



A Farm to Fork Strategy that works for people and planet

The Farm to Fork Strategy and the Action Plan for the development of EU organic production proposed by the European Commission and currently being debated, is at the heart of the European Green Deal, aiming to make food systems fair, healthy, and environmentally friendly. An ambitious strategy is of crucial importance in the midst of the current climate and biodiversity crises. The loss of biodiversity, pressure on soils, contamination by pesticides, dependence on non-renewable energy sources, overuse of synthetic fertilizers and antibiotics, compromised animal welfare, and opaque supply chains require urgent attention and proper implementation.

We need to keep pressure within the European Union to commit to an ambitious Farm to Fork Strategy that should be enshrined in an ambitious common agricultural policy. It is important that the EU delivers a coherent policy towards food sovereignty. Such a policy should deliver for all Europeans, both inside and outside of the EU, as we stand together in tackling the climate and biodiversity crises.

Therefore, the European Green Party demands that the Farm to Fork Strategy:

- **promotes and supports organic agricultural methods.** Organic agriculture, which hosts 30 percent more biodiversity than conventional agriculture, has a positive effect on our soil protection and soil health, minimised resource use and animal welfare. It also provides for better income for farmers. Furthermore, by using organic fertilizers, cover crops or other techniques that increase organic matter and reduce the energy used in food production (which still depend heavily on fossil fuels), it contributes to greater carbon sequestration in the soil and the mitigation of global heating. The organic agriculture sector must be developed to grow, aiming at the goal of at least 25 percent of total farmland being used for certified organic farming by 2030 across Europe. Programmes, initiatives, and more investments in education should support and empower farmers in this transition which is necessary for both the long-term ability to produce food and therefore continued nutrition and continuity in farmers' businesses. Research and development into organic agricultural practices should support the sector, in addition to the strategic steering of citizen demand. EU support should include agroecology and agroforestry.
- **increases attractiveness for young agricultural producers and female entrepreneurs,** becoming an easier entry point than the conventional sector, providing equal access and income.
- **reduces the use and risk of toxic chemical pesticides.** Pesticides in agriculture contribute to the pollution of soil, water and air and have negative health effects on farming communities, their neighbouring communities, consumers as well as on biodiversity. We welcome the Commission's proposed goal of reducing the use of toxic chemical pesticide by 50 percent and encourage the development of a coherent strategy for a reduction of pesticides by at least that number. We need to support the development of agricultural practices into cooperative modes with nature. Investments should also be made to support meaningful and easily accessible technical innovation. This does not include new and old genetically modified organisms.
- **reduces the use of artificial fertilizers.** The production of artificial fertilizers is heavily



dependent on fossil gas (2 kilograms of gas are needed to produce 1 kilogram of nitrogen). Artificial fertilizers also drive a dangerous and rapid rise in nitrous oxide emissions, which are harmful to our climate and biodiversity. In tandem, we need to incentivise multiannual crop rotation with legumes and manure management to close nutrient cycles again and work within the capacities of the land and the planetary boundaries.

- **reduces the use of antibiotics used in animal production.** All antibiotics available are currently overused in the intensive breeding of animals, leading to multi-resistant bacteria that cause about 33,000 deaths in the EU each year, including even antibiotic resistance in soil bacteria. A reduction in the use of antibiotics and the introduction of 'reserve antibiotics' for human health only must be achieved as quickly as possible.
- **rethinks food production at a local level keeping balance in mind.** We must reduce our dependence on imports and cut down the transport of food across the world and Europe. We need to rebuild regional food chains that are based on regional and seasonal availability. Organic farmers and consumers can mutually benefit from short supply chains. The reliance on global trading relations with long supply chains weakens our food security: no more oversized animal production for export only.
- **steers consumers to a healthier and plant-based diet.** We must reduce the amount of animal products in our diets and increase the plant-based ingredients. We need to re-balance animal and crop production in a way that fits the natural boundaries of our territories, and shift towards land-based animal farming systems that operate within the eco-system boundaries which substantially reduce feed imports. Governments should use financial incentives to promote plant-based diets and conduct awareness campaigns on the environmental and health benefits of plant-based diets. Overproduction of meat and dairy leads to enormous amounts of manure poured on the landscape and into the sea.
- **adopts origin and production labelling for all products to improve animal welfare.** There should be transparency for citizens on where their products come from, and how and under what conditions and standards they were produced. Animal welfare labelling should include information on the origin, birth, raising, transport, and slaughter of all animals.
- **supports a shift from fuel-intensive, non-selective and destructive fishing to low-impact fishing.** All fish populations commercially exploited need to be restored to sustainable levels where they can reproduce safely with a surplus that we can harvest. To achieve this, the importance of artisanal fisheries, community-supported fisheries and co-operatives must be highlighted and further improvements in their support should be granted. An ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management needs to be implemented to reduce the impact of fisheries on the marine environment. The environmentally damaging fuel subsidy should be reduced, for example by including large- and medium-scale fisheries in the emission trading system.
- **saves seeds, heterogenous material and genetic diversity in animals.** Increase in biodiversity in the agricultural landscape is an important factor for securing pollination, humus formation, natural pest control, and any other ecosystem services. Biodiversity also includes the brought varieties of seeds and animal types. Seedbanks, seed saving, and seed sharing are key to preserving the genetical diversity of our plants.



