



European Economic and Social Committee

NAT/755

Promoting healthy and sustainable diets in the EU

OPINION

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Promoting healthy and sustainable diets in the EU

(own-initiative opinion)

Rapporteur: Peter SCHMIDT

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1. Conclusions and recommendations

- 1.1 The EESC opinion on "A comprehensive EU food policy", adopted in December 2017, advocated for a more integrated approach to food in the EU. Healthy and sustainable diets represent a key "pillar" of such a food policy, as we urgently need to orient our diets to improve – not damage – the health of both ecosystems and the public and the vitality of rural territories.
- 1.2 The time is ripe to accelerate a paradigm shift, and the evidence is strong and increasing. The EESC highlights that there is now political momentum in policies such as the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the new proposals on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy. There is also growing scientific evidence of the urgent need to transform Europe's and global food systems, for example in reports from the IPCC, the EAT-Lancet Commission, the Committee on World Food Security and the InterAcademies Partnership¹. Last but not least, there is strong civil society demand (e.g. from the coalition brought together by the IPES Food process), recognition by business of its responsibilities to help change (e.g. on food waste, the circular economy, obesity-reduction, biodiversity protection, cultural enhancement, etc.) and action at regional and municipal level, for example through the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, the "Projets Alimentaires Territoriaux" in France and the C40 world cities² leadership.
- 1.3 The EESC acknowledges and supports the existing initiatives by the Commission to promote healthy and sustainable diets, for example the inclusion of provisions in the latest CAP reform proposal to improve the response of EU agriculture to societal demands on food and health including safe, nutritious and sustainable food, food waste and animal welfare³. However, a coordinated approach to these initiatives is missing.
- 1.4 The complexity of the food-health-environment-society nexus requires a more comprehensive approach on diets, not just related to consumers' behaviour. To provide cohesion and shared purpose, the EESC calls for the development of new Sustainable Dietary Guidelines, which take into account cultural and geographical differences between and within Member States. Simply reducing the use of resources in production and changing ingredients does not translate into better or healthier diets.
- 1.5 New Sustainable Dietary Guidelines would help create clearer direction for farms, processors, retailers and foodservice. The agri-food system would benefit from a new "framework" to produce, process, distribute and sell healthier and more sustainable food with a fairer price.
- 1.6 The EESC calls for the creation of an Expert Group to formulate Europe-wide sustainable dietary guidelines within two years. This should include relevant professional and scientific bodies from nutrition, public health, food, environmental and social sciences. The EESC stands

¹ <http://www.interacademies.org/48945/Global-food-systems-are-failing-humanity-and-speeding-up-climate-change>.

² <https://www.c40.org/>.

³ [COM\(2017\) 713 final](#).

ready to contribute to the work of such an Expert Group to provide the input of civil society organisations, particularly through its Temporary Study Group on Sustainable Food Systems.

- 1.7 The EESC reiterates the importance of investing in education on sustainable diets from an early age, to help young people appreciate the "value of food". Special attention must be paid to vulnerable groups, especially people on low incomes.
- 1.8 The EESC highlights that a common European food labelling approach reflecting the Sustainable Dietary Guidelines would improve transparency and discourage the use of unnecessarily cheap raw materials that are both unhealthy and unsustainable (e.g. trans fats, palm oil and excess sugars). Consumers would benefit from extension to food labelling, to include environmental and social aspects. This would help drive consumers' choices towards healthier and more sustainable options.
- 1.9 Besides helping the commercial sector, Sustainable Dietary Guidelines would also provide common, clear criteria for use in public procurement. Europe needs food to be at the heart of a Green Public Procurement (GPP). In this context, the EESC calls for the revision of EU GPP criteria for food and catering services to be urgently adopted.
- 1.10 Competition law should not be an obstacle to developing Sustainable Dietary Guidelines. Rules should be adapted to help the local economy rather than hinder sustainability. To ensure a better distribution of the added value for the stakeholders across the food supply chain, the EESC welcomes the possibility introduced for all sectors by the 2013 reform of the CMO Regulation, which allows inter-branch organisations to notify their agreements to increase the sustainability standards of products to the European Commission for clearance under the competition rules. Products which are produced in a more sustainable manner in terms of environmental, animal health and quality standards, might enable operators in the food supply chain to obtain better prices. Pre-notification talks with the Commission can help inter-branch organisations to shape any possible future notification.
- 1.11 The EESC underlines that the full range of public governance tools should be considered as policy instruments to discourage the production and consumption of unhealthy foodstuffs and to promote healthy eating habits. The externalised costs of unsustainable diets are a "hidden" burden on society, economy and the environment which must be reduced or internalised. The EESC calls for proper policy strategies to implement sustainable dietary guidelines, especially focusing on the co-benefits for farmers and businesses.
- 1.12 Europe champions the consumer right to accurate information. If we want healthy and sustainable food choices to be the norm and the easiest choice, Europe requires an open, evidence-based set of criteria, such as via agreed Sustainable Dietary Guidelines.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 In its own-initiative opinion on "Civil society's contribution to the development of a comprehensive food policy in the EU" adopted in December 2017 (NAT/711), the EESC called for the development of a comprehensive food policy in the EU, with the aim of providing

