European Commission

Scientific Opinion on

Towards Sustainable Food Consumption

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ISSUE

For Europe to achieve its health and sustainability goals, **the way we consume food must change.**

Our current food system has a major impact on the environment, and poor-quality diets are also linked **to risk of disease, obesity and overweight** — which affects **around 60% of adults and 30% of children in Europe**.

Our diets need to **include more plant-based ingredients, vegetables, fruits, wholegrains, and pulses**. They should be **limited in red meat, processed meat, salt, added sugar, and high-fat animal products**. **Fish and other seafood** should be sourced from sustainably managed stocks.

CHALLENGE

Until now, the main policy focus in the EU has been on providing consumers with more **information**. This is important, **but not enough**.

REQUIREMENTS

EU policymakers should consider ways to **unburden the consumer and make sustainable, healthy food an easy and affordable choice**. That will require a mix of incentives, information, and binding policies governing all aspects of food production and distribution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure coherence between new and existing EU interventions that influence the food system, **striving for a shared long-term vision**.

Price food and drink products **according to their environmental and health impacts** by reviewing taxes and subsidy schemes.

Define and communicate **EU-wide and national-scale time-bound goals** for healthy and sustainable consumption.

Increase consumer awareness with **adequate and trusted information** and improve food literacy education.

Include sustainability criteria in **national dietary guidelines**.

Improve the **availability, visibility and accessibility** of healthy and sustainable food.

Restrict EU imports of food commodities from places where food production causes major environmental damage.

IMPACT

In addition to the policy interventions included in the Farm to Fork Strategy, these recommendations provide new tools for overcoming the barriers that prevent consumers from adopting sustainable and healthy diets.

*This is a summary of a scientific opinion by the **GROUP OF CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS***

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