

Legislative Initiative on a framework for a Union sustainable food system

DG SANTE

Wim Debeuckelaere

DG SANTE Unit D1: Farm to fork strategy

European Union



Goals of the F2F Strategy



GENERAL OBJECTIVE: Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly EU food system



BUILD A SUSTAINABLE FOOD VALUE CHAIN

- 1) Ensure sustainable food production
- 2) Stimulate sustainable food processing, wholesale, retail, hospitality and food services practices
- 3) Promote sustainable consumption & facilitate shift to healthy and sustainable diets
- 4) Reduce food loss and food waste
- 5) Ensure food security, combat food fraud



ENABLE SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION

- 1) Research & innovation
- 2) Advisory services, data and skills



PROMOTE A GLOBAL TRANSITION: coherent global EU food policy



Farm to Fork Strategy: 27 actions

New legislative proposals

Revision of current legislation

Non legislative such as Code of conduct, action plans



New framework legislation on a Union sustainable food system

- ✓ Currently no dedicated EU framework law on food sustainability similar to the EU framework law on food/feed safety, i.e. General Food Law (GFL)
- ✓ Different pieces of legislation address some components of food sustainability, e.g. Pesticides, GMOs, (food) waste, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), Plant Reproductive Material ... but none do so holistically
- ✓ Fitness Check of the GFL (2018) → regulatory framework found largely inadequate to address the new challenges of food sustainability



Objective of Union level intervention

Ensure that all foods placed on the EU market increasingly become sustainable through a socially responsible food value chain

- an enabling environment for future policy and legislation, ensuring coherence with all EU food related policies in terms of sustainability objectives, including biodiversity and climate objectives;
- a favourable and transparent food environment making it easier to choose healthy and sustainable diets;
- optimise the production, distribution and consumption of food, so as to increase resource efficiency and reduce food loss and waste.



Policy options to achieve the objectives

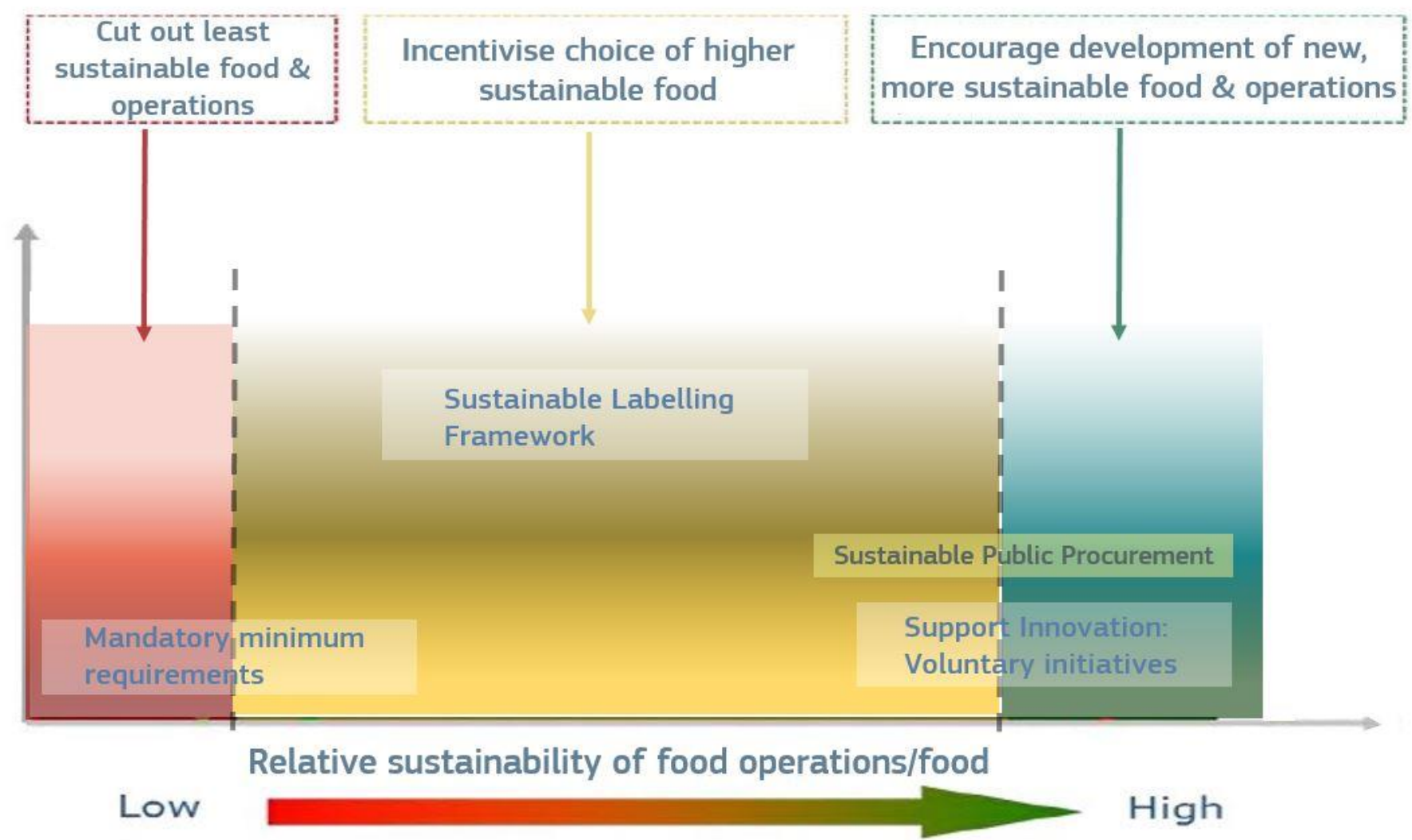
- ✓ **Option 1 – Baseline**
- ✓ **Option 2 – Voluntary approaches**
- ✓ **Option 3 – Reinforcing existing legislation**
- ✓ **Option 4 – New comprehensive framework legislation on the sustainability of the Union food system**