healthy diets from sustainable food systems, linking agriculture to nutrition and ecosystem services, and ensuring supply chains which safeguard public health for all sections of European society⁴. To meet these goals, policy measures on both the supply and the demand side have to be coordinated. This means that the availability and affordability of food through sustainable food production must also be coordinated with increased access and empowerment of consumers to choose healthy and tasty diets. This own-initiative opinion aims to tackle healthy and sustainable diets as one of the key pillars of a comprehensive EU food policy.

2.2 The political momentum to discuss healthy and sustainable diets is high:

- According to the latest State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) report⁵ presented in October 2018 at the Committee on World Food Security, there has been a rise in world hunger for the third year in a row. The absolute number of undernourished people increased to nearly 821 million in 2017, from around 804 million in 2016. Adult obesity is also worsening. More than 1 in 8 adults, or more than 672 million, in the world are obese. The global pandemic of obesity is happening at huge economic costs – nearly 3% of global GDP, equivalent to the costs of smoking and to the consequences of armed conflicts. Even in Europe, half of the population is overweight and 20% suffers from obesity.
- The UN has declared this to be the Decade of Action for Nutrition, acknowledging the need to re-shape food systems to achieve healthier diets and improved nutrition. The High Level Panel of Experts of the Committee on World Food Security further emphasised this imperative in its September 2017 report⁶. The FAO and the World Health Organisation are currently working on a new definition of healthy and sustainable diets, and planning an international consultation in March 2019 to analyse the multi-dimensional nature of the sustainability of diets.
- Nutrition has a central role in achieving sustainable development and the entire 2030 Agenda, in particular to ensure access by all people to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round and to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030 (Goal 2) as well as to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (Goal 3). The implementation of the SDGs therefore offers an opportunity to change food consumption and production patterns in a more sustainable and healthy way.
- Achieving the objectives of the Paris agreement on climate change also requires a profound transformation of the food system, and the special IPCC report adopted in October 2018 scientifically confirmed the need for urgent climate action⁷.
- At EU level, the reform of the CAP represents an opportunity to promote more sustainable production and healthy diets, if it makes nutritious products such as fruit, vegetables and dairy products easily available for EU citizens.
- The Committee of the Regions has also recently adopted an opinion on "Local and regional incentives to promote healthy and sustainable diets"⁸.

⁴ [OJ C129, 11.4.2018, p. 18.](#)

⁵ State of Food Insecurity in the world (SOFI) report 2018: **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**<http://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutrition/en/>.

⁶ HLPE, 2017. Nutrition and food systems.

⁷ http://www.ipcc.ch/news_and_events/pr_181008_P48_spm.shtml.

⁸ CoR Opinion Factsheet, [Local and regional incentives to promote healthy and sustainable diets.](#)

- The International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) will shortly present its report on a "Common Food Policy" in the EU, which will also include concrete recommendations on healthy and sustainable diets.

2.3 City governments (and territorial communities) are emerging as key actors in fostering more sustainable food systems. Through integrated, cross-departmental action, cities are bringing together various stakeholders to design food policies that address pressing food-related problems (such as food insecurity and obesity), but at the same time help resolve wider issues, including environmental challenges, social inequalities and poverty. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, signed by over 180 cities worldwide and covering 450 million inhabitants,⁹ is an important milestone in this context.

2.4 In addition to the political momentum, there is also the growing scientific and societal urgency of addressing this issue, as further explained in chapter 3.

