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(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

P9_TA(2021)0425

Farm to Fork Strategy

European Parliament resolution of 20 October 2021 on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system (2020/2260(INI))

(2022/C 184/01)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and in particular Articles 11, 13, 39, 168(1), 169(1), 191, 192(1) and 349 thereof,

— having regard to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of 2004,

— having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain [1],

— having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/6 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on veterinary medicinal products [2],

— having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market [3], Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides [4] and Regulation (EC) No 1185/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 concerning statistics on pesticides [5],

— having regard to Directive 2001/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 March 2001 on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms [6],

— having regard to Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy [7]; Directive 2006/118/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration [8] and Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources [9],

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[1] OJ L 231, 6.9.2019, p. 1.
[2] OJ L 4, 7.1.2019, p. 43.
[3] OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 1.
[4] OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 71.
[5] OJ L 324, 10.12.2009, p. 1.
[6] OJ L 106, 17.4.2001, p. 1.
[7] OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.
[8] OJ L 372, 27.12.2006, p. 19.
[9] OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1.

— having regard to Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes ([10]); Council Directive 1999/74/EC of 19 July 1999 laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens ([11]); Council Directive 2007/43/EC of 28 June 2007 laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production ([12]); Council Directive 2008/120/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs ([13]); Council Directive 2008/119/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of calves ([14]); Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations ([15]); Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing ([16]); Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health ('Animal Health Law') ([17]) and Directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes ([18]),

— having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 on a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system (COM(2020)0381),

— having regard to its resolution of 19 June 2020 on European protection of cross-border and seasonal workers in the context of the COVID-19 crisis ([19]),

— having regard to its resolution of 18 December 2019 on the EU Pollinators Initiative ([20]) and its resolution of 23 October 2019 on the draft Commission regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 546/2011 as regards the assessment of the impact of plant protection products on honeybees ([21]),

— having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency ([22]),

— having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2019 on a Europe that protects: Clean air for all ([23]),

— having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2018 on a European One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) ([24]),

— having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2018 on the implementation of the 7th Environment Action Programme ([25]),

— having regard to its resolution of 16 May 2017 on initiative on resource efficiency: reducing food waste, improving food safety ([26]),

— having regard to its resolution of 4 April 2017 on women and their roles in rural areas ([27]) and its resolution of 16 January 2018 on women, gender equality and climate justice ([28]),

— having regard to its resolution of 7 June 2016 on technological solutions for sustainable agriculture in the EU ([29]),

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([10]) OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23.
([11]) OJ L 203, 3.8.1999, p. 53.
([12]) OJ L 182, 12.7.2007, p. 19.
([13]) OJ L 47, 18.2.2009, p. 5.
([14]) OJ L 10, 15.1.2009, p. 7.
([15]) OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1.
([16]) OJ L 303, 18.11.2009, p. 1.
([17]) OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, p. 1.
([18]) OJ L 276, 20.10.2010, p. 33.
([19]) OJ C 362, 8.9.2021, p. 82.
([20]) OJ C 255, 29.6.2021, p. 29.
([21]) OJ C 202, 28.5.2021, p. 49.
([22]) OJ C 232, 16.6.2021, p. 28.
([23]) OJ C 23, 21.1.2021, p. 23.
([24]) OJ C 433, 23.12.2019, p. 153.
([25]) OJ C 390, 18.11.2019, p. 10.
([26]) OJ C 307, 30.8.2018, p. 25.
([27]) OJ C 298, 23.8.2018, p. 14.
([28]) OJ C 458, 19.12.2018, p. 34.
([29]) OJ C 86, 6.3.2018, p. 51.

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— having regard to its legislative resolution of 8 September 2015 on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the cloning of animals of the bovine, porcine, ovine, caprine and equine species kept and reproduced for farming purposes ([30]),

— having regard to its resolution of 11 February 2015 on country of origin labelling for meat in processed food ([31]) and its resolution of 12 May 2016 on mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for certain foods ([32]),

— having regard to European Court of Auditors (ECA) Special Reports 15/2020 of 9 July 2020 entitled 'Protection of wild pollinators in the EU — Commission initiatives have not borne fruit', 13/2020 of 5 June 2020 entitled 'Biodiversity in farmland: CAP contribution has not halted the decline', 05/2020 of 5 February 2020 entitled 'Sustainable use of plant protection products: limited progress in measuring and reducing risks', 02/2019 of 15 January 2019 entitled 'Chemical hazards in our food: EU food safety policy protects us but faces challenges', 31/2018 of 14 November 2018 entitled 'Animal welfare in the EU: closing the gap between ambitious goals and practical implementation', and 34/2016 of 17 January 2017 entitled 'Combating Food Waste: an opportunity for the EU to improve the resource-efficiency of the food supply chain' and 21/2019 of 19 November 2019 on Addressing antimicrobial resistance,

— having regard to the report of the European Environment Agency of 11 May 2020 entitled 'The European environment — state and outlook 2020: knowledge for transition to a sustainable Europe',

— having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights,

— having regard to the opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on the farm to fork strategy of December 2020 entitled 'From farm to fork — the local and regional dimension' (NAT-VII/005),

— having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Development, the Committee on International Trade, the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumers and the Committee on Fisheries,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (A9-0271/2021),

A. whereas the Commission communication on a farm to fork strategy sets out a holistic approach to the European food system, with agriculture as a provider of food as a central element, and recognises the interconnectedness of all actors throughout the supply chain and their shared responsibility in achieving the strategy's objectives, as well as the key role of farmers in delivering public goods, including in the fight against climate change; whereas, however, the strategy must go further in taking into account the role, rights and responsibilities of consumers and the long-term economic viability of farmers; whereas the strategy has major implications for non-food agricultural production and this must be fully taken into account;

B. whereas the recently published Joint Research Centre report entitled 'Modelling environmental and climate ambition in the agricultural sector with the CAPRI model: Exploring the potential effects of selected Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies targets in the framework of the 2030 Climate targets and the post 2020 Common Agricultural Policy' concludes, together with other recent studies, that the implementation of the strategy's targets would substantially impact agricultural production in the EU; whereas these studies underline the need for robust, scientific ex ante impact assessments, covering sustainability from the economic, social and environmental perspectives and the need to take into account cumulative effects, possible trade-offs, the availability of the means to achieve the targets and different farming models across the Member States as part of any legislative proposals under the Farm to Fork Strategy;

C. whereas Europe's food system should deliver high quality food and nutrition security in a way that contributes to social well-being and public health, maintains and restores ecosystem health, respects the planetary boundaries and ensures animal health and welfare; whereas currently, the whole food system is responsible for a range of impacts on human and animal health and welfare and on the environment, the climate and biodiversity, including deforestation

([30]) OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 278.
([31]) OJ C 310, 25.8.2016, p. 15.
([32]) OJ C 76, 28.2.2018, p. 49.

and ecosystem degradation outside the EU; whereas the way in which we produce and consume food, beverages and other agricultural products needs to adapt in order to ensure coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and EU policies and commitments, as well as in general to achieve a coherent balance between the three pillars of sustainability, including the environment, climate, biodiversity, public health, the economy and food affordability, animal welfare, and economic sustainability for farmers, fishermen and actors further in the food chain and rural and coastal areas, as well as social aspects such as working and employment conditions and health and safety standards; whereas other important factors such as research and innovation, trade policy and waste policy, need to be taken into consideration;

D. whereas it is necessary to ensure consistency and coherence between the measures envisaged by the farm to fork strategy and the common agriculture and fisheries policies, EU trade policy, the EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030, the EU forest strategy, the circular economy action plan, the bioeconomy action plan, the EU climate law, as well as other related EU policies and strategies; whereas it should be stressed that all imported foods should comply with the same sustainability and agri-food safety standards that are applicable in the EU;

E. whereas the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) estimates that 90 % of land is projected to be significantly altered by 2050 and 75 % of land has already been significantly altered; whereas 85 % of wetlands areas have already been lost ([33]); whereas biodiversity is crucial for food security, human well-being and development worldwide; whereas biodiversity loss puts European and global agricultural production, food systems and nutrition at risk; whereas it is estimated that the global social and economic costs related to land degradation mount to EUR 5,5-10,5 trillion per year ([34]);

F. whereas approximately 80 % of global deforestation is caused by the expansion of land used for agriculture ([35]); whereas the Union's demand for products such as palm oil, meat, soy, cocoa, maize, timber and rubber, including in the form of processed products or services, is a large driver of deforestation, forest and soil degradation, ecosystem destruction and associated human rights violations in non-EU countries and represents around 10 % of the global share of deforestation embodied in total final consumption ([36]); whereas unsustainable fishing has severe negative impacts on biodiversity;

G. whereas semi-natural habitats depending on agriculture, such as grasslands, are particularly threatened and their conservation status is significantly worse than for other habitat types that do not depend on agriculture; where 45 % of agriculture-dependent habitats are assessed as bad, in comparison with 31 % of other habitats;

H. whereas imprudent use of pesticides is a significant source of soil, water and air pollution and negatively affects human, animal and plant health; whereas it is therefore necessary to intensify efforts to significantly reduce the dependence on, risk from and use of harmful pesticides, and the use of fertilisers and antibiotics; whereas sustainable farming practices, such as the sound implementation of IPM, agroforestry, agroecology and organic farming and precision farming techniques, can help to provide solutions to reduce pesticide use at EU level and globally, and should

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([33]) IPBES, 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

([34]) https://www.oecd.org/environment/resources/biodiversity/Executive-Summary-and-Synthesis-Biodiversity-Finance-and-the-Economic-and-Business-Case-for-Action.pdf

([35]) FAO, *State of the World's Forests 2016. Forests and agriculture: land-use challenges and opportunities*, Rome, 2016. https://www.fao.org/3/i5588e/i5588e.pdf

([36]) European Commission, *The impact of EU consumption on deforestation: Comprehensive analysis of the impact of EU consumption on deforestation. Final report*, study funded by the European Commission and undertaken by VITO, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, HIVA-Onderzoeksinstituut voor Arbeid en Samenleving and International Union for the Conservation of Nature NL, 2013.

be encouraged; whereas scientific research ([37]) indicates that pesticide use can be reduced substantially without affecting profitability and productivity negatively, especially when accompanied by increased availability of sustainable alternatives;

I. whereas in 2018 EU member countries approved the export of more than 81 000 tonnes of pesticides containing substances banned in Europe ([38]); whereas these hazardous pesticides can pose even greater risks in their destination countries because conditions of use (e.g. protective gear, aerial spraying) are not always as strict as in the EU; whereas these banned pesticides can return to the EU market as residues in imported foods; whereas monitoring programmes have shown that residues of several pesticides that are banned from use in the EU were detected in food sold in the EU market, in 4,5 % of the cases even at levels above the maximum residue limit (MRL) which is set for these substances to ensure consumer safety ([39]);

J. whereas overweight and obesity are increasing at a rapid rate in the EU ([40]), with one in two adults overweight or obese ([41]); whereas the causes for overweight and obesity are multifaceted, but poor diet and nutrition are among the key factors that lead to a high prevalence of overweight and obesity;

K. whereas it is estimated that in the EU in 2017, over 950 000 deaths (one out of five) and the loss of over 16 million lost healthy life years, mainly through cardiovascular diseases and cancers, were attributable to unhealthy diets ([42]); whereas exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals via food and food packaging is also an increased threat to public health ([43]);

L. whereas around half of the zoonotic diseases that have emerged in humans since 1940 have resulted from changes in land use ([44]); whereas animal health is an essential element in any sustainable food system and impacts on animal health have direct effects on the sustainability of the food system;

M. whereas it is estimated that 88 million tonnes of food waste are generated in the EU each year, with associated costs estimated at EUR 143 billion ([45]); whereas food waste has a huge environmental impact, accounting for about 6 % of total EU greenhouse gas emissions ([46]); whereas the top contributors to food waste in the EU are households (53 %) and processing (19 %) ([47]); whereas 10 % of the food waste in the EU is linked to date marking and consumer misunderstandings on how to read and use the date marking system ([48]);

N. whereas the volume of antibiotic sales to European livestock farms fell by 18,5 % between 2011 and 2016 ([49]), resulting in a reduction of antibiotic burden in agriculture by 35 % in the period 2011-2018, while in a majority of

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([37]) Lechenet, M., Dessaint, F., Py, G. et al. *Reducing pesticide use while preserving crop productivity and profitability on arable farms*, Nature Plants 3, 17008, 2017.
([38]) https://www.publiceye.ch/en/topics/pesticides/banned-in-europe
([39]) European Food Safety Authority, *The 2019 European Union report on pesticide residues in food*, EFSA Journal, 2019. https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2021.6491
([40]) Eurostat, *Overweight and obesity — BMI statistics*.
([41]) Eurostat, *The European Health Interview Survey, Wave 2*, 2013.
([42]) https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/health-promotion-knowledge-gateway/eu-burden-non-communicable-diseases-key-risk-factors_en
([43]) Muncke, J. et al., 'Impacts of food contact chemicals on human health: a consensus statement' *Environmental Health, 19*.
([44]) Keesing, F. et al., 'Impacts of biodiversity on the emergence and transmission of infectious diseases', *Nature 468*, pp. 647-652, 2010.
([45]) EU-Fusions, *Estimates of European food waste levels*, final report, 2016.
([46]) FAO, *Food wastage footprint & climate change*.
([47]) EU-Fusions, *Estimates of European food waste levels*, final report, 2016.
([48]) ICF, *Market study on date marking and other information provided on food labels and food waste prevention*, final report for the European Commission, 2018.
([49]) EMA: Sales of veterinary antimicrobial agents in 30 European countries. Trends from 2010 to 2016. Eighth ESVAC report (https://www.ema.europa.eu/en).

