics and health³¹. The components of this project include analysing the available TCA data, developing a database, identifying socio-economic and socio-true cost assessments, along with assessing the true costs of these European dietary patterns. Following this work, it is anticipated that there will be a roadmap proposal for a European Food Policy Council³¹. This would set up a methodology framework to design easily understood healthy and sustainable food guidelines on national levels.

On 3 October 2022, [The True Cost Accounting Agrifood Handbook](#) was launched at an event organised by the German Federal Office for Agriculture and Food. This provides TCA methodology that has been tested in 14 countries across 20 different supply chains. This handbook is the first of its kind to provide concrete indicators and a

clear framework to measure and quantify environmental, social and human impacts and externalities throughout the agrifood value chain, laying out the standard for reporting and therefore inviting agrifood businesses to participate in the movement³².

When looking at application in practice, a prime example of effective TCA is the chocolate company [Tony's Chocolonely](#) which aims to have 100% slavery-free chocolate through five principles. In 2018, it worked with True Price in order to calculate the true price of its chocolate bars. Now, Tony's is focusing mostly on the socio-economic level of TCA, to pay farmers 82% more in Côte d'Ivoire to reflect the increased costs of living. This decision was made by understanding that the cost of living had increased by 14% and the cost of fertiliser had gone up by 50-60%³³.

Overall, groups of organisations are working on defining key frameworks that match our demand in order to work from bottom-up – from researchers and companies to policymakers. However, this process is moving slowly and is seen to be making much less impact than if policymakers worked alongside the organisations, which is needed in order to scale up the European impact.



Tackle food waste at sector level

In 2021, the FutureFoodMakers called for monitoring plans that measure and support waste reduction including food and packaging.

Yet, in 2021, the EU imported almost 138 million tonnes of agricultural products, worth a total of €150 billion and, as a whole, 153.5 million tonnes of food is wasted each year³⁴. As per the [Farm to Fork strategy](#), the EU Commission is committed to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12.3 to halve food waste by 2030.

But whether the EU is on track is yet to be seen. There is ample evidence from leading businesses and member states that food waste reduction can be achieved at sufficient speed if the right policies are in place³⁴.

For instance:

- In retail, Carrefour achieved food waste reduction of 28.7% between 2016–20, equal to about 7% reductions per year³⁵.
- In Denmark, the government and businesses saw levels of food waste in retail/wholesale and food service fall by 13% and 11% per year respectively between 2014–2018³⁶.

From a policy point of view, member states are not bound to regulations delivering fast-paced Food Loss Waste reduction (FLW). FLW reporting and reduction targets for large food businesses is not mandatory, nor increased taxes/bans of incineration and landfill (while these practices still occur)³⁷.

We can see that the mandates over FLW derive from the following countries, where laws are applied much later by some countries and where best practices are not implemented:

- From 2022, Spanish supermarkets will be fined for discarding unsold food, while restaurants must provide 'doggy bags' for leftovers. It is expected to save 1,300 tonnes of food annually³⁸.
- For France, this type of law already passed in 2016³⁹ under the National Pact to fight food waste. Furthermore, the 2021 decree asks caterers to propose meal reservation solutions to compensate for oversupply⁴⁰.
- For Poland, its landfill rate has increased in the past years, reaching 43% in 2020 (above the EU average of 24%). Legislation therefore focuses on the National Waste Management Plan than specific food waste targets⁴¹.

Maximising the impact of waste reduction also requires innovation and technology. There are a number of interesting innovations contributing to food circularity, including:

- [VanRijsingengreen](#) sees surplus food differently. Fresh food that cannot be sold is instead turned into juice or powdered ingredients.
- [Norbite](#) uses insects to turn plastic waste into animal feed and environmentally friendly pesticides.
- Scientists from Spain discovered saliva from wax worms that rapidly breaks down plastic bags. The enzymes from the saliva have been found to degrade polyethylene within hours at room temperature and could 'revolutionise' recycling⁴².
- [GetWasted](#) helps avoid food surplus going to waste thanks to an innovative online marketplace.

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. As we mentioned in our Menu for Change, recommendations on how to eat in a sustainable and healthy way should be made accessible to everyone starting in primary schools and shared with children, families and educators.

In early 2022, the [EU Education Summit](#) took place, and "green education" was one of its focus topics. Its webpage states that the EU is encouraging the education sector to contribute to the green transition and to strengthen the sustainability competences of all learners. It can also be seen that the EU is focusing on two main areas to tackle this topic: [Education for Climate Coalition and Learning for the Green Transition](#).

The Education for Climate Coalition is a European participatory community for students, teachers and education stakeholders to act on innovative education solutions for environmental sustainability. As a flagship initiative of the European Education Area by 2025, and an essential part of the European Green Deal, the Education for Climate Coalition is part of the EU's comprehensive approach to environmental sustainability education. It enriches both the Council's recommendation on environmental sustainability and the competence framework on sustainability with its participatory approach for taking action on education for climate challenges. For this, the Education for Climate Coalition aspires to create a community led by students and teachers and other educational actors, learn from as many relevant experiences as possible and bridge fragmentation between education sectors⁴³.



Learning for the green transition encourages learners of all ages to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to live more sustainably, embrace healthier lifestyles and contribute to the green transition. Acquiring sustainability competences can help children, young people and adults to understand challenges related to climate change and the environment, reflect on their behaviours, and act for a sustainable future.

On 16 June 2022, the Council of the European Union adopted a recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development. This recommendation provides a roadmap for member states on supporting learning and teaching for the green transition and sustainable development in all phases of education and training. This includes making learning for the green transition and the climate crisis a priority, supporting educators to develop their knowledge in sustainability, and involving students, staff, local authorities, and youth organisations to work as a community. The recommendation is based on a proposal put forward by the Commission on 14 January 2022.

Also, in June 2022, the EU launched the [Fighting Food Waste campaign from its European Health and Digital Executive Agency \(HaDEA\)](#). This was a call for proposals to help stakeholders take action to tackle food waste from different points of view, and it also offered grants for initiatives focusing on health and environmental education⁴³.



Call To Action from the FutureFoodMakers

In late 2021 we, the FutureFoodMakers, came on a mission to drive change in the food system. We asked stakeholders in the food value chain to take action to shape a healthy and sustainable food system.

In this report we aim to:

- Strengthen evidence for global systems change
- Showcase key food systems actors that are living up to our demands
- Stimulate EU action to achieve resilient food and agricultural systems shaped by and for future generations
- Facilitate meaningful dialogue between young people, food system actors, and their communities.

In this report, the FutureFoodMakers reiterate the urgency of food system transformation by scaling existing solutions, exploring new solutions and changing the status quo. We call for action on the Menu for Change demands and urge food system actors to invest in and commit to change. Finally, we continue to call upon young people to amplify their voices to stimulate change in their local communities.

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