3. **Impacts of unhealthy and unsustainable diets**

3.1 Dietary choice has many impacts, both good and harmful. Europeans need support to reduce the harmful impacts from diet and to gain the positive aspects. The old idea of simply aiming for enough food supply is no longer an adequate policy. We need to consider how food is produced and consumed and what its long-term as well as immediate impacts are. How European consumers eat has unintended consequences in pollution (e.g. single-use plastic packaging), climate, health, biodiversity and more. These impacts undermine the future and require changes in how we eat and consume. Food supply chains, from farm to restaurant, need to receive different policy signals. Science has begun to redefine what a good diet is for the 21st century: sustainable diets from sustainable food systems. Policy now needs to address this challenge.

3.2 *Diet's public health impact*

Poor diets are Europe's main causes of premature death and preventable disease. Health is the Member States' responsibility, and the European Commission mainly facilitates data and information exchange. Nevertheless, the EU has the potential to improve consumers' understanding of the importance of consuming a sustainable diet for health. 550 000 people of working age die prematurely in the EU annually from non-communicable diseases (NCDs). NCDs have overtaken communicable disease as the cause of premature death globally. NCDs now account for most healthcare expenses in Member States, costing EU economies EUR 115 billion, or 0.8% of GDP annually, according to the OECD¹⁰. A major threat to future public health is the spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR)¹¹. Although the Commission and WHO European Region have taken good and strong stands on AMR, more effort needs to be made to cut antimicrobial use on EU farms, and to prevent importation of meats from third countries which have prophylactic antibiotic use.

⁹ <http://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/>.

¹⁰ European Commission (2018). Non Communicable Disease https://ec.europa.eu/health/non_communicable_diseases/overview_en.

¹¹ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (2017), Summary of the latest data on antibiotic resistance in the European Union. <https://ecdc.europa.eu/sites/portal/files/documents/EAAD%20EARS-Net%20summary.pdf>.

3.3 *Diet's societal impact*

Diet is both a key indicator of social inequalities, and a driver of them. People on low incomes in Europe eat worse diets, and experience worse and earlier diet-related ill-health. Low income areas have less purchasing power than more affluent ones. People on low incomes eat more restricted diets, and consume less fruit and vegetables. Fatty, salty, sugary and "ultra-processed" food products feature more highly in their diets, simply because they are cheaper.

3.4 *Diet's cultural and psychological impact*

Europe is famous for its diverse and rich culinary traditions. Although the EU has done much to protect foods of special and local interest through the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) schemes¹², there is slow integration of foods, as processors scale up production to lower costs and find new markets. Europe needs a renewed effort to rebuild and diversify our food cultures – not to seal them up behind walls, but to build diversity to enable resilience. More diverse diets increase the range of nutrients and tastes.

3.5 *Diet's environmental impact*

Food production and consumption have a significant environmental impact in terms of resource use at global level – however in the EU this is much lower. The system of agriculture and food production has a major impact on the environment (e.g. GHG, biodiversity, water, soil) . Europe can lower the impact of unnecessarily processed food systems by encouraging simple nutrient rather than energy-dense diets. Food systems can be the source of restoration and enhanced resilience, if food is grown, processed and consumed differently^{13,14}. This almost certainly means feeding cattle less grain, and consumers eating less meat. This has both climate and health gains¹⁵. We have to promote more sustainable farming systems and notice for example the positive environmental impacts of grasslands (increased biodiversity, carbon sequestration). This would also encourage the consumers towards healthy, balanced and sustainable diets.

3.6 *Diet's economic impact*

Europe's success is that 550 million Europeans are fed annually but now we need that system to be more sustainable. Many economists are critical of the Common Agricultural Policy subsidies, which represent a big part of the EU budget. The counterargument is that subsidies keep Europe's farmers in existence. Their costs have grown but the percentage of gross value added (GVA) farmers receive is low. Most food GVA is made off the land, not from the land. Food is one of the EU's biggest economic sectors. EU Food manufacturing, for example, employs

¹² European Commission (2015) Geographical indications and traditional specialities http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/schemes/index_en.htm.

¹³ Berners-Lee M, et al (2018) Current global food production is sufficient to meet human nutritional needs in 2050 provided there is radical societal adaptation, *Elementa*, 6, 1, 52: <http://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.310>.

