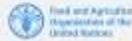


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SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS FOR HEALTHY DIETS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

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SUSTAINABLE HEALTHY NUTRITION – A COMMON FOOD POLICY FOR EUROPE?

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Origins of the “Healthy and Sustainable Diets for European Countries” report

“Healthy Nutrition” and “Sustainability” have been researched by different groups of scientists, and policies developed in separate government departments.

Against this backdrop, the Council of EUPHA asked its Food and Nutrition Section to carry out a comprehensive literature research of the field of healthy and sustainable nutrition, and to make recommendations. The report was published in May 2017.

The methodology applied has been described elsewhere, including in the report itself.

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https://eupha.org/repository/advocacy/EUPHA_report_on_healthy_and_sustainable_diets_20-05-2017.pdf

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Definition of “Sustainable Diets” (FAO)

“Sustainable Diets are those diets with low environmental impacts, which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimising natural and human resources.”

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Definition of “healthy and sustainable diets” (WHO Regional Office for Europe)

“diets high in vegetables, fruit and whole grains, with limited intake of saturated fat, trans fats, sugar and salt”

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The key features of sustainable healthy diets

- **Low environmental impact;**
- **Contribute to food and nutrition security for present and future generations;**
- **High quality nutrition, to avoid all forms of malnutrition;**
- **Essentially plant-based diets, based on vegetables, pulses, fruit, whole grain cereals;**
- **Much reduced content of meat and meat products, and of other animal-origin foods (e.g. dairy);**
- **Include sustainably-sourced fish;**
- **Trans fats, and foods with high content of saturated fats, sugar or salt are to be avoided.**

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How to make progress towards sustainable healthy diets?

- **Ambitious food strategies need to be developed at EU level and in each European country;**
- **Such strategies (and those that exist) must be translated into policies which are implemented rigorously;**
- **All sectors of society and all levels of the food chain must be consulted and involved in these changes;**
- **Very many stakeholders and agendas are involved; therefore much need to coordinating public health leadership;**
- **Accountability networks, with well structured monitoring and evaluation, are essential;**
- **Research community must work to fill in our knowledge gaps;**
- **Public health benefits may rapidly become evident; sustainability benefits will take longer to accrue.**

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An agenda for the EU and nation states

Each governmental body should each establish a statutory Sustainable Nutrition Task Force, the responsibilities of which might include:

- Identification of essential key features of a healthy and sustainable food system;
- Formulation and recommendation of a strategic plan for moving from current food systems towards healthy and sustainable alternatives, including by adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to food and nutrition;
- planning and recommending a programme for implementation of the strategy for sustainable and healthy food systems;
- monitoring progress towards implementation of such policies;
- supervision the evaluation of outcomes in relation to both healthy nutrition and sustainability.

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EU and WHO / FAO Regional Offices: Further actions:

- **The EU must reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), taking account of the principles already outlined, ideally replacing it by a Common Food Policy, with policies from farm field to the dining table fork.**
- **The WHO and FAO Regional Offices could take a lead in development of appropriate sustainable dietary guidelines, and of accountability systems, to enable commitments to be tracked.**

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A new European food research agenda

Food research has hitherto been splintered into many domains with minimal inter-connections between them, e.g. nutrition, food science, sustainability, agriculture, economics, social science, etc.

What is now required is a completely new food research infrastructure, devoted to the support, facilitation, and funding of multi-disciplinary aspects of food science, involving scientists with all relevant backgrounds in both natural and social sciences.

In this way, multi-disciplinary research on relevant topics “from field to fork” might at last become possible.

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Summary of policy recommendations:

- Food policies must move towards healthy sustainable diets;
- Food production must move away from mammalian towards vegetable protein;
- Such policy changes must involve the entire food production chain;
- Governments and the EU should establish administrations for all components of the food chain;
- A new multi-disciplinary European food research infrastructure, from field to fork, is needed.

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Thank you!

Any comments / questions?

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Matters not discussed in the report

These include:

- The impact of current and potential new food production systems on agricultural workers and on rural communities generally.
- The various challenges which need to be addressed if we are properly to ensure all basic human rights in relation to the employment of seasonal workers.
- Environmental, economic and social impacts of agriculture and the food trade in general, both at local and global levels.
- Food waste and the concept of a circular economy (i.e. zero waste economy), as applied to food.

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