Member States antimicrobial consumption in food producing animals is lower or much lower than in humans ([50]); whereas, however, there are big differences between the Member States, and consumption of some antimicrobials is still too high ([51]); whereas antimicrobial resistance is a major threat to human health; whereas reducing and minimising the use of antibiotics in animal husbandry will help slow down its emergence and spread;

O. whereas already in 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1,5 °C, which stated that limiting global warming to 1,5 °C would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society; whereas climate change and biodiversity loss constitute increasing threats to food security and livelihoods with recurring droughts, floods, forest fires, and new pests; whereas food systems are responsible for 29 % of worldwide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and have a profound effect on the climate, biodiversity, water, air, soil and carbon sinks; whereas the EU agricultural sector produces around 10 % of the EU's total GHG emissions with considerable variations between Member States, with agriculture accounting for between 3 % and 33 % of national GHG emissions ([52]);

P. whereas greenhouse gas emissions from European agriculture have been reduced by around 20 % since 1990; whereas GHG emissions reductions in agriculture have slowed down considerably since 2012, and have even increased in some years ([53]); whereas agriculture can actively contribute to carbon sequestration by increasing natural carbon sinks through the uptake of nature- and ecosystem-based solutions, such as wide crop rotations, intercropping, permaculture, agro-forestry, silviculture, agroecology and ecosystem restoration, and especially the restoration and maintenance of peatland areas as a way of increasing natural carbon sinks and sequestration;

Q. whereas agriculture is the third biggest source of primary PM10 emissions in the EU, as stressed by the European Environment Agency; whereas ammonia (NH_3) emissions from agriculture contribute to episodes of high PM concentrations experienced across Europe each spring, as well as to both short- and long-term negative health impacts;

R. whereas the EU consumes seven times more nitrogen and three times more phosphorus than can be considered sustainable and equitable within the planetary boundaries ([54]);

S. whereas increased lifecycle information alongside better tracking and monitoring of supply chain information is needed to quantify progress towards reducing the environmental impact of the European food system;

T. whereas the European model of a multifunctional agri-food sector, consisting of various farming models and driven by family farms, is a key component of the EU's economy and society and must ensure competitive, high quality and diversified food production, food security, local supply chains, good agricultural practices, protection of land and water resources, high environmental and animal welfare standards and vibrant rural areas throughout the EU; whereas a properly supported agriculture policy will promote transitions to more localised supply chains and more sustainable agricultural practices, achieving higher environmental and animal welfare standards;

U. whereas it is important to highlight the key role played by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the EU's agri-food sector at all stages of the supply chain, from processing to retail, in achieving the strategy's objectives;

([50]) ECDC/EFSA/EMA second joint report on the integrated analysis of the consumption of antimicrobial agents and occurrence of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria from humans and food-producing animals, 2017.

([51]) ECA, *Addressing antimicrobial resistance: progress in the animal sector, but this health threat remains a challenge for the EU*, 2019.

([52]) EEA, Data viewer on greenhouse gas emissions and removals, sent by countries to UNFCCC and the EU Greenhouse Gas Monitoring Mechanism, see also IEEP 2019, Net-Zero Agriculture in 2050: How to get there (https://ieep.eu/publications/net-zero-agriculture-in-2050-how-to-get-there).

([53]) EEA greenhouse gas — data viewer — European Environment Agency (europa.eu)

([54]) European Environment Agency report No 1/2020.

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V. whereas the agriculture sector must continue to produce safe, nutritious food, while maintaining and managing the land more sustainably, all of which counteracts the depopulation of rural areas; whereas European farmers meet the highest global standards and deliver high quality food, not only for European citizens but also world-wide; whereas the agriculture sector is of immense strategic value yet, in just over a decade, several million farms have ceased to exist, representing over a third of all farms in Europe, the vast majority being small family businesses;

W. whereas the transition of European agriculture towards more sustainable practices and circularity will require substantial investments, with adequate access to finance as a precondition; whereas the EIB is committed to increasing the share of its financing of investments in climate action and environmental sustainability to reach 50 % of its operations in 2025 and from then on; whereas this could be utilised to roll out technologies that contribute to sustainable practices and to strengthening the link of agriculture to the circular economy;

X. whereas good soil health improves the earth's capacity for food production, water filtering and carbon absorption, thus contributing not only to stabilising the climate but also to ensuring food security, restoring biodiversity, protecting our farmland and building a healthier food system; whereas regenerative agriculture as an approach to food production and land management could mitigate those challenges, helping the transition towards a highly resilient agricultural system based on the appropriate management of lands and soils;

Y. whereas it is important that consumers are fully informed, enabled and empowered to make informed food choices; whereas this requires a healthy and sound food environment which ensures transparency and ensures that the healthy and sustainable choice is also an easy and affordable choice for all, and fosters and encourages consumption patterns that support human health while safeguarding the sustainable use of natural and human resources and a high level of animal welfare; whereas information provision, education and awareness campaigns alone are insufficient to achieve the required change towards more sustainable and healthy consumer choices as these can be influenced by aspects such as norms and conventions, price, convenience, habit and the ways in which food choice is presented; whereas, however, informed citizens and education may play an important role in achieving Europe's climate, resource-efficiency, and biodiversity objectives from the demand side; whereas mandatory labelling of nutrient content and origin, as well as comprehensible information on animal welfare and sustainability, in principle on all food products, and the public provision of information on the true cost of production can help to guide the consumer towards healthy, sustainable and safe nutrition; whereas consumer information should also be adapted to the digital age, while leaving no-one behind;

Z. whereas the Mediterranean diet, recognised by UNESCO in 2010 as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity, is known as a healthy, balanced diet, with a high nutritional, social and cultural value, based on respect for the territory and biodiversity, ensuring the conservation and development of traditional activities and crafts related to fishing, sustainable hunting and agriculture and playing a protective role in the primary and secondary prevention of the main chronic degenerative diseases;

AA. whereas water and agriculture are inextricably linked and sustainable water management in the agriculture sector is vital to allow the production of high-quality and adequate food and to ensure the conservation of water resources;

AB. whereas the globalisation of the food market has increased, bringing with it a related increase in the importance of free trade agreements between the EU and non-EU countries;

AC. whereas the results obtained from the implementation of the environmental standards currently in force need to be taken into account;

AD. whereas the serious situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on all players in the European agri-food chain, from primary production to food service industries;

AE. whereas the European food system has played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating its resilience with farmers and their cooperatives or producers' organisations, workers employed along the food value chain, processors, distributors and retailers working together under difficult conditions, including lockdowns, and facing sanitary risks, to ensure that European consumers continue to have access to safe, affordable and high quality products without impediment, while respecting the integrity of the internal market; whereas the EU's internal market and agricultural system largely and rapidly overcame the interruptions to supply amid the COVID-19 crisis, which, nevertheless, revealed certain vulnerabilities in intricate food supply chains, demonstrating the need to ensure long-term food security, resilience and short supply chains; whereas, in this context, it is essential to emphasise the value of food security and security of supply chains for all EU citizens and the importance of having all necessary tools available to farmers so that they may produce diverse food sustainably;

AF. whereas although farmers' rights were enshrined in the FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in 2004, intellectual property rules have often been at odds with them, putting local, traditional and indigenous seed systems at risk;

AG. whereas consumers are increasingly concerned about animal welfare and animal health; whereas a high level of animal welfare is important to sustainable development and has the potential to strengthen the economic and environmental sustainability of European farmers, creating a new market for farmers to sell products based on higher animal welfare standards; whereas the Commission has announced an evaluation and revision of existing animal welfare legislation, including on animal transport and slaughter of animals; whereas horizontal rules to protect animals in farming, combined with science-based, species-specific animal welfare requirements for all farmed species would significantly benefit animal welfare; whereas transition periods and support for farmers are essential with respect to legislative changes to allow more sustainable farming and to achieve animal welfare improvements;

AH. whereas geographical indications result from immemorial EU heritage and are the fruit of the adaptation of mankind to his environment and an expression of EU identity;

AI. whereas it is highly important to tackle food fraud and unfair practices by recognising and investigating fraudulent activities;

1. Welcomes the ambitions and goals of the farm to fork strategy as an important step in ensuring a sustainable, fair, healthy animal friendly, more regional, diversified and resilient food system, which is central to achieving the goals set out in the European Green Deal and in the SDGs; emphasises the inextricable links between healthy people, healthy societies, healthy animals, and a healthy planet; stresses that this strategy is essential to bring the food system, including animal and crop production, within planetary boundaries, while underlining the importance of achieving decent working, employment conditions and fair opportunities across the whole food value chain and the need to achieve a suitable and balanced policy approach; encourages the Commission to translate the strategy into concrete legislative and non-legislative action as soon as possible, accompanied by the proper financial support mechanisms for the transition;

Need for action

2. Recalls that impact assessments are an integral part of the EU rulemaking process; welcomes the Commission's announcement that it intends to perform detailed impact assessments, including public consultations, in line with the Better Regulation guidelines for any legislative initiative under the farm to fork strategy, including those regarding effective quantitative targets ([55]); stresses that these ex-ante scientific impact assessments should include robust environmental assessments, should cover the three dimensions of sustainability (environmental, economic and social, including health) in a holistic and systemic approach and consider cumulative effects, and should include the cost of non-action in terms of immediate and long-term impact on human health, environment, biodiversity, and general sustainability, as well as taking into account generational renewal, possible trade-offs between policy goals, the availability of means to achieve the targets and the different farming models across the EU Member States; notes the importance of describing the methods of

([55]) Answers by Ms Kyriakides to written question E-000689/2021.

calculation, baselines and reference periods of each individual target and highlights the need for cooperation, consultation and collaboration with Member States; acknowledges that the first mid-term review of the farm to fork strategy is planned for mid-2023; stresses the need for this mid-term evaluation to reflect in depth on the cumulative impact of all actions in a holistic and systemic manner, covering all dimensions of sustainability, be they environmental, economic or social, including health;

3. Welcomes the announcement of an evidence-based proposal for a legislative framework for sustainable food systems based on transparent data and taking into account the latest scientific knowledge; invites the Commission to use this proposal to set out a future-oriented holistic, balanced, integrated and environmentally, socially and economically sustainable common food policy, in which all actors make their contribution, aimed at reducing the environmental and climate footprint of the EU food system as well as reducing its negative impacts on biodiversity and human and animal health and welfare in order to make Europe the first climate-neutral and close-to-zero-pollution continent by 2050 at the latest, and strengthening its resilience to ensure medium- and long-term food security in the face of climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss; stresses the need to ensure economic and social sustainability throughout the food chain as good socioeconomic prospects and the competitiveness of the various sectors concerned will help fulfil the goals of the strategy; encourages the EU in leading a global transition towards sustainability from farm to fork, based on the principle of a multifunctional agricultural sector that is sustainable from an environmental, social (including health) and economic viewpoint, on the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) principles of agroecology and the UN right to food, while ensuring enhanced policy consistency and coherence to enable all actors in the European food system to carry out long-term planning based on realistic and transparent SMART objectives; stresses the need for urgent and bold policy and legislative change in the face of overwhelming scientific evidence of the need to improve the sustainability of the current food system and the higher costs incurred resulting from a failure to act and highlights the importance of innovation and sustainable practices; suggests that the respective baselines in each Member State and progress achieved be taken into account, as well as their specific (regional) conditions, while promoting the exchange of know-how and best practices between Member States; stresses the need to include the entire food and beverage chains including production, processing, marketing, storage, transport distribution, hospitality, retail, disposal and recycling of secondary materials; calls for this legislative proposal to pay full regard to the welfare of farm animals, given that this is integral to food sustainability;