¹⁴ Ritchie H, D Reay & P Higgins (2017). Beyond Calories: A Holistic Assessment of the Global Food System, *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, 2, 57, doi: 10.3389/fsufs.2018.00057.

¹⁵ See reports such as WRI (2018) *Creating a Sustainable Future*. <https://www.wri.org/publication/creating-sustainable-food-future>; and the EAT-Lancet Commission on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems (2019). *Food in the Anthropocene* <https://eatforum.org/initiatives/eat-lancet/>.

4.2 million workers and has a turnover of GBP 1 089 bn¹⁶. Consumers have benefited from a long-term drop in food costs, as a proportion of domestic expenditure. But the full costs are not necessarily included in this drop in costs. A 2017 study of the UK food system showed that, while UK consumers spend GBP 120 bn a year directly on food, this has an additional cost to other "budget headings" of the real economy of the same amount, including GBP 30 bn for degradation of land and GBP 40 bn for health¹⁷. Studies such as this suggest the need for "true cost accounting", an approach being championed by the UN's Environmental Programme¹⁸.

4. Policies and tools to foster healthy and sustainable diets

- 4.1 Supporting better nutrition and healthier diets is an urgent imperative in Europe, and opportunities to promote nutrition through better food systems should be further explored¹⁹. A transition to food systems that deliver nutritious food for healthy diets would require policy changes both on the supply and the demand side. On the supply side, food production and the way food is processed (e.g. through food reformulation), distributed and made available to consumers are crucial factors in determining the accessibility and affordability of food that promotes healthier dietary patterns. On the demand side, public policies should empower consumers to choose healthier diets, e.g. through education in schools and awareness raising campaigns, dietary guidelines, labelling, public procurement, etc. Strategies and policies to enhance the supply and demand for nutritious food are interconnected and interdependent. A comprehensive, multi-sectoral and multi-level approach should therefore be adopted, involving all relevant institutions, civil society and stakeholders across the food system.
- 4.2 Part of the problem is also that, so far, many food industry decisions have been made on the basis of short-term economic reasons, which has sometimes misdirected production and processing towards the growing and using of unhealthy ingredients (e.g. palm oil, trans fats, excess sugar and excess salt). A sustainability approach implies looking not only at the economic, but also at the social and environmental impacts. Such an approach must have a long-term perspective and develop conditions for shorter and territorial food supply chains. For this reason, it is also important to promote a new "framework" for the food industry, including SMEs, to produce, process, distribute and sell healthier and more sustainable food. For example, EU measures should make it easier for producers to advertise reformulation even if it is gradual, which is not possible with the current legislation. As regards the CAP, it should encourage farmers to produce on a local level those ingredients with a better health impact. The EESC also calls for a swift introduction of an EU-wide legislative limit to industrially produced trans-fats in food.

¹⁶ FDE (2018). Annual Report 2018.

https://www.fooddrinkEurope.eu/uploads/publications_documents/FoodDrinkEurope_Annual_Report_INTERACTIVE.pdf.

¹⁷ Sustainable Food Trust (2017). *The Hidden Cost of Food*. Bristol.

<http://sustainablefoodtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/HCOF-Report-online-version.pdf>.

¹⁸ UNEP (2017). *TEEB for Agriculture and Food Interim Report*. Nairobi: UN Environment Programme.

<http://teebweb.org/agrifood/home/teeb-for-agriculture-food-interim-report/>.

¹⁹ [OJ C 129, 11.4.2018, p. 18](#).

- 4.3 Several EU policies and initiatives already exist that are aiming to foster healthy diets, for example Commission initiatives such as the EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, regulatory measures on food information to consumers and nutrition and health claims, the 2017 White Paper on Obesity, the EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2001-2020, certain provisions in the new CAP proposal (e.g. to "improve the response of EU agriculture to societal demands on food and health including safe, nutritious and sustainable food, food waste and animal welfare"), the EU School Fruit, Vegetable and Milk Scheme, etc. However, a coordinated approach is missing. New EU Sustainable Dietary Guidelines would provide that coherence and a "multi-criteria" framework for Member States to develop their national guidelines, as further outlined below.

