

Brussels, 28 April 2014

Europe's food chain partners working towards more sustainable food systems

In a Joint Declaration entitled, '**Actions towards a more sustainable European food chain**' published today, representatives from across Europe's food chain¹ and the NGO community encourage EU policy makers to support a more cohesive approach to safeguarding the sustainability of food systems for future generations.

The Declaration comes ahead of the publication of a European Commission Communication on the 'Sustainability of Food Systems' and in the context of addressing future challenges in this area. It includes 32 concrete policy recommendations which could help achieve a more sustainable food chain by 2020, including improving the coherence among different food-related policy objectives and among EU stakeholder platforms, taking into account all aspects of sustainability, ranging from EU agriculture and fisheries, environmental policies, health and consumers, to waste management and energy policies.

Signatories to the Declaration have defined the sustainability of food systems as "*The continuous engagement of food chain stakeholders to achieve 'low environmental impacts while contributing to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations*²". These systems should be '*protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources*³'. Last but not least '*sustainability means ensuring human rights and well-being without depleting or diminishing the capacity of the earth's ecosystems to support life or at the expense of others well-being*⁴'". The definition encompasses the three pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environmental dimensions) all of which need to be simultaneously addressed if the sustainability of food systems is to be ensured.

In this context, the signatories are looking to the Commission to demonstrate leadership in its forthcoming communication with the aim to increase the cohesion of the food sustainability policy. They will continue to work with food chain members to take these recommendations forward in 2014 and beyond, for instance in the High Level Forum.

Note to the Editors

*This joint initiative was stirred by 'The Stakeholder Dialogue Group on Food Sustainability', a voluntary group established in September 2013 including 18 organisations and companies from across the EU food chain, most of which are also members of the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain*⁵. For more information on the High Level Forum please visit: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/food/competitiveness/high-level-group/index_en.htm.

¹ Food chain: any actor involved in the production, distribution and consumption of food

² Burlingame and Dernini, 2012, in <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3300e/i3300e01.pdf>

³ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3300e/i3300e01.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/nr/sustainability/home/en/>

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/food/competitiveness/forum_food/index_en.htm

The organisations involved in this Initiative are:

- CELCAA (European Liaison Committee for the Agricultural and Agri-Food Trade), www.celcaa.eu
- CLITRAVI (Liaison Centre for the Meat Processing Industry in the European Union), www.clitravi.eu
- COPA-COGECA (European Farmers – European Agri-Cooperatives), www.copa-cogeca.be
- EFFAT (European Federation Of Food, Agriculture & Tourism Trade Unions), www.effat.org
- ELC (Federation of European Specialty Food Ingredients Industries), www.elc-eu.org
- ERRT (European Retail Round Table), www.errt.org
- EURO COOP (European Community of Consumer Cooperatives), www.eurocoop.coop
- EuroCommerce (Retail, wholesale & international trade representation to the EU), www.eurocommerce.be
- FERRERO INTERNATIONAL, www.ferrero.com
- FoodDrinkEurope, www.fooddrinkeurope.eu
- INDEPENDENT RETAIL EUROPE, www.independentretaileurope.eu
- NESTLÉ, www.nestle.com
- SONAE, www.sonae.pt
- spiritsEUROPE, www.spirits.eu
- SÜDZUCKER AG, www.suedzucker.de
- UNILEVER, www.unilever.com
- WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature), www.wwf.eu