4. Supports the development of food policy strategic plans ([56]), which serve to facilitate, stimulate and upscale new and existing national, regional, and local food policies, also giving consideration to the complex issue of food poverty in Europe; emphasises the importance of the underpinning of these plans by independent, impartial science and research and the involvement of stakeholders from a broad variety of perspectives to ensure a legitimate and inclusive process; stresses that a new cross-cutting approach to governance is needed to ensure coherence between EU food and farming policies and those that influence them such as trade, energy, competition, and climate policies in order to increase synergies and avoid and manage trade-offs; calls therefore for a structured dialogue between Parliament, Member States and all food system actors, including citizens, to seize all the opportunities offered by this strategy and to discuss gaps, opportunities and challenges in the development and implementation of a holistic common EU food policy; calls on the Commission to promote a societal dialogue on a common understanding of sustainability and its various components, on the path towards its proposal for a legislative framework for a sustainable food system, which ultimately will have to be based on one coherent approach to all aspects of sustainability;

5. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to develop a contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security in order to coordinate a common European response to crises affecting food systems; insists that a prevention approach is needed to avoid panic movements and overreactions by people, firms or Member States; considers that it will be an adequate response to the growing expectations about food security that are to be addressed at European level; urges the Commission to consider strategic food stock issues in the way that it does for strategic petroleum stocks across the Union;

([56]) Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) and Ecologic Institute, Think2030 policy paper, *European food and agriculture in a new paradigm: Can global challenges like climate change be addressed through a farm to fork approach?*, 2021. https://think2030.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/European-food-and-agriculture-in-a-new-paradigm-WEB.pdf

6. Emphasises the need for actions in order to promote sustainable farming, reduce the use of and risks associated with pesticides, protect and restore soil ecosystems, and increase landscape features on farmland that support the recovery of species and habitats protected under the nature directives, including pollinators and their habitats; recalls that agricultural productivity and resilience is dependent on the sustainable management of natural resources to guarantee the long-term sustainability of our food systems;

7. Emphasises that European consumers, farmers, and businesses have an interest in a successful transition towards a more sustainable food system; highlights that improved stakeholder information and agricultural policies can support this transition; stresses that the ecological transition in food production and the resulting contribution to climate change mitigation could be a win-win situation for primary producers, the environment, the economy and society as a whole, providing sustainable, safe, sufficient, affordable, healthy and nutritious food, and can be achieved with a balanced approach that synergises sustainable practices and economic opportunities; reiterates that to ensure a proportionate contribution from the sector, agriculture should be a target- and incentive-driven part of the EU's ambition to move towards net-zero emissions by mid-century at the latest, while also addressing emissions that are linked to European food production and consumption but are generated outside Europe; stresses that participation of and support for farmers in climate action is crucial in order to achieve global mitigation targets and the SDGs, without compromising global food and nutrition security, and while leaving no-one behind;

8. Emphasises the need to ensure coherence between the farm to fork strategy and the objectives of the European Green Deal, including on climate, biodiversity, zero pollution and health; underlines that maintaining and enhancing biodiversity is crucial for safeguarding EU and global food security, and that coherence must be guaranteed with the EU biodiversity strategy, including the contribution of Natura 2000 and Marine Protected Areas to supporting healthy food production, as well as consistency regarding the common agricultural policy (CAP), common fisheries policy (CFP), EU trade policies and the EU bioeconomy strategy; highlights that the SDGs offer a relevant framework to integrate in a coherent and systemic manner environmental, social and economic objectives, and allow the design of crosscutting policies that better reflect the interlinkage between each policy objective; recalls that the social dimension must be fully integrated in all future initiatives of the farm to fork strategy along with the economic and environmental dimensions to achieve much-needed policy coherence for sustainable development; insists that the improvement of working conditions in line with the eight fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO), collective bargaining and social protection should be included as sustainability criteria;

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9. Welcomes the decision to revise the directive on the sustainable use of pesticides and the reduction targets for pesticides, nutrient losses from both organic and mineral sources and sales of antibiotics and is convinced that these targets are well within reach but that their achievability depends on the availability of safer, effective and efficient alternatives; highlights the importance of further holistic education and communication, including through advisory services to achieve this transformation; emphasises the need for these reduction targets to be of a binding nature and the importance of pursuing them through holistic, preventive and circular approaches such as organic and agroecological practices, innovative sustainable agricultural practices, implementing precision agriculture and integrated crop and pest management practices where appropriate, and the use of sustainable alternatives, aided by a life-cycle perspective; stresses the need to establish fast-track evaluation, authorisation and registration processes for non-chemical low-risk pesticides, while ensuring that their assessment is subject to the same level of rigour as for other substances; insists that each Member State, according to its climatic and agricultural production characteristics, should establish robust, effective and time-bound quantitative reduction targets in their reviews of the CAP strategic plans and other relevant policy instruments, with the ambition of reducing to zero the agricultural emissions to soil, groundwater, surface water and air in line with the Green Deal's zero pollution ambition, accompanied by well-defined crop-specific support measures ensuring accountability and enforceability at all levels, and using independent and complete data to help reach these targets as well as support and training for implementation at farm level and further research and development for innovative and sustainable farming solutions; calls on the Commission to support Member States in improving their systems of supervision, monitoring and proper

enforcement of the rules on the use of pesticides and to enhance communication with and raise awareness among their final users; reiterates its call for the translation into legislation of the above targets and objectives, including through the revision of the Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides and calls on the Commission to clarify how it will deal with individual Member States' contributions to Union-wide binding targets while ensuring a level playing field and to clarify the baselines for these targets, taking into account the different starting points, efforts undertaken and characteristics of each Member State, and identifying clearly the many non-synthetic and other alternatives already known today, their availability, and the impact on the viability of the sector, on farmers' incomes and on food security, and invites the Commission to draft a plan for minimising synthetic inputs in agriculture; calls on the Commission to support Member States in giving particular attention to the specific conditions that apply to the use of pesticides in groundwater protection zones through better communication, monitoring and inspections;

10. Stresses the key role of integrated pest management (IPM) in reducing pesticide dependency and urges the Member States to ensure it is applied and that its implementation is assessed and monitored systematically; calls on the Member States to convert the general IPM principles into practical and measurable criteria and to verify these criteria at farm level, and calls on the Commission to ensure that Member States effectively implement these IPM principles through their CAP strategic plans; urges them to include well-defined and tailored measures and practices for every crop, such as flower strips as a baseline to reverse the use of pesticides and the resistance of pests; calls on retailers in the food chain to proactively cooperate with farmers on implementing and scaling up all available IPM practices and methods for every crop in their supply chain and to report on their own contribution to the goals and reduction targets as part of their environmental, social and governance reporting;

11. Considers that, although the EU has one of the most stringent systems in the world, both the regulation on pesticide approval as such and its implementation need to be improved; recalls its resolution on the Union's authorisation procedure for pesticides ([57]) and expects the Commission and Member States to address all its calls without delays, underlines that the regulatory framework should encourage innovation and research in order to develop better and safer plant protection products and alternatives; points out that, in addition to revising the directive on the sustainable use of pesticides to reduce the use of and risks associated with pesticides, the Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) should improve the environmental risk assessment for plant protection products, inter alia by taking into account the effects of pesticides on soil water quality and drinking water sources, including cumulative and synergistic effects; urges the Commission to adequately assess progress made towards policy objectives and to improve the harmonised risk indicators laid down in Commission Directive (EU) 2019/782 ([58]) to also include toxicity, persistence and bioaccumulation and to take into account agricultural areas or volumes of active substances and the way plant protection products are used in order to effectively reduce the use of synthetic pesticides and heavy metals in conventional and organic farming, and to adopt clear scientifically based criteria for what constitutes unacceptable effects on the environment, taking into account real-life exposure (acute and chronic) to multiple plant protection products, including cumulative and synergistic effects; insists that prophylactic uses of pesticides, including seed treatment with systemic pesticides, should be restricted as much as possible where it poses a danger to human health or the environment; calls on the Commission to present its legislative proposal on pesticides data at the latest by mid-2022;

12. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 are properly applied and thereby to guarantee, inter alia, a minimum standard of notification on emergency authorisations of pesticides, including the requirement for Member States to provide complete and detailed explanations and to make those notifications public; welcomes the role of EFSA in examining these derogations;

([57]) European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2019 on the Union's authorisation procedure for pesticides (OJ C 411, 27.11.2020, p. 48).

([58]) Commission Directive (EU) 2019/782 of 15 May 2019 amending Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the establishment of harmonised risk indicators (OJ L 127, 16.5.2019, p. 4).

13. Calls for the full consideration of the cumulative and synergistic effects of pesticides in the setting of MRLs as well as for the criteria of animal health and environmental risks to be better taken into account when assessing applications for new MRLs in accordance with article 14 of the MRL regulation; calls for data collected through post-market biomonitoring to be used to verify the accuracy of predicted pesticide exposure levels for the setting of MRLs as well as for acceptable exposure levels for farm workers, residents, bystanders and consumers, as well as farm animals; emphasises the need to continue to pay great attention to the protection of the health and safety of users in future EU legislative initiatives linked to the use of pesticides; recalls the importance of ensuring that all users receive protective equipment as well as comprehensive information and training about the use and the associated dangers of pesticides; stresses the need to ensure that each agricultural worker is able to access official documentation reporting the type of pesticide used during their work activity; underlines that in order to achieve these targets it is crucial to further revise Directive 2004/37/EC on carcinogens or mutagens at work ([59]), Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides and Directive 98/24/EC on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work ([60]);

14. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to act to reduce nutrient losses by at least 50 %, while ensuring that there is no deterioration in soil fertility; is convinced that this would be best achieved through the closure of nutrient cycles, nutrient recovery and reuse and encouraging and rewarding farmers to plant leguminous crops; insists that legally binding legislative initiatives as well as measures aimed at enabling farmers to improve nutrient management are needed to that end; emphasises the importance of pursuing these targets through holistic and circular approaches to nutrients management, such as agroecological practices and smart farming, which can deliver co-benefits for soil quality and biodiversity and help farmers end their dependency on mineral fertilisers and reduce phosphorus and nitrogen flows; points out that the reduction of inefficient fertilisation and the phasing-out of excessive fertilisation should take into account the climate and environmental impacts of different fertilisers, including the presence of heavy metals; urges Member States to put forward in their strategic plans measures to promote the efficient management and circularity of nutrients, as well to strongly support education for farm advisors and farmers and to use the reform of the CAP as an opportunity to curb emissions of ammonia (NH_3) from the agricultural sector; stresses that improved management of nutrients presents both economic and environmental benefits; highlights the importance of the application of modern and innovative technologies and solutions such as precision farming, targeted fertilisation that is adapted to plant requirements, and plant nutrition advisory services and management support, as well as the need to install broadband in rural areas for that purpose; believes that support should be given to sustainable farm business models to aid nutrient recovery, recycling and reuse from contaminant-free waste streams;

15. Stresses that in order to achieve the targets for the reduction of the use and associated risks of chemical pesticides and the reduction of nutrient losses, safer alternatives must become available to ensure the availability of a functioning plant protection toolbox; highlights, however, the importance of education in ensuring the proper application of preventive measures; calls for an increase in research and development of alternative plant protection products, fertilisers, more resistant varieties that require less input to secure stable yields and digital tools, as well as incentives for application methods and technologies such as precision agriculture; invites the Commission to speed up and simplify the adoption of new plant health solutions, including plant protection products with a lower impact, such as low-risk substances or biosolutions, and to introduce a definition and a separate category for natural substances in horizontal legislation, as well as to engage in initiatives aimed at finding alternative assessment paths for these low-risk, basic and naturally occurring substances; further stresses that reduced use of pesticides must be matched by increased availability on the market of sustainable alternatives with equivalent effectiveness in plant health protection to chemical pesticides in order to avoid proliferation of plant pests; calls, furthermore, for measures to facilitate the incorporation of new approach methodologies (NAMs) in chemical food and feed risk assessments, reducing the need for tests using animals and ultimately contributing to the complete phasing-out of animal testing;

([59]) Directive 2004/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work (OJ L 158, 30.4.2004, p. 50).