Indicative elements for the policy options

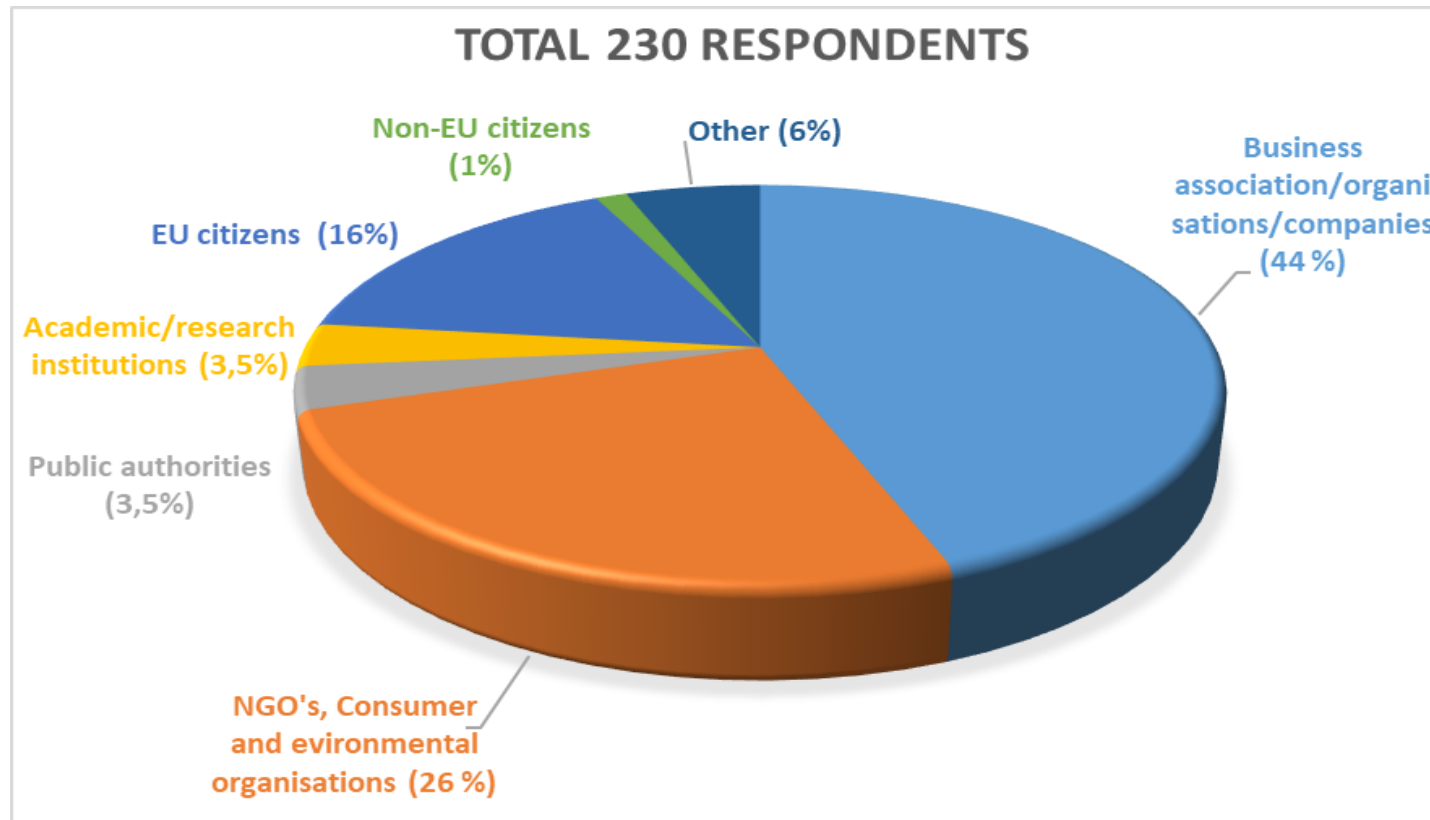
- ✓ **Definitions:** ‘*food system*’, ‘*sustainable food system*’, ‘*food environment*’, ‘*food system actors*’, ‘*sustainability analysis*’, ‘*healthy/sustainable diets*’, ‘*traceability for sustainability purposes*’
- ✓ **Minimum sustainability standards** for foods/food operations
- ✓ **Responsibilities** of food system’s actors
- ✓ Horizontal elements for **sustainability analysis for regulated products** in the food chain
- ✓ **Labelling** of sustainability
- ✓ Minimum mandatory sustainability criteria for **public procurement**
- ✓ **Governance** systems and transparency/consultations
- ✓ Actions to **mitigate negative impacts** of the transition on food system actors
- ✓ **Monitoring**