5. Sustainable dietary guidelines

- 5.1 As evidence about diet's impact on health, environment and economy has grown, there has been growing interest in developing what are termed "sustainable dietary guidelines". Almost all nation states have official nutrition or food-based dietary guidelines. These are familiar as advice to eat less salt, eat a number of "portions" of fruit and vegetables, to consume certain amounts of fish, and other guidelines. Given the strong evidence on food's environmental impact, it now seems logical to include wider criteria in dietary advice – hence the growing calls for "sustainable dietary guidelines"²⁰.
- 5.2 EU Member States have already begun to develop different forms of sustainable dietary guidelines²¹. Some of these have emerged from their health and nutrition expert bodies^{22,23}, others have been collaborative between ministries and agencies²⁴, and some have been led by civil society and industry²⁵. This diversity has been useful in experimenting, but it now needs to be given a clear, coherent, common framework, if consumers are to benefit within the Single Market. When Sustainable Dietary Guidelines and related measures are implemented, there is a need to ensure that they are effectively controlled.
- 5.3 An Expert Group should be created to formulate Europe-wide sustainable dietary guidelines. This should include relevant professional and scientific bodies from nutrition, public health, food, environmental and social sciences. The Expert Group would formulate guidelines within two years which provide consumers with clear advice on sustainable diet, drawing upon research and data provided by the Joint Research Centre, Food 2030, SCAR and others. These

²⁰ Gonzalez-Fischer C, T Garnett (2016). *Plates, pyramids, planet: Developments in national healthy and sustainable dietary guidelines: a state of play assessment*. Rome and Oxford: FAO and Food Climate Research Network.

²¹ See the review in Lang T, P Mason (2017). Sustainable diet policy development: implications of multi-criteria and other approaches, 2008–2017, *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, doi: 10.1017/S0029665117004074.

²² Health Council of the Netherlands (2011) *Guidelines for a Healthy Diet: the Ecological Perspective*. Contract No.: publication no. 2011/08E The Hague: Health Council of the Netherlands.

²³ Voedingscentrum (2016). *Netherlands Nutrition Centre guidelines Wheel of Five (Appendix 13 on sustainability issues)*. Den Haag: Voedingscentrum.

²⁴ National Food Administration, Environment Agency (2008) *Environmentally Effective Food Choices: Proposal notified to the EU*. Stockholm: National Food Administration.

²⁵ German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) (2014) *The Sustainable Shopping Basket - A Guide to Better Shopping*. Berlin: Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung / German Council for Sustainable Development <https://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/en/projects/the-sustainable-shopping-basket/>.

guidelines would be available for Member States to use at the national level, for instance, in healthcare services and institutions of public policy and, at the EU level, to help develop clear integrated frameworks for the food supply chain. The guidelines would help deliver broad EU aims such as its support for the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Change Agreement and other sustainability commitments and programmes such as FOOD2030²⁶. The Expert Group should include key bodies such as the Federation of European Nutrition Societies (FENS), IPES-Food, the European Public Health Association, (EUPHA) and the European Ecological Federation, together with input from expert scientific sources such as SCAR, and with support from DG Agriculture, DG Environment, DG SANTE, the European Food Safety Authority, the European Environment Agency and the Standing Committee on Agricultural and Bioeconomy (SCAR). The EESC stands ready to contribute to the work of such an Expert Group to provide the input of civil society organisations, particularly through its Temporary Study Group on Sustainable Food Systems.

6. Sustainable food labelling schemes

- 6.1 Sustainable Dietary Guidelines should also be the basis for broader food labelling, which is readable and would improve transparency and discourage the use of unnecessarily cheap raw materials that are both unhealthy and unsustainable (e.g. trans fats, palm oil and excess sugar). Consumers would benefit from extension to food labelling, including of the EU quality logo system (PGI, PDO, TSG), to encompass environmental, social as well as health and nutritional aspects.
- 6.2 Policies have focused on nutrition and other health claims, but the EESC notes rising concerns about the lack of consumer information and education on the environmental and social impact of food. Implementing a clear labelling system on the origin, means of production and nutritional value of food would facilitate consumers' choices. Traceability is also very important both for food producers and for consumers, to ensure food safety²⁷. The EESC therefore reiterates its call for the development of a new smart system on sustainable food labelling, which should be harmonised at EU level²⁸. This should be also based on new traceability and certification processes, and will be further developed in the future work of the EESC Temporary Study Group on Sustainable Food Systems. More emphasis on technologies like mobile apps, and consumer displays in the retail sector, providing all the required information and full traceability should also be promoted.