([60]) Council Directive 98/24/EC of 7 April 1998 on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work (OJ L 131, 5.5.1998, p. 11).

16. Reiterates the crucial importance of protecting bees and other pollinators against the harmful effects of pesticides and diseases; recalls its objection of 23 October 2019 ([61]) and reiterates its call on the Commission to ensure that the revision of the bee guidance and the future implementing acts do not lead to a level of protection for bees below that laid down in the EFSA bee guidance from 2013, and are based on the latest scientific and technical knowledge, and thus proposes modifying the uniform principles, not only with regard to acute toxicity for honeybees but at least also with regard to chronic toxicity and larval toxicity for honeybees and acute toxicity for bumblebees; notes that EFSA is designing its own modelling system, ApisRAM, which appears to be more in line with the biology of honeybees than BeeHAVE and less open to conflicts of interests; urges the Commission to urgently reassess those substances that have the same mode of action as neonicotinoids;

17. Reiterates its call for a pollinator indicator ([62]) and a restoration target; calls on the Commission and the Member States to secure a new EU-wide pollinator monitoring framework with robust schemes deployed at Member State level, interim milestones, clear time-bound objectives, indicators and targets; stresses that the monitoring activities must be integrated in the new CAP monitoring and evaluation framework;

18. Calls on the Member States to carry out systematic, standardised field monitoring of biodiversity on farmland, including pollinators, involving professionals, farmers and citizen scientists and to use the data to help evaluate EU policies and their implementation;

19. Recalls the importance of a One Health approach; stresses that antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a growing transnational and cross-border health threat where coordinated EU action can make a difference; acknowledges the substantial efforts made to reduce the use of antimicrobials in animals contributing to the global effort to reduce antibiotic resistance; highlights, however, the need to further reduce the use of antibiotics, including in food production; welcomes the Commission's plan to reduce overall sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 50 % by 2030, underlines that progress already made at Member State level must be taken into account; points to the fact that intermediate targets and clear actions and measures, including the application of sanctions as provided for in EU legislation, are necessary to achieve this goal; recalls, furthermore, that to achieve this goal, improved animal husbandry practices are key as better animal welfare improves animal health, thus reducing the need for medication; believes that the proper implementation of the Veterinary Medicines Regulation ([63]) and Regulation (EU) 2019/4 on medicated feed ([64]) will further reduce the use of antibiotics and calls on the Commission to scrutinise the implementation and enforcement by Member States; underlines that antimicrobials, other than human reserve antibiotics, must remain available for essential use, in order to ensure that animal health and welfare is protected at all times;

20. Welcomes the emphasis placed on the need to continue the reduction of overall EU sales of antibiotics for farmed animals and in aquaculture, and stresses that EU initiatives in this area have been and will be adopted under the One Health approach that recognises the interdependence between the health and well-being of humans, animals and the environment; calls on the Commission and the Member States to focus on additional measures to enable and incentivise sustainable innovative solutions, particularly in prevention tools and alternative treatments; calls for efforts to ensure equivalent standards for products of animal origin imported into the EU to those established under the Veterinary Medicines Regulation; notes the need, as part of the revision of the Feed Additives Regulation ([65]), to address the use of substances currently not classified as antibiotics but having antibiotic properties in line with Article 4(14) of the Veterinary Medicines Regulation that may be used in animal agriculture and aquaculture for preventative use; draws attention to the fact that workers in the food chain are at risk of contracting AMR pathogens, for example when using the 'top dressing' technique when they administer veterinary medicinal products; stresses the need to take appropriate measures to reduce this serious occupational health risk;

([61]) OJ C 202, 28.5.2021, p. 49.

([62]) As per the commitment made in the EU pollinators initiative (COM(2018)0395), action 5C https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/pollinators/documents /EU_pollinators_initiative.pdf

([63]) Regulation (EU) 2019/6 (OJ L 4, 7.1.2019, p. 43).

([64]) Regulation (EU) 2019/4 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the manufacture, placing on the market and use of medicated feed, amending Regulation (EC) No 183/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Directive 90/167/EEC (OJ L 4, 7.1.2019, p. 1).

([65]) Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2003 on additives for use in animal nutrition (OJ L 268, 18.10.2003, p. 29).

21. Recalls that agriculture and forestry play an important role in addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation; emphasises the importance of recognising and monitoring the impact of agriculture and animal production on GHG emissions and land use; stresses the need to reduce these emissions in order to contribute to the EU's commitment to the Paris Agreement; stresses the need and potential to maintain, restore and enhance natural carbon sinks and reduce agricultural emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, in particular in the feed and livestock sectors as well as the organic and mineral fertiliser sector without further compromising animal welfare and while ensuring no deterioration in soil fertility; acknowledges that healthy animals require less natural resources and that sustainable livestock management practices can lead to reductions of GHG emissions; calls for appropriate and tailored regulatory measures and targets for emissions from agriculture and related land use as part of the 'fit for 55' package to ensure ambitious reductions of all GHG emissions in these sectors, inter alia by addressing livestock densities in the EU and embedded land use emissions from imported feed and food; calls for a coherent policy mix to enable a transition towards more sustainable practices such as grass-based extensive livestock production as part of a mixed farming system which respects the carrying capacity of the local environment and supports biodiversity;

22. Takes note of promising developments in the area of feed additives that help to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and water and air pollutants from animal husbandry; welcomes, in this regard, the Commission's plans to facilitate the placing on the market of sustainable and innovative feed additives and calls for relevant research programmes to support their further development;

23. Points out that extensive permanent grassland-based, silvo-pastoral or extensive organic animal husbandry, often involving pastures of high environmental value, are key features of the European food system and that its quality schemes and are a defining element of many traditional rural communities which allows them to make productive use of land that otherwise would have been abandoned; underlines that this form of land-based and low density agricultural production can have multiple positive effects for the environment and for the conservation of cultural landscapes, contributes to protecting rural areas from depopulation and abandonment, helps in mitigating against climate change, and contributes to a circular economy and biodiversity restoration and must therefore be supported and encouraged; emphasises that support should be given to farms making the transition to more sustainable forms of production and moving away from farming practices such as high density stocking and crop monocultures; calls on the Commission to ensure that its policies and funding programmes support the traditional European cultural landscape, such as sloping and terraced vineyards and extensive permanent grassland-based production supporting biodiversity; notes that Member States' reports under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive ([66]) highlight that many semi-natural grasslands are in unfavourable, inadequate or bad conservation status and that pollinators which depend on them are threatened, putting pollination services in jeopardy;

24. Calls for stronger harmonisation of the legal framework for animal husbandry in the EU, using common, science-based animal welfare indicators and welcomes the Commission's commitment to evaluate and revise, where necessary, the existing body of animal welfare legislation; underlines the importance of taking into account the latest advances in animal welfare science and responding to public, political and market demands for higher animal welfare standards; calls on the Commission to put forward a legislative proposal with the objective of phasing out the use of cages in EU animal farming, assessing the possibility of a phase-out by 2027; emphasises the need for this phase-out to be based on a science-based impact assessment and to ensure an appropriate transition period; calls on the Commission to adopt a species-by-species approach that takes into account and assesses the characteristics of each different animal, which should have housing systems suited to their specific needs, while safeguarding animal and human health, ensuring the protection of workers and ensuring sufficient support and a transition period with the aim of maintaining the competitiveness of farmers and breeders;

25. Recalls the importance of a high-quality animal welfare system, including in transport and slaughter; emphasises that a high level of animal welfare is integral to sustainable development and is essential for superior food quality that facilitates healthier nutrition, meeting the requirements of consumers and contributing to biodiversity conservation; emphasises that a coherent and harmonised approach is needed, considering human health, the environment, biodiversity, animal health and welfare and climate in a holistic and joint way when referring to a sustainable food system;

([66]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7).

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26. Considers it important to start infringement procedures against systemically non-compliant Member States in the implementation and enforcement of existing animal welfare legislation and, where necessary, to close legislative gaps and set higher standards in legislation for animal welfare; stresses that it is essential for the EU to take into account the compliance of non-EU countries with animal welfare standards, particularly where imported products are concerned;

27. Emphasises that animals should experience as little distress as possible when transported and slaughtered and therefore welcomes the intention to revise the existing animal welfare legislation regarding animal transport and the slaughter of animals; calls on the Commission and the Member States to facilitate local slaughter solutions, including mobile slaughter, with smaller units and better staff training on avoiding animal suffering; calls on the Commission to promote alternatives to live animal transport wherever possible;

28. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement and enforce relevant EU legislation, in particular Council Directive (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations ([67]); regrets the current non-compliance with the ruling of the European Court of Justice that animal welfare protection does not stop at the EU's external borders and that animal transporters departing from the European Union must therefore also comply with European animal welfare rules when leaving the EU, while pointing out the difficulties in its application due to the lack of jurisdiction in non-EU territory;

29. Recalls that 70 % of emerging diseases and pandemics have an animal origin according to IPBES; expresses its deep concern about the increasingly frequent emergence of zoonotic diseases that are transferred from animals to humans (anthropozoonoses), such as Q fever, avian influenza and the new strain of influenza A (H1N1), which is exacerbated by climate change, environmental degradation, land use changes, deforestation, the destruction of and pressure on biodiversity and natural habitats, illegal trafficking of wild animals, and our current food production and consumption systems; underlines that animal production systems which involve the confinement of animals of a similar genotype in close proximity to one another can increase the susceptibility of animals to infectious disease, creating conditions for the emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases ([68]); calls on the Commission and Member States to accelerate the move away from these agricultural practices and from the unsustainable use of wildlife, including illegal trafficking, and towards better management of veterinary prevention and the promotion of high standards of animal health and animal welfare, including with the EU's trading partners, in order to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases and invasive species and to promote the EU's high biosecurity standards as the best practice at global level; acknowledges that disease prevention and preparedness, i.e. availability of diagnosis, prevention and treatment methods, is key to containing emerging threats to human and animal health;

30. Welcomes the Commission's recognition of organic farming as one of the strong components on the EU's path towards more sustainable food systems and the ambition to increase the EU's agricultural land under organic farming by 2030; underlines that a majority of Member States have already adopted targets to increase the agricultural area under organic production; looks forward to the analysis of the organic sector in the overall impact assessment of the strategy and stresses the importance of the European action plan for organic farming in increasing its uptake; underlines that the development and growth of the organic sector must be accompanied by market-driven and supply chain developments and measures stimulating further demand for organic food and ensuring consumer trust, together with public procurement, fiscal incentives and a broad variety of promotion measures, research, innovation, training and scientific knowledge transfer, all of which would contribute to the stability of the market for organic products and fair remuneration for farmers;

([67]) OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1.

([68]) IPBES Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics; EPRS, *The link between biodiversity loss and the increasing spread of zoonotic diseases;* HSI report, *The connection between animal agriculture, viral zoonoses, and global pandemics*; Dhingra SM, Artois J, Dellicour S, et al. 2018. 'Geographical and historical patterns in the emergences of novel highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5 and H7 viruses in poultry', *Frontiers in Veterinary Science 5:84*. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5996087/; Jones BA, Grace D, Kock R, et al. 2013. 'Zoonosis emergence linked to agricultural intensification and environmental change', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 110(21):8399-404*. www.pnas.org/content/110/21/8399.

