



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 3 November 2021
(OR. en)

13434/21

AGRI 514
ENV 808
PESTICIDE 49
PHYTOSAN 32
FORETS 66
SAN 645
VETER 98
PECHE 400
MARE 29
ECOFIN 1051
RECH 483
SUSTDEV 140
DEVGEN 191
FAO 37
WTO 251

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Farm to Fork 2021 conference: Building sustainable food systems together
- *Information from the Commission*

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Commission services on the above mentioned subject to be raised under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 15 November 2021.

Farm to Fork 2021 conference: Building sustainable food systems together**Information from the European Commission**

The Farm to Fork 2021 conference, held on 14 and 15 October 2021, was the second annual gathering of European stakeholders who are engaging to help shape the EU's path towards sustainable food systems. This year's conference focused on taking stock of the progress on the initiatives planned in the Farm to Fork Strategy's action plan and on the efforts to achieve a global transition to sustainable food systems.

The first day was dedicated to the international aspects of the Strategy. The European Commission's Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides and European Commissioner for Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski opened the conference. The day continued with panel discussions and a lively debate on the challenges and opportunities linked to the transition to sustainable food systems and the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit featuring high-level speakers such as Slovenia's Agricultural Minister Jože Podgoršek and Deputy Special Envoy for the UN 2021 Food Systems Summit Dr Martin Frick. Partnerships and green alliances on sustainable food systems were also discussed during a session plugged-in to the Italian Pavillion at the Dubai Expo.

The second day started with an inspirational talk by Dario Nardella – Mayor of Florence and President of Eurocities – with a focus on the role of cities in the transition towards sustainable food systems. The day followed with a series of five thematic sessions on topics, which are crucial for the successful implementation of the Strategy, namely “game changers” for sustainable food systems; carbon farming and soil health for sustainable food systems; reducing pesticides use and risk; sustainable business models and research and innovation as transition enablers.

The Farm to Fork 2021 conference attracted a large number of viewers (on the first day alone, more than 10,000 viewers) from 68 countries. It gathered important players and relevant stakeholders from every part of the food system, including public authorities, international organisations, primary producers, retailers and food business operators. Participants followed the debate with great interest, actively engaging in the discussions by sending questions on the conference platform and shared feedback on social media.

Participants to the conference were vocal on the need for urgent actions covering the whole food

system, with a high level of ambition, to ensure a successful transition towards sustainability. They acknowledged the role of the Farm to Fork Strategy in achieving this. They highlighted the importance of finding ways to protect climate and the environment, without forgetting the economic and social dimensions of sustainability and ensuring coherence across all policy areas.

Participants emphasized that the challenges of the transition towards sustainable food systems are present both at local and global level. Indeed, the Strategy requires the engagement of all actors – both private and public ones – at all governance levels (international, EU, national and regional level). On the one hand, international cooperation will play an essential role in this transition, also in terms of research and innovation. In addition, international trade is vital in absorbing shocks in the market and the COVID pandemic has shown the need for continued cooperation and for a diversified food chain in order to maintain trade, food security and food affordability. On the other hand, local authorities have emerged as actors of change, given their power of purchase, urban planning and power of partnership. As such, they can catalyse the design and implementation of innovative solutions for food systems. To be effective, these actions at local level will need to be combined with the ongoing global dialogue.

Finally, the conference discussed examples of business models, which have proven to be economically sustainable and environmentally ambitious. Participants stressed the need to share good practices, show-case best examples and facilitate knowledge and technology transfers. This would help in increasing the attractiveness of farming sectors and rural areas and it would represent a significant step forward towards a sustainable food system.