7. Public procurement

- 7.1 Through public procurement, local authorities would be able gradually to apply sustainable diet guidelines in a wide range of public institutions, especially schools and hospitals. The production, sale and consumption of healthy, local and seasonal foodstuffs that ensure sustainability would contribute to Goal 12.7 – sustainable public procurement – of the 2030

²⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/index.cfm?pg=policy&lib=food2030>.

²⁷ [OJ C 303, 19.8.2016, p. 64.](#)

²⁸ [OJ C 129, 11.4.2018, p. 18.](#)

Agenda. Local producers should be favoured in public procurement procedures in order to promote healthy diets and the development of the local economy.

- 7.2 Several initiatives already exist to promote sustainable food procurement, which shows the increasing interest and involvement by civil society and local authorities in this issue. For example, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is currently promoting an initiative to push for mandatory, progressive sustainable food procurement in all European schools and kindergartens, with 20% organic food by 2022 as an initial target.
- 7.3 The EESC acknowledges the current work being undertaken by the Commission's Joint Research Centre to revise the EU Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria for food and catering services. The Committee calls for explicit and more ambitious food sustainability criteria to be included in GPP and for regulatory obstacles to be removed, particularly as far as competition rules are concerned.

8. Competition rules

- 8.1 Competition law is sometimes presented as an obstacle to producing and distributing sustainable and healthy food. Consultations with the Commission's DG Competition should encourage both clarification and adaptation to existing rules so that European food supply chains achieve better conditions and accelerate their transition to sustainability.
- 8.2 Article 101 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)²⁹ prohibits agreements between two or more independent market operators which restrict competition. These cover in particular price fixing arrangements. Under Article 101(3) TFEU agreements are exempted from the prohibition in Article 101(1) if they generate objective economic benefits that outweigh the negative effects of a restriction of competition, e.g. by contributing to improving the production or distribution of goods, while allowing consumers a fair share of the resulting benefit³⁰.
- 8.3 Recognised Interbranch Organisations (IBO) can, by fulfilling certain conditions, rely on a derogation from Article 101(1) TFEU. They have the possibility of notifying their agreements to the Commission according to Article 210 of Regulation (EU) 1308/2013 (CMO Regulation) and if the Commission does not find them incompatible with Union rules, within two months after having received a complete notification, Article 101(1) TFEU does not apply. The agreements may not entail price or quota fixing or lead to market partitioning or create other competition distortions. Using the possibilities which the CMO Regulation offers might allow inter-branch organisations to find agreements increasing the sustainability standards.

²⁹ [OJ C 326, 26.10.2012; p. 1.](#)

³⁰ COM(2018) 706 final http://ec.europa.eu/competition/sectors/agriculture/report_on_competition_rules_application.pdf.

9. Information and awareness raising

- 9.1 The EESC reiterates its proposal to launch a Europe-wide information and awareness-raising campaign on "the value of food". This will be necessary to ensure a long-term change in consumers' behaviour³¹.
- 9.2 It is also necessary to invest more in food education in schools as well as vocational training.
- 9.3 The EESC calls again for EU-wide visual advertising campaigns for healthier food and diets³², taking inspiration from the positive social advertising campaigns on some TV channels targeted at children, e.g. encouraging more balanced diets. More effective controls should be introduced on the marketing of foods high in saturated fats, trans fats, free sugars and/or salt (HFSS) being targeted at children, not just during children's TV peak viewing times, but also through social media and other commercial routes which shape children's food tastes^{33, 34}.

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³¹ See footnote 12.

³² [OJ C 303, 19.8.2016, p.64.](#)

³³ WHO Region for Europe (2018). Policies to limit marketing of unhealthy foods to children. Copenhagen: WHO Europe
<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/nutrition/news/news/2018/10/policies-to-limit-marketing-of-unhealthy-foods-to-children-fall-short-of-protecting-their-health-and-rights>.

³⁴ Food Active & Children's Food Campaign (2018). *Junk Food Marketing to Children: a study of parents' perceptions*. London.
<http://www.foodactive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Junk-Food-Marketing-to-Children-a-study-of-parents-perceptions.pdf>.