31. Welcomes the notion of enhancing, incentivising and rewarding natural carbon sequestration in soils, which has already been achieved on some farms, providing additional rewards to farmers for developing and maintaining good agricultural practices for carbon sequestration, which should lead to the enhancement of carbon sinks across the EU; underlines that agriculture and food policies should facilitate the transition to sustainable farming by rewarding farmers for the environmental and climate benefits they deliver; stresses the importance of nature-based solutions such as wide crop rotations, intercropping, permaculture, agroecology and ecosystem restoration, and especially the restoration and maintenance of peatland areas for increasing natural carbon sinks and sequestration; stresses, however, that agriculture and farming practices with significant negative impacts on climate, biodiversity, soil, water, air, and or animal welfare should not receive climate funding, nor be incentivised or rewarded; calls on the Commission to explore a framework for robust carbon quantification and certification that should avoid the possibility of misrepresentation known as greenwashing; calls on the Commission to present several options for carbon farming and underlines that carbon markets are part of a much broader set of regulatory and non-regulatory measures to reduce GHG emissions, and stresses that carbon farming schemes should be part of an incentivising toolbox to deliver on climate objectives; calls for the proposals to be in line with animal welfare and environmental objectives and the 'do no harm' principle of the Green Deal; is in favour of stimulating the uptake of regenerative agriculture practices, improving access to technologies, data, training and information, and complementing farmers' incomes through carbon sequestration and payments for ecosystem services, thereby increasing their resilience;

32. Underlines the importance of ensuring the security and diversity of seed and plant propagating material to provide stable yields and plant varieties adapted to the pressures of climate change, including traditional and locally-adapted varieties, and varieties suitable for organic production and low input farming systems, while ensuring transparency and freedom of choice for farmers and access to genetic resources and innovative plant breeding techniques in order to contribute to healthy seeds and protect plants against harmful pests and diseases and to help farmers tackle the growing risks caused by climate change, ensuring an incentive for open innovation through plant variation;

33. Raises awareness of the potential negative effects of concentration and monopolisation in the seed sector and calls on the Commission to take measures to counter them if necessary; emphasises, in this context, the importance of open innovation through plant breeders' rights and notes with concern the detrimental effect of wide-scoped patents in the seed sector; believes that non-commercial production and use of traditional and locally-adapted varieties of seed by private citizens and smallholders should not be subject to disproportionate EU and national regulation; stresses the importance of preserving a strong single market for the EU seed sector;

34. Calls for strengthened coordination at EU level to stimulate the preservation and sustainable use of genetic diversity and for the establishment of a common EU platform for information exchange on preserved genetic resources;

35. Welcomes the announcement of the revision of marketing rules for traditional and locally-adapted crop varieties in order to contribute to their conservation and sustainable use; stresses the need for measures to facilitate the registration of seed varieties, including for organic farming, and to ensure easier market access for traditional and locally adapted varieties;

36. Takes note of the study on the status of new genomic techniques under Union law and in light of the Court of Justice ruling in Case C-528/16 (SWD(2021)0092), and of the Commission's announcement that it plans to initiate a regulatory policy action including an impact assessment and public consultation on plants derived from certain new genomic techniques, aimed at maintaining a high level of protection of human and animal health and the environment, while reaping potential benefits from science and innovation, in particular to contribute to sustainability and to the sustainability goals of European Green Deal and the farm to fork strategy; highlights the precautionary principle and the need to ensure transparency and freedom of choice to farmers, processors and consumers, and stresses that this policy action should include risk assessments and a comprehensive overview and assessment of options for traceability and labelling with a view to achieving proper regulatory oversight and providing consumers with relevant information, including for products from third countries in order to ensure a level playing field;

37. Reiterates its call on the Commission to present a new legislative proposal on the issue of cloning and 'clone food' as a matter of urgency; insists that this proposal should include a ban on cloning, a ban on the placing on the market and importing of cloned animals, their reproductive material and their descendants and a ban on the placing on the market and importing of food from cloned animals and their descendants; deeply regrets the lack of action to regulate clones and their descendants and reiterates that natural or artificial breeding or breeding procedures which cause, or are likely to cause, suffering or injury to any of the animals concerned must not be practised and that it is necessary to ensure that food from cloned animals and their descendants does not enter the food chain;

38. Highlights the important role of European farmers in realising the transition to a sustainable food system and stresses that sufficient financial resources must be made available to achieve this; emphasises the need for all of the various sustainable production methods, including organic, integrated production and agro-ecology, to be utilised, promoted and supported, as they can deliver environmental sustainability, increase the proportion of total cultivated land area under environmentally-friendly systems and offer strong guarantees in terms of quality, safety, quantity and price;

39. Insists that the national strategic plans, to be drawn up by the Member States and approved by the Commission under the new CAP, ensure adequate financial support for all EU farmers and foresters to strengthen their competitiveness and income, so that they and their families may achieve a decent standard of living, combat rural depopulation and maintain vibrant rural communities;

40. Welcomes the fact that the new CAP will provide incentives to promote innovative, digital, ecological, regional and sustainable business models for agriculture and artisanal food production, notably through fostering short supply chains such as products with protected geographical indications or designations of origin, respecting single market rules and through approaches including innovative local logistics such as 'green hubs', and the integration of artisanal food production into other services in rural areas such as tourism or gastronomy; stresses that regional marketing of agricultural products and partnerships plays an important role in the promotion of sustainable supply chains; acknowledges that when local production is not available, imports are needed;

41. Calls on the Commission to only approve CAP national strategic plans which clearly demonstrate a commitment to sustainability from the economic, environmental and social perspectives and are in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal, the relevant EU-wide targets and the Paris Agreement;

42. Calls for these plans to take due account of the specific challenges facing the EU's outermost regions in terms of biodiversity, agricultural production and the supply of foodstuffs and raw materials; stresses that adequate financial support under the CAP is crucial to allow EU agriculture to contribute to the transition towards climate neutrality and to enhance the conservation of biodiversity; points out that reinforced support measures, including training programmes and advisory services, are essential to enable farmers to play their role in meeting the targets of the strategy; calls for 'enhanced eco schemes' to be implemented in national strategic plans, in line with Parliament's position, which would avoid an unnecessary duplication of conditionality controls;

43. Underlines that healthy soils are a precondition for ensuring security of food, feed and fibre production; calls on the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to prevent its further degradation at the EU level; underlines that agricultural soil is a basic natural resource, the good condition of which is key to fulfilling the farm to fork strategy; stresses, in this context, the importance of the new soil strategy and calls on the Commission to take appropriate action based on it to bring about the necessary solutions; acknowledges the essentiality of soil organic matter and biodiversity and the services and goods which it provides; regrets that soils are under increasing pressure; believes that robust EU-wide monitoring of soil organisms and trends in their range and volume must be put in place and maintained across all Member States;

44. Recognises the importance of high-diversity landscape features, which are essential in order to maintain basic ecosystem services such as pollination or natural pest control, for agricultural production and which increase its productivity in the long term; welcomes the EU target of dedicating at least 10 % of agricultural area to this end; recalls the findings of the impact assessment of 20 October 2011 entitled 'common agricultural policy towards 2020' (SEC(2011)1153) stating that no significant impacts on production or income would be generated at farm level;

45. Stresses that agricultural land is limited and hence must be used efficiently; highlights the need to include innovative farming models with low land-use footprints such as horticulture and insect farming into the strategy;

46. Points out that 'protected cultivation' of fruit and vegetables in modern greenhouses is a highly sustainable food production system that is increasingly being used and offers a number of advantages; calls on the Commission to recognise the ongoing transformation in the European horticultural sector, which enables more sustainable food production and contributes to food security, food safety, increased resource efficiency and reduced food waste throughout the food production chain; highlights that besides a low land-use footprint, modern horticulture contributes to different goals of the strategy such as a low need for input, efficient use of resources and production of fruits and vegetables close to the point of consumption, thereby promoting shorter supply chains and security of supply; calls on the Commission to consider allocating research and innovation investment funds for protected growing systems in modern greenhouses that use fewer resources to grow the same yields;

47. Calls on the Commission to encourage Member State governments to expand or create systems which allow members of the public to rent and utilise derelict and unused government-owned land for food production;

48. Stresses the importance of using agro-forestry and forest curtains to reduce pressure on natural forests, help tackle climate change and increase productivity, as well as alternatives to the use of fertilisers in agricultural production; encourages the Commission and the Member States to develop tools in their future national strategic plans to encourage reforestation and afforestation and to promote sustainable agroforestry, including silvo-pasture where possible; calls on the Commission to promote EU-wide specialised training programmes in order to make farmers aware of the benefits of integrating woody vegetation in agriculture; highlights that restoration and rejuvenation of existing agroforestry systems, as well as the establishment of new ones, would contribute to the biodiversity strategy's target of three billion trees, serving both biodiversity and climate objectives as well the objective of diversification and circularity;

49. Stresses the importance of robust and strict criteria for biomass-based renewable energy production and calls on the Commission to bring forward science-based criteria as part of the review of the Renewable Energy Directive;

50. Recalls that the European agri-food and fisheries system should deliver a sufficient and varied supply of safe, nutritious, healthy, affordable and sustainably-produced food to citizens at all times and underlines that increasing the economic, environmental and social sustainability of food production will ultimately increase its medium and long-term resilience as well as create new economic opportunities and contribute to the use of raw materials of European origin; highlights that more locally-produced food can contribute to all these objectives, including food security; recalls that in the EU, 33 million people ([69]) cannot afford a quality meal every second day; stresses that food affordability and availability requires appropriate policy responses and must remain a key consideration when assessing increases in production costs including those resulting from changing farming practices; highlights the need to support the development of sustainable food SMEs in rural areas;

51. Urges the Commission to integrate food aid issues in the farm to fork strategy since many Europeans suffer from lack of food, especially single parent families and students, and the social and economic consequences of the pandemic will increase that figure; recognises the unique role of the food aid associations across the European Union that need to be better supported because of the growing number of people who need help; considers that in order to increase the resilience of our food system we need to increase connections between food policies and agricultural policies at every level from the local to the European level;

52. Welcomes the fact that the European Green Deal seeks to ensure decent living conditions for people working in farming and fishing and for their families; recalls that the social dimension must be fully integrated in all future initiatives of the strategy along with the economic and environmental dimensions; underlines that the COVID-19 pandemic has shed a new light on challenging working and living conditions and, therefore, emphasises the importance of protecting the individual and collective labour and social rights of farm labourers and workers, including seasonal and mobile workers employed along the EU food supply chain; calls for proper working and living conditions for all workers in the sector, collective bargaining and social protection;

([69]) Eurostat, 2018.

53. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to consider agricultural land, agricultural know-how, the food supply chain and its workers as strategic assets for the safety and well-being of all Europeans and to ensure that working and social protection conditions throughout the agri-food supply chain, including proper control of unfair practices in this chain, meet national and EU standards for all workers;

54. Underlines the importance of seasonal workers for a well-functioning supply chain and calls for robust measures to ensure proper working and living conditions for these workers; encourages retailers to assume responsibility and adhere to social, environmental and economic sustainability criteria in their purchasing practices;

55. Welcomes the intention of the Commission to propose an emergency plan to deal with food crises by taking stock of the experience acquired during the COVID-19 pandemic and by including harmonised measures to guarantee the proper functioning of the internal market; considers that the promotion of territorial food projects which stimulate the development of short food circuits in the Member States can help in facing such crises;

56. Shares the view that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of securing a robust, sustainable and resilient food system that functions in all circumstances, and one which is capable of ensuring access to a sufficient supply of affordable and local food for European consumers; stresses the need, in this respect, to preserve the smooth functioning of the single market, and in particular the movement of foodstuffs, including during health crises; stresses, too, that the pandemic should also be seen as an opportunity to build a sustainable and resilient food system and not as an excuse to scale down ambitions, given that sustainability and health are interconnected issues;

57. Stresses the need, due in part to the disruptions to global production chains and increased price volatility caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, to develop open strategic autonomy for the EU with the aim of ensuring access to key markets and reducing dependency on imports of critical goods such as plant-based protein sources; reiterates that agri-food systems must be acknowledged as a crucial aspect of the EU's open strategic autonomy in order to ensure sufficient availability of safe and good-quality food and to maintain functioning and resilient food supply chains and trade flows during future crises, in line with Article 2(1) of the Paris Agreement;

58. Stresses that the agri food sector supports not only farmers but also upstream and downstream businesses, secures and creates jobs and is the backbone of the entire food industry; highlights in this respect that the preservation of the cultural landscape is the driving force for active rural areas; highlights the importance of traditional craftsmanship in regional and local food production and the rich cultural diversity that results from it; recalls that maintaining and passing on knowledge of craftsmanship in food production should also be supported as a horizontal part of the farm to fork strategy, for example by better including it in participatory research and development programmes;

59. Expresses disappointment at the lack of prominence and ambition for the contribution and potential of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the farm to fork strategy; urges the Commission to pay due attention to the specific nature of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in any future legislative proposals, strategies or guidelines; emphasises the need for an ecosystem-based approach to bring fish populations to sustainable levels and to restore marine and coastal ecosystems, which should also focus on the benefits and the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors;

60. Underlines that robust and reliable legal frameworks for the fisheries and aquaculture sector, consistently applying the precautionary principle and aligned with the updated strategic guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture, should provide the basis for sustainably harnessing potential in the sector as well as for better protection and animal health measures, including reduced use of veterinary drugs, as well as antibiotics, with subsequent increases in fish populations and more clarity regarding the use of space and licenses for all anthropogenic uses, including in aquaculture, allowing for greater predictability for investments without undermining environmental legislation; highlights the importance of a transparent and participative mechanism, in line with Directive 2014/89/EU on maritime spatial planning, for allocating space to all stakeholders in an equitable manner; stresses the need to fully respect marine protected areas;