Inception Impact assessment

- Consultation period: 28 September – 26 October 2021



Inception Impact assessment

- **Member States** that responded to the consultation refer to the importance of an impact assessment before deciding on the best way to progress.
- **Business** operators are more inclined to voluntary measures and where needed, to reinforce existing legislation. They raise the issue of the impacts of the transition to sustainability on costs and prices, and the need for support measures
- **NGO's** in general support for the option to establish a comprehensive framework legislation on the sustainability of the Union Food System. The role of sustainable public procurement, the importance of labelling and the need for transition towards plant based diets was emphasized.



Legislative framework for sustainable food system

Next steps of the impact assessment:

- Analysis of the economic, environmental and social impacts of the different options
- Extensive consultation of stakeholders:
 - open public consultation : to be launched in the second quarter of 2022
 - targeted experts workshops, interviews, targeted questionnaires,
 - consultation of relevant Member States' expert groups of the Commission
 - consultation of **European Parliament**, EESC and the Committee of the Regions,
 - consultation of decentralised agencies,
 - annual Farm to Fork conference

⇒ **Adoption of the initiative in the second half of 2023**

Nutrients

- Farm to Fork strategy

The excess of nutrients (especially nitrogen and phosphorus) in the environment, stemming from excess use and the fact that not all nutrients used in agriculture are effectively absorbed by plants, is another major source of air, soil and water pollution and climate impacts. It has reduced biodiversity in rivers, lakes, wetlands and seas.

The Commission will act to **reduce nutrient losses by at least 50%**, while ensuring that there is no deterioration in soil fertility. This will reduce the use of fertilisers by at least 20% by 2030



Issues with nutrients

- N and P surplus into the environment are exceeding safe planetary boundaries, for N by a factor of 3.3 and for P by a factor of 2,
- According to the latest Nitrates Directive report, 36% of rivers, 31 % of lakes and 81% of marine waters have been reported as eutrophic
- The deposition of the atmospheric emissions lead to soil acidification and eutrophication, affecting biodiversity
- Atmospheric emission of nitrogen pollutants from agriculture and from fossil fuel combustion are estimated to be annually responsible for 374 000 premature EU deaths.
- Nitrous oxide (70% release by agriculture) is an important greenhouse gas, 300 times more powerful than CO₂ regarding Global Warming Potential.
- Industrial production of chemical fertilisers consumes 1 to 2 % of the total energy produced in the EU, leading to CO₂ emission and dependency on gas prices



Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan (INMAP)

The Commission will develop with Member States an **integrated nutrient management action plan** to **address nutrient pollution at source and increase the sustainability of the livestock sector.**

The INMAP will look at the entire N and P cycles, including all relevant sources of pollution (e.g., agriculture, industry, urban, waste, energy, transport). It will identify policy gaps of pollution through the nutrient cycles and develop a framework for actions that need to be taken at the relevant levels in order to achieve the objectives under the Green Deal.



Change in the diets also needed?

- Moving to a more plant-based diet with less red and processed meat and with more fruits and vegetables will reduce not only risks of life-threatening diseases, but also the environmental impact of the food system (Farm to Fork strategy).
- Agricultural activity (and thus nitrogen loads to the environment) may decrease strongly if the European population adopts a healthier 'low meat' diet leading to lower nitrogen losses related to animal husbandry. Change to a 'healthy diet' across the EU, which consists of 63% less meat and eggs, would reduce ammonia emissions from animal production by 48%. (European Nitrogen Assessment)



Thank you



© European Union 2020

Unless otherwise noted the reuse of this presentation is authorised under the [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license. For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the EU, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective right holders.