- **avoids adopting digitalisation as an end.** The right to repair must be the basis for all equipment and technology assessment methodologies that need to be developed. Big finance and tech companies want farmers to go online, primarily to gather large amounts of data for themselves. We insist that the ownership of this data needs to stay in the farmers' hands. While satellite data can help us to be more effective, good education for farmers and their experience remain key to sustainable food production. We also want to connect agriculture to smart grid systems.
- **empowers consumers and creates a just food environment and prices.** Food prices should reflect the real cost of food production, and externalities should be considered. Healthy and sustainable food must be the most affordable and the easiest to obtain for citizens, including in collective catering services or vending machines, being fundamental in public procurement or green public procurement (GPP) such as hospitals, nursing homes, sports performances centers, kindergarten, and/or in schools. This GPP offers great potential to promote organic farming and a change to the healthier and more sustainable agri-food model. As the Action Plan itself recommends, in the implementation of these contracting procedures, special attention should be paid to small agricultural holdings, micro-enterprises and SMEs.
- **reduces food waste along the whole food chain,** from primary producers, food processors, supermarkets, and consumers which currently reaches figures between 30 and 50%. This includes an obligation for food processors and supermarkets to give their unsold edible products to charities and associations in favor of those living in precarity, as well as forbidding them to put chemicals on unsold edible products with the sole purpose of avoiding so-called "dumpster diving".
- **re-establishes a balance among the different actors in the food chain.** Limiting the size of single cropped arable parcels eligible for subsidies shall definitely facilitate a more diverse landscape. We need to stop land grabbing by large investors and opaque hedge funds as well as abusive practices by large wholesalers that pay small producers below production costs. Furthermore, we need to stop the exploitation of migrant workers, the lack of safety for seasonal workers, and put an end to gender inequalities in the sector. The aim is to recover the dignity and value of agricultural work helping the generational changeover. These are important components of a truly sustainable EU food system in the long term, not just in the post-pandemic recovery period.
- **includes measures to maintain and increase agricultural soil carbon sinks.** 98% of our foods are directly or indirectly produced on soil. Soil has the ability to absorb large amounts of carbon in the form of natural humus, which is the basis for fertile and vital soil. Forestry and agriculture can play and must play a key role in fighting the climate crisis. Clear measurements and support mechanisms for long-term storage of CO₂ in soils need to be put in place.

The European Green Party also:

- demands that EU trade policy should be aligned with the goals of the Farm to Fork Strategy and the European Green Deal. A binding chapter on the targets in current and future trade agreements should be introduced. To be enforceable, environmental and social objectives set in EU free trade agreements should be clear, measurable, verifiable, and binding. There



shall be no food imports into the European Union that do not meet its environmental, labour and human rights standards. Audits of international Treaties on trade will be carried out to apply the appropriate reciprocity clauses for strict compliance with those standards.

- calls on the European Commission to strengthen the enforcement mechanism of the trade and sustainable development (TSD) chapters of the Farm to Fork Strategy and use it as a tool to foster a more diverse and sustainable food system.
- demands an export ban to third countries on pesticides that are prohibited in the EU.
- demands that funding within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) must not block or even counteract the goals of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies. Quite contrary, both strategies must be realized in the best possible way in the national implementation of the CAP.