61. Stresses that good traceability mechanisms, responding to consumers demands by providing information on where, when, how and what fish has been caught or farmed, including origin and method of production labelling and high sustainability and animal welfare standards for all products sold on EU markets, including those imported from outside the EU, are essential to ensure food safety, transparency for consumers, the sector and the different administrations, the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fisheries and to achieve the targets of the Green Deal and the SDGs; stresses, to this end, the importance of technologies that are cyber secure in developing accurate digital decentralised traceability systems; calls for a coordinated approach to ensure consistency between different initiatives on this issue, involving all actors in the value chain; calls for control measures to make sure all imported fisheries products that enter the EU market comply with internationally agreed social standards, such as those laid down in ILO Convention No. 188 on Work in Fishing and implemented in the EU through Council Directive (EU) 2017/159 ([70]), in order to prevent fisheries products being placed on the EU market caught by vessels that do not respect minimum social standards;

62. Recalls the aims of the CFP to ensure the sustainable exploitation of living marine biological resources, restoring and maintaining fish populations above biomass levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield, as well as to ensure profitability of fishing activities and to contribute to the supply of highly nutritional food to the EU market and reduce the EU market's dependence on food imports and stresses the need to improve the monitoring, control and enforcement of the CFP, including the full implementation of the landing obligation and the introduction of electronic monitoring of certain vessels;

63. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to build on existing sustainable practices and to facilitate, encourage and provide adequate support for the transition to low-impact fisheries and aquaculture and the sustainable development of the sectors, including small-scale coastal fisheries, such as through the application of selective fishing gear, environmentally friendly aquaculture, including organic aquaculture, and energy efficiency solutions and by increasing the percentage of the national quotas allocated to small-scale coastal fisheries; stresses the need to support fishers and actors in the fish product supply chain, including in the outermost regions, in the transition to more digital practices by investing heavily in training and providing financing for digitisation and conversion to 'green' practices and tools; underlines the importance of the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) in this regard in promoting the development of a sustainable blue economy and modernising the fisheries sector in line with the objectives of the CFP;

64. Demands that the Council of the European Union proactively make public all documents related to the adoption of total allowable catch (TAC) regulations, in line with the European Ombudsman's recommendation in case 640/2019/FP;

65. Stresses the need to monitor and promote the responsible exploitation of fisheries resources while applying zero tolerance in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by making full use of the instruments at the EU's disposal in accordance with the IUU Regulation ([71]), including using 'red cards' if a country fails to comply with EU requirements and by strengthening the policy of sustainable fisheries agreements with non-EU countries; highlights that these agreements must become truly sustainable and be in line with the best scientific advice available and must neither threaten the small-scale fisheries sector in non-EU countries nor undermine local food security;

66. Urges the Commission and Member States to deliver on the legally binding measures it committed to in the framework of the marine Natura 2000 sites and to adopt a holistic approach to the marine environment and tackle the root causes of water pollution, including marine litter and urban and industrial waste water, putting an end to practices that are harmful to the marine environment and human health and incentivising fishers to sustainably collect maritime waste while avoiding additional fuel consumption and emissions as well as bycatch of marine animals and fish and negative ecosystem impact, and to implement measures to improve water quality and disease control and limit stocking density in aquaculture production in the interests of human health and animal welfare;

([70]) Council Directive (EU) 2017/159 of 19 December 2016 implementing the Agreement concerning the implementation of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 of the International Labour Organisation, concluded on 21 May 2012 between the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the European Union (Cogeca), the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and the Association of National Organisations of Fishing Enterprises in the European Union (Europêche) (OJ L 25, 31.1.2017, p. 12).

([71]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 1).

67. Highlights the value of the work of women and men in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and the important role that women play in processing, promoting and marketing the fish that is caught; recalls the potential of sustainable aquaculture and fisheries to create green jobs and considers that the ecological transition of food systems, including fisheries, should take place in a way that ensures a fair income and a strong position across the value chain, and underlines in this respect the importance of the active participation of producer organisations in the fisheries and aquaculture sector;

68. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support and encourage the development of more sustainable fishing techniques and gear and higher welfare methods of capture, landing, transport and slaughter of fish and marine invertebrates, on the basis of the best available science, as well as improvements to animal welfare standards for farmed fish in order to reduce stress and improve fish quality; stresses that the Union should support and encourage investments in such gear, methods and improvements;

69. Highlights the contribution of pond fishing with its traditional management practices to the achievement of the targets of the farm to fork strategy and the interlinked biodiversity strategy; underlines that cultivated pond areas provide habitats for rare species, make positive contributions to the climate and to water reserves, serve as nutrient sinks, retain sediment and contribute to the sustainable production of regional food; calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider pond fishing in relevant measures and programmes;

70. Recalls that primary producers are in a significantly more disadvantaged position in terms of income compared both to other operators along the food supply chain and to the rest of the economy; stresses that it is essential to strengthen the position of primary producers in the food supply chain, especially with regard to small and medium-sized producers, in order to enable them to capture a fair share of the added value of sustainably produced food, including through the encouragement of cooperation and collective actions, making use of the possibilities provided for in the common market organisations for agricultural, fishery and aquaculture products, including the adaptation of competition rules;

71. Stresses that securing a stable and fair income for primary producers is crucial in enabling the transition of the food system towards greater sustainability and more circular agriculture, in combating unfair trade practices and in managing risks and crises; calls for primary producers throughout the EU to be supported in making this transition including through the uptake of new technologies and in boosting efficiency in terms of farming systems, waste management and input supply and packaging; underlines that producer prices should cover the costs of production and reflect social, economic and environmental sustainability and thus be in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal;

72. Takes the view that supply chain agreements should be encouraged to ensure a fair distribution of value to farmers and to guarantee greater transparency and traceability in the supply chain as a whole, fostering the growth of youth employment in the sector;

73. Welcomes the goal of shortening supply chains; highlights however, the reality of island Member States and island territories, disconnected from mainland Europe, faced with issues of isolation and dependence on imports for necessary products, such as grains for animal feed, which needs to be respected when implementing measures to reduce the dependence on long-haul transport and other measures which will shorten supply chains; highlights that without long-haul transport of certain foodstuffs the food security of these disconnected areas would be jeopardised;

74. Notes that citizens' expectations are evolving and driving significant change in the food market, with a growing demand for locally produced food as a result; emphasises the importance of locally produced food, the opportunities it offers to our farmers and the significant positive contributions it can deliver to our environment; therefore, encourages the Commission and the Member States to actively promote the development of local food strategies, together with short supply chain initiatives;

75. Recognises the importance of fresh organic food consumed locally, which is beneficial for the health of consumers and the environment; highlights the great potential in promoting cooperation between local primary producers and tourism service providers, which could enhance the consumption of fresh locally grown food; calls for support measures to promote such cooperation;

76. Calls for the promotion of measures allowing for raw materials to be processed as close as possible to their place of origin, which significantly reduces the carbon footprint and ensures better traceability of foodstuffs;

77. Highlights that while new sustainable business models are enormous opportunities for SMEs, several initiatives envisaged under the strategy could lead to the creation of substantial red tape; welcomes the Commission's commitment to adhere to the better regulation tools, to assess the impacts on SMEs as well as to take action to promote sustainable and circular business models specifically for SMEs, to utilise the InvestEU Fund to facilitate access to finance for SMEs and to offer tailored solutions to help SMEs to develop new skills and business models; urges the Commission and the Member States to reduce the administrative burden on small and medium-sized participants in the food chain through measures such as streamlining registration processes and making permit and licence and approvals more efficient and also by ensuring that relevant regulatory bodies are appropriately staffed, in order for small food producers to get their products to market as quickly and easily as possible;

78. Considers the allocated budget to achieve the ambitions of the EU Green Deal and the Just Transition Mechanism to be insufficient to deal in a socially sustainable manner with the consequences of the expected transformation; calls for the Just Transition Mechanism also to cover agricultural regions that may be adversely affected and underlines the need to ensure the proper involvement of social partners in the definition and implementation of future initiatives of the strategy; recalls that the transition to this system will require significant investments and it cannot be accomplished without the complicity and support of European farmers;

79. Urges the Commission to thoroughly enforce Directive (EU) 2019/633 on unfair trading practices, and to carefully monitor its transposition into national law; calls on the Commission to reinforce efforts to strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain and bring forward concrete proposals in line with the strategy;

80. Reiterates that dual quality in food products is unacceptable and needs to be fully counteracted in order to avoid discriminating against and misleading European consumers; considers, therefore, that the farm to fork strategy must include provisions to prevent double standards in food quality, and to this end calls on the Commission to monitor the situation on the market closely and propose targeted legislation where necessary; stresses, furthermore, the role of consumer organisations in identifying these misleading practices;

81. Reminds the Commission of the need to follow up on the EU code of conduct on responsible business and marketing practices by producing a monitoring framework for the food and retail sectors and providing legislative measures if progress in integrating economic, environmental and social sustainability and animal welfare considerations into corporate strategies is insufficient, and in so doing promoting and rewarding the efforts of sustainable agricultural producers while increasing the availability and affordability of healthy, sustainable food options and reducing the overall environmental footprint of the food system and the societal costs of unhealthy diets;

82. Insists on the need for the EU code of conduct for food and retail businesses to focus on commitments which are relevant to shaping healthy and sustainable food environments, and which are specific, measurable and time-bound, that can tackle dual standards in agri-food practices and are centred on key operations of the entities involved;

83. Stresses the importance of halting and addressing consolidation and concentration in the grocery retail sector in order to ensure fair prices for farmers and decent labour conditions for workers; insists on the need for agricultural production costs to be taken into account by upstream actors and for fair prices to apply at all links in the supply chain; recalls the importance of making farmers more resilient in the market by getting more value out of the food chain, which is achieved by encouraging their participation for example in producer organisations or cooperatives;

84. Calls for improvements to be made in a non-discriminatory manner to the EU promotion policy for agricultural and food products, as well as to the EU school scheme and the European Healthy School Lunches initiative; believes that these improvements should strengthen high-quality European agricultural production and contribute to sustainable production and consumption in line with this strategy, the European Green Deal and the SDGs; considers that these improvements should focus on educational messages based on available scientific data, on EU quality labels such as the EU organic label and geographical indications, on short, local and regional supply chains, on healthy nutrition and lifestyles, and on promoting greater consumption of fruit and vegetables as part of a varied and balanced diet, and lower intake of sugar, salt and fats with the aim of reducing obesity rates;

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85. Highlights further, in the context of the EU promotion programme, the importance of greening the environment, both indoors and outdoors, as a natural solution to the effects of climate change and air pollution, as well as for a healthy living environment and people's wellbeing;

86. Underlines the need to boost European information campaigns on moderate consumption of wines while maintaining the promotion of quality products; considers that only broad information and education campaigns would be effective in combating the abuse of consumption and recalls that moderate wine consumption is part of the Mediterranean diet;

87. Recognises the role of EU quality schemes and geographical indications in the EU, such as protected designation of origin (PDO), protected geographical indication (PGI), geographical indication of spirit drinks and aromatised wines (GI) and traditional speciality guaranteed (TSG), which are excellent examples of the EU setting quality standards in agriculture; welcomes the revision of the EU GI policy to allow protected geographical indications or designations of origin to further contribute to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of European regions, benefiting producers, consumers and society as a whole through the production of high quality products that create a strong link to the regions; stresses the need to improve the recognition of their authenticity among consumers who are not always in a position to distinguish European GIs from other products without the designation; considers it also necessary to reduce the administrative burden for small producers who wish to join these quality schemes and to strengthen the protection of GIs against misuse or imitation at international level; reiterates their important role in trade between the EU and partner countries;

88. Highlights the recognition in the strategy that most Europeans' diets are not in line with recommendations for healthy eating, and that a population-wide shift in consumption patterns is needed towards more healthy foods, diets and lifestyles, including increased consumption of sustainably and regionally produced plants and plant-based foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and legumes, and to address the overconsumption of meat and ultra-processed products, as well as products high in sugars, salt and fats, which will also benefit the environment and animal welfare and secure a more resilient economy; emphasises that EU-wide science-based recommendations, including clear objectives, for sustainable, healthy and more balanced diets, taking into account the cultural and regional diversity of European foods and diets, as well as consumers' needs, would help and encourage consumers and inform Member States' own efforts to integrate sustainability elements in national dietary advice; calls on the Commission to develop such recommendations and specific actions to effectively promote healthy, sustainable and more balanced diets;

89. Welcomes the fact that the strategy rightly recognises the role and influence of the food environment in shaping consumption patterns and the need to make it easier for consumers to choose healthy and sustainable diets; encourages the Commission and the Member States to take a more systematic and evidence-based approach in order to facilitate creating healthy, sustainable and fair food environments instead of only relying on a code of conduct; reiterates the importance of promoting healthy, more balanced and sustainable diets by improving the food environment, raising consumer awareness of the impacts of consumption patterns, including via digital channels, and providing information on diets that are better for human health and have a lower carbon and environmental footprint, such as products from short local and regional supply chains, which should be accompanied by a range of measures to make food production more sustainable by default;

90. Calls for a comprehensive and complementary range of measures, including regulatory measures and consumer awareness campaigns to reduce the burden that overconsumption of highly processed foods as well as of other products with high salt, sugar and fat content place on public health; calls on the major food producers and retailers to swiftly and seriously reformulate those processed foods not covered by EU quality schemes where improvements towards a healthier composition can be achieved, and welcomes the Commission's intention to launch initiatives to stimulate this reformulation, including by setting maximum levels of sugar, fats and salt in certain processed foods, and urges the Commission to closely monitor the progress in reformulation; underlines that such reformulations should also seek to minimise health risks posed by food improvement agents, pesticide residues and harmful chemicals; calls for particular attention to be given to food for children and other special purpose foods and for an effective and EU-wide regulatory approach to tackle the exposure of children and adolescents to advertising and marketing of processed foods high in fat, sugar and salt on broadcast and digital media;

91. Considers that further development and sustainable innovation in the field of plant protein production and alternative sources of protein in the EU, such as insects or algae, is a way of effectively addressing many of the environmental and climate challenges that EU agriculture is facing, as well as preventing deforestation, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation in countries outside the EU and reducing Europe's current dependence regarding its supply of plant protein; calls on the Commission to build upon its report on the development of plant proteins in the European Union (COM(2018)0757) and to present an EU protein transition strategy covering the demand and the supply side to support and boost the sustainable production of protein crops, including local supplies of feedstuffs and food production, enhancing EU self-sufficiency and lowering global environmental and climate impacts; underlines the importance of reducing dependence on the importation of protein crops from overseas;

92. Recalls its call to extend the EU generic risk assessment across the legislation to prevent the exposure of consumers to hazardous substances in food;

93. Recalls that nutrient profiles, which are long overdue, remain pertinent and necessary to meet the objectives of Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods ([72]); welcomes the announcement of a legislative proposal to establish nutrient profiles; points out that many food products, including some marketed towards children, continue to use health and nutrition claims despite them having high levels of nutrients of concern; stresses that a robust set of nutrient profiles must be developed to prohibit the use of nutrition and health claims on foods high in fats, sugars and/or salt; calls for particular attention to be given to food for children and other special purpose foods;

94. Recognises that front-of-pack nutritional labels have been identified by international public health bodies such as the World Health Organization as a key tool to help consumers make more informed, more balanced and healthier food choices; stresses that front-of-pack nutrition labelling system, which is consistent with and complementary to dietary guidelines, should help consumers to make healthier food choices by providing them with comprehensible information on the food they consume; calls on the Commission to ensure that a mandatory and harmonised EU front-of-pack nutritional label is developed based on robust, independent scientific evidence and demonstrated consumer understanding, with open access for all market operators including small and medium-sized operators, taking into account the additional burden to food operators and unions; stresses furthermore that to facilitate comparison across products, it should include an interpretive element to provide transparent, comparable and harmonised product information and be based on uniform reference amounts; calls on the Commission to duly take into account the specific characteristics of single ingredient products and products under European quality schemes (PDO, PGI, GI etc.), particularly the invariability of their composition, while stressing that any considerations regarding potential exemptions should be based on scientific reasoning; calls for the establishment of a digital system for the provision of additional voluntary information for food products (EU4healthyfood), and suggests that this information could be provided in a digital manner via a QR code and be retrieved easily by the consumer;

95. Notes that healthy products, including food, may contain natural or synthetic ingredients which have different impacts on the environment and the health of consumers; Calls for the introduction of mandatory labelling schemes for healthy products, indicating whether an ingredient is of synthetic origin when obtained by a chemical synthesis, especially in cases where natural equivalents exist;

96. Calls on the Commission to make an assessment of changes in consumer behaviour, such as in the online purchasing of food products;

97. Welcomes the Commission's initiative aimed at improving origin labelling and its consideration of extending it to a wider range of products; reiterates its call for mandatory origin labelling; stresses that this should be comprehensive and harmonised and cover all food products and should cover catering facilities, restaurants and retail and be fully verifiable and traceable and not undermine the proper functioning of the internal market; emphasises that the food information regulation ([73]) needs to be revised with a focus on milk and meat as ingredients; calls on the Commission to rectify the current practice whereby products whose primary ingredients are not locally or regionally sourced can be marketed as such if the origin of these non-local primary ingredients is indicated in the small print, and to make the origin of the primary

([72]) OJ L 404, 30.12.2006, p. 9.
([73]) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers (OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18).

ingredients more visible to the consumer; calls on the Commission to propose legislative changes for honey labelling rules that will result in better consumer information and to support the EU beekeeping sector by reinforcing import inspections in order to prevent imports of adulterated honey while stressing that all country-of-origin labelling needs to be effectively enforced to combat food fraud;

98. Welcomes the Commission's intention to create a sustainable food labelling framework and calls on the Commission to define the methodology and specify which dimensions of sustainability would be covered while ensuring that the new scheme does not conflict with existing environmental frameworks such as the EU ecolabel or the organic logo; highlights that many unsubstantiated and even misleading environmental claims and advertising methods are currently being used and calls on the Commission to introduce a regulatory framework establishing a clear, swift and efficient pre-approval procedure for all sustainability claims and labels; stresses that such a framework would protect consumers from untruthful sustainability claims while ensuring that businesses that genuinely strive for more environmentally friendly operations are duly rewarded for their efforts; stresses the need for inspections by public control authorities of any label allowed on food products;

99. Underlines the need to establish labelling on animal products, which should be based on identifying the method of production as well as animal welfare indicators, and contain the place of birth, rearing and slaughter of the animal, and stresses that these requirements should be extended to processed products in order to increase transparency, help consumers to make a better choice and contribute to the welfare of animals; stresses that production and market uptake of plant-based proteins should be better supported, and calls furthermore for the long-overdue harmonisation of requirements with regard to labelling for vegetarian and vegan foods to be put forward without further delay;

100. Reaffirms its belief that policy measures to increase food system sustainability should not depend solely on shifting the responsibility to purchase sustainable products to consumers as this lacks effectiveness, while consumer choice is an important factor for the uptake of sustainably produced and healthier diets; underlines the importance of good nutritional and environmental education as well as the availability of easily comprehensible relevant information in this regard; emphasises that sustainability labelling should be based on scientific harmonised sustainability criteria, should entail inspections by public control authorities wherever possible, and new legislative measures where necessary; notes, however, that third-party certification and labelling alone are not effective but can be complementary tools in ensuring the transition to sustainable production and consumption; acknowledges that increasing transparency through methods such as labelling is an important element that can help consumers to make more sustainable purchasing decisions, which is important for achieving the transition to a more sustainable, regional and healthy food system;

101. Underlines that food prices must send the right signal to consumers; considers that true food prices, reflecting the true cost of production for farmers and also for the environment and society, are the most efficient way to achieve sustainable and equitable food systems in the long term; welcomes, therefore, the strategy's objective to guide the food industry towards practices that make the healthy and sustainable choice the easy, accessible and affordable one for consumers; supports giving Member States more flexibility to differentiate the VAT rates on food with different health and environmental impacts, and enable them to choose a zero VAT rate for healthy and sustainable food products such as fruits and vegetables, as is already implemented in some Member States but not currently possible for all ([74]), and a higher VAT rate on unhealthy food and food that has a high environmental footprint; recalls that household expenditure on food products varies significantly across EU Member States and affordability should be ensured for consumers in all Member States, while also ensuring fair income for primary producers for their sustainable and healthy products and increasing transparency and consumers' awareness regarding the costs and profits related to each stage of the food supply chain; invites the Commission to launch a study to quantify in economic terms the environmental and societal costs, including health-related costs, associated with the production and consumption of the most consumed food products on the EU market;

([74]) Supporting the mid-term evaluation of the EU action plan on childhood obesity, The childhood obesity study. EPHORT consortium: Jolanda Boer, Jeanine Driesenaar, Anneke Blokstra, Francy Vennemann, Nikolai Pushkarev, Johan Hansen.

102. Calls for a revision of public procurement legislation with a view to introducing or reinforcing minimum mandatory criteria for kindergartens and schools, other public institutions and private companies delivering public services so as to encourage: sustainable food production, including traditional and typical foods with geographical indications; the consumption of local and, where possible, seasonal products; short supply chains including direct sales; higher animal welfare standards; and the reduction of food waste and packaging in line with the principles of the circular economy; calls for the promotion of healthier and balanced diets and dietary patterns by creating a food environment that makes healthy, informed and sustainable choices the easiest ones for consumers to make; calls on the Commission further to develop monitoring and reporting tools on sustainable food procurement;

103. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to revise the EU legislation on food contact materials (FCM) while regretting the lack of harmonised action until now and proposes that the Commission bring forward the date of publication of the proposal; insists on the need for a comprehensive, harmonised regulation of all FCMs including those materials and contaminants that are not yet covered at EU level, insists that this should be based on the precautionary principle, the principle of 'no data, no market', comprehensive safety assessments based on the latest scientific data and scientific work of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and EFSA, and stresses that effective enforcement and the provision of improved information to consumers are crucial; reiterates its call to revise the legislation on FCM in line with the regulation on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH), as well as classification, labelling and packaging regulations, and to insert, without further delay, specific provisions to substitute endocrine disrupting chemicals and other hazardous chemicals in all FCM while not affecting the packaging role in preserving food safety or quality; welcomes the intention of the Commission to establish rules for the safe recycling into food contact materials of plastic materials other than PET; stresses at the same time that equal safety requirements should be applied to virgin and recycled materials and that responsible actors in supply chains and final consumers have to be able to easily access information about the identity and safety of chemicals in food contact materials;

104. Highlights that food waste and loss have enormous environmental consequences, exacerbate climate change and are a waste of limited resources such as land, energy and water and a loss of revenue to farmers; reiterates its call to take the measures required to achieve a Union food waste reduction target of 30 % by 2025 and 50 % by 2030 compared to the 2014 baseline; underlines that binding targets at every stage of the supply chain, including primary production, pre-retail and retail, are needed to achieve this; calls on all Member States to establish and implement food waste prevention programmes that fully integrate the principles of the circular economy and include the promotion of short food supply chains, which lower the risk of generating food waste; stresses that CAP objectives include food waste prevention, emphasises that action should be encouraged to curb food waste occurring at primary production level and early stages of the supply chain, including unharvested food; underlines the importance of ensuring animal health, inter alia as a means to avoid food losses and waste at source and highlights that recovering plant-based food waste for animal feeding is a viable solution where food waste cannot be prevented; stresses the importance of raising public awareness and providing guidance on how to avoid food waste to promote long-term consumer behavioural change; calls on the Commission to identify any potential barriers that hinder a faster pace of reducing waste and calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure adequate financing for research, innovation, engagement of stakeholders and information and education campaigns through the creation of national food waste funds with the objective of eliminating waste;

105. Underlines that, in line with the waste hierarchy, the focus should be on prevention of food waste; welcomes the proposed revision to clarify the current EU rules on date marking in order to prevent and reduce food waste and food loss; stresses that any change to date marking rules should be science based and should improve the use, expression and presentation of date marking by all actors in the food chain, including in the hospitality industry, and its understanding by consumers, in particular 'use by' and 'best before' labelling, while at the same time not undermining food safety or quality; emphasises that harmonised date marking would help to combat food waste; calls for an accompanying revision of rules on the distribution of food stuffs, with the objectives of identifying and eliminating potential barriers to waste reduction, increasing efficiency and boosting competition and innovation;

106. Stresses the importance of fighting food fraud and counterfeiting in the food sector which mislead consumers and distort competition in the internal market, highlights the need to urgently address the complex issue of food fraud, more specifically including mislabelling, the replacement, dilution, addition, removal or substitution of ingredients with cheaper

or substandard replacements, unapproved chemical treatments or processes and falsified documentation, and paying particular attention to the counterfeiting and illegal trade of geographical indications; highlights the importance of imposing effective penalties which should fit the crime and calls on Member States to adequately reflect that principle in national legislation, in line with the Official Controls Regulation ([75]); calls on the Commission to work on a European force against food fraud to enhance coordination between the different relevant national agencies in order to ensure the enforcement of EU food standards both within the EU single market and regarding our imports;

107. Urges the Commission to monitor and enforce the continuous allocation of adequate resources for official food controls in order to ensure that a sufficient number of controls is performed to verify the compliance with food and feed requirements and urges the Commission and the Member States to strengthen customs checks to ensure compliance with EU production standards, inter alia on food safety, antimicrobial resistance, animal welfare and plant protection products, as well as to avoid the entry of plant and animal pests into the EU; calls on the Member States to stringently and consistently enforce the product traceability provisions of the General Food Law (GFL) Regulation ([76]) throughout the food chain; highlights that in cases of incidents which involve risks for public health and safety, public authorities should fully, properly and immediately inform the public about the potential risks posed by the food products concerned, in line with the relevant provision of the GFL Regulation;

Enabling the transition

108. Underlines the importance of EU funding for research and innovation, especially for SMEs and smallholders, as key drivers in accelerating the transition to a more sustainable, productive, diversified, local, healthy and inclusive European food system; encourages the agri-food sector to actively use the funding earmarked for it in Horizon Europe in this regard; emphasises equally the need to facilitate the investments needed to encourage sustainable practices and the circular economy and bio-economy;

109. Points out that the introduction of new smart-farming technologies and techniques, including digitalisation and protected cropping systems, can be beneficial for improving efficiency, the use of resources and environmental sustainability, and can deliver positive economic benefits from agricultural production; acknowledges that innovation must remain compatible with the restoration and promotion of traditional practices and knowledge, especially those adapted to the agro-climatic characteristics of each area;

110. Highlights the importance of implementing the various integrated pest management practices and of providing independent farm advisory services in ensuring a broader and inclusive transfer of knowledge to the farming sector; believes that this would be helped via the establishment of a system for the collection and dissemination of sustainable practices and by building upon the existing specialised training systems for farmers in Member States, without introducing additional administrative burdens for farmers in Member States; calls on the Member States to dedicate a sufficient share of their allocations for farm advisory services to services and technical assistance related to sustainable practices that contribute to the objectives of the strategy; believes that, given their acquired knowledge and know-how, the input of small-scale primary producers would also play an important part in achieving real results at the level of individual agricultural holdings;

111. Emphasises the importance of higher education institutions in fostering the promotion of research and innovation and providing advice on sustainable best practices; recognises the role of universities in the development and transition of the agri-food sectors in regions with distinct characteristics, including outermost regions; welcomes the strategy's intention to help SME food processors and small retail and food service operators develop new skills, while ensuring that they are not subjected to additional red tape; stresses the strategic importance of collective approaches through producer organisations and cooperatives to bring farmers together in achieving their goals;

([75]) Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products (OJ L 95, 7.4.2017, p. 1).

([76]) Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety (OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1).

112. Highlights that multiple synergies are possible between agriculture and European space policy in order to properly understand soils and food quality and meet the challenges of the environment, climate and demographic change; encourages the participation of all Member States in science and research programmes and calls on the Commission to take action to ensure that more equal progress is made in all Member States;

113. Recalls the need to promote effective agricultural knowledge and innovation systems (AKIS), enabling the agricultural sector to become more sustainable by speeding up innovation and fostering close cooperation between all interested stakeholders such as farmers, researchers, advisers, experts and NGOs, through high-quality and inclusive training and lifelong learning and by accelerating knowledge transfer, including on the implementation of integrated farming techniques such as integrated pest management for every crop;

114. Calls on the Member States, when designing and implementing their CAP National Strategic Plans, to take full advantage of the possibilities provided by AKIS; recalls, in addition, the need for a farm sustainability data network for the purposes of setting benchmarks for farm performance, documenting the uptake of sustainable farming practices and enabling the precise and tailored application of new production approaches at farm level, including by processing collected data and providing farmers and interested stakeholders with easy access to relevant information, especially on best practices; points out that data on agriculture and farmland is of public interest but that farmers' access to and control of their own farm data must be protected;

115. Highlights the importance of comprehensive access to fast broadband connections to facilitate the uptake of digital farming technologies at farm level and stresses the importance of supporting farmers in making efficient use of such innovative solutions while safeguarding their economic viability; recognises that farmers' organisations are valuable contacts in developing information brokerage services geared towards innovation; stresses the importance of Horizon Europe in achieving the goals of research and innovation in the field of soil and food health, which has the potential to attract the next generation to the agricultural sector;

116. Highlights the fundamental role of independent farm advisory systems in disseminating innovation and knowledge, stimulating the exchange of experiences and promoting practical demonstrations, and calls on Member States in particular to provide comprehensive advice to farmers on adopting more sustainable production systems; encourages the Commission and the Member States to actively support bottom-up initiatives bringing farmers and citizens closer by working at local level and incorporating local knowledge, to better adapt to the specific realities on the ground; emphasises the importance of promoting the training of young farmers and entrepreneurs in sustainable farming and food systems;

117. Calls, in addition to farm advisory systems, for the establishment and the promotion of multi-stakeholder platforms that increase collaboration and mobilise the sharing of knowledge and technology, across the entire agricultural and food chain, to help scale up innovation and advance agricultural production systems; stresses, further, the importance of extending this possibility to all actors in the chain, without additional administrative burdens;

118. Highlights the key role that young farmers will have in accomplishing the transition to sustainable farming and in delivering on the aims of the strategy; underlines that the ecological transition of our food system is an opportunity to contribute to a vibrant countryside; stresses that the CAP should provide better support to young and new farmers in terms of income, generational renewal, training, youth employment, entrepreneurship and digitalisation especially in peripheral and very sparsely populated areas, so as to create a space enabling the inclusion and retention of young people in agriculture, given that they are likely to be the early adopters of new and more sustainable farming methods;

119. Highlights that young farmers and potential new entrants encounter difficulties in purchasing or leasing land and stresses the need to ease the way for young farmers to enter the sector; stresses the need to ensure that this strategy does not adversely affect the availability and price of land, leading to increased speculation and further hindering young people's access to land;

120. Notes that the concentration of farmland as well as land-grabbing in the EU, encouraged in some cases by policies at the local, regional, national and EU-level, can create difficulties for young farmers and new entrants seeking land on which to set up a farm; calls on the Commission and Member States, as well as regional and local administrations, to put an end to such practices in order to support young farmers and to facilitate their entry into farming;

121. Considers, furthermore, that this strategy is an opportunity to improve the prospects of rural women and highlight the crucial role they play by providing women entrepreneurs with an enabling environment, including legal and political considerations, leading to greater access to information, knowledge and skills, as well as facilitating access to financial resources, leading to the creation of more jobs in rural areas;

Promoting the global transition

122. Recalls the global responsibility of European food systems and their key role in setting global standards for food safety, environmental protection, social protection and animal welfare; reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of Policy Coherence for Development principles; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that all food and feed products imported into the EU fully comply with relevant EU legislation and the Union's high standards and to provide development assistance to support primary producers from developing countries in meeting those standards; welcomes the Commission's intention to take the environmental impacts of requested import tolerances into account; considers that embedded land use and land use change emissions from imported feed and food should be addressed;

123. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to maintain a holistic approach as the implementation of certain farm to fork strategy targets in the EU must not lead to the relocation of parts of agricultural production to other regions with lower standards than the EU;

124. Recalls that access to the EU market and its 450 million consumers provides our trading partners with a strong incentive to improve their sustainability as well as their production and labour standards; believes that the success of the Green Deal is closely connected to our trade policy;

125. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to promoting the global phasing out of pesticides no longer approved in the EU and to ensuring that hazardous pesticides banned for use in the EU in accordance with the relevant legislation are not exported outside the Union, and urges the Commission to present its proposals to that end as soon as possible; considers that the EU should support developing countries to help them reduce the imprudent use of pesticides and promote other methods to protect plants and fishery resources; stresses that the strategy must not favour imports of products from non-EU countries with a greater environmental and climate impact; notes, in this respect, that agri-food products from non-EU countries must therefore be subject to the same requirements, including zero-tolerance of residues of substances meeting the cut-off criteria;

126. Points to the need for safe and affordable food for a global population of around 10 billion by 2050 in the context of rapid population growth, climate change, the scarcity of natural resources and changing consumption patterns; calls on the Commission to strengthen the global dimension of the strategy to ensure the right to adequate food and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas and emphasises that EU policies on fair, sustainable and resilient food systems should explicitly address gender inequality; urges the Commission to provide support for developing countries to protect their infant industries, promote food security, support climate change mitigation for agriculture, and meet EU and international sustainability standards for exporting their agricultural products;

127. Stresses the need for the EU to champion human rights and the right to food as a central principle and priority of food systems and as a fundamental tool to transform food systems and ensure the rights of the most marginalised to access nutritious foods and to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas;

128. Stresses that, unless animal production standards in non-EU countries are aligned with those of the EU, imports of animal products from those countries should be forbidden;

129. Notes with concern that several audits carried out by DG Sante as well as detailed NGO investigations state that full traceability of live horses from Argentina destined to the European Union market is not ensured, involving food safety risks, and that animal welfare is compromised; calls on the Commission to suspend the import of horse meat from countries where applicable EU requirements relating to traceability and animal welfare are not complied with;

130. Recalls that structural animal experiments that are not indispensable should have no place in the food chain as Directive 2010/63/EU prescribes the replacement and reduction of the use of animals in procedures; calls on the Commission and Member States to stop the import and domestic production of Pregnant Mare Serum Gonadotropin (PMSG), which is extracted from the blood of pregnant horses that are systematically impregnated and exposed to blood collections, involving health and welfare issues;

131. Calls on the Commission to urgently present a proposal for an EU legal framework based on mandatory horizontal due diligence throughout the supply chain for EU and foreign companies operating in the single market that ensures sustainable supply chains and investments that are free from adverse environmental impacts including deforestation, forest degradation, ecosystem conversion and degradation and adverse impacts on human rights and governance, to promote good governance and to increase traceability and accountability in global supply chains;

132. Notes that the EU internal market is the world's biggest importer and exporter of agri-food products; is convinced that the EU should use its position as a major global player to set the benchmark and direct international standards for sustainable food systems, based on respect for human and labour rights, fair competition, the precautionary principle, environmental protection and animal welfare in accordance with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules; considers that the protection of standards in these areas should be an integral part of all trade agreement chapters and that multilateral and regulatory cooperation could further help to achieve the objectives of the farm to fork strategy;

133. Calls on the Commission to strengthen the trade aspects of the farm to fork strategy in order to ensure consistency between the common commercial policy, the customs union action plan, the common agricultural and fisheries policies and the objectives of the farm to fork strategy, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 and other related EU policies, and to pursue these objectives in a gradual way through the development of efficient green alliances in all relevant bilateral, regional and multilateral forums, including the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, as well as through an ambitious revision of its trade policy, by establishing a dedicated framework on sustainable agri-food systems and products for future trade agreements, notably by means of non-regression clauses, improving the functioning of safeguard clauses and putting an end to imports of products that exceed the maximum EU residue limits for plant protection products, in accordance with WTO rules; calls on the Commission to promote better coordination between all public and private stakeholders in order to achieve these objectives; considers that the EU should reconfirm the mandate of the Committee on World Food Security as the international policy platform for food security and nutrition;

134. Welcomes the farm to fork strategy's ambition of ensuring enforceable trade and sustainable development chapters in all EU trade agreements as a means of guaranteeing that the greater regulatory ambitions put forward are consistent with EU trade policy and are complied with by non-EU countries that have signed trade agreements with the EU; emphasises the importance of strengthening the enforceability of trade and sustainable development chapters in trade agreements including, as a last resort, through sanction-based dispute mechanisms, in order to promote a global approach to climate and biodiversity, foster more sustainable agri-food production, put a stop to global deforestation and raise labour standards in line with the eight core conventions of the ILO; suggests that trade and sustainable development chapters should also take account of equivalent standards of production, such as animal welfare, traceability, antimicrobial resistance and the use of plant protection products, which should be systematically certified by independent audit and certification bodies at all production and distribution stages, as well as roadmaps with milestones subject to ex-post evaluations; urges the Commission to provide support to developing countries in a bid to promote food security and provide assistance on aligning with European standards for sustainable agri-food systems; expects the Commission's Chief Trade Enforcement Officer to fully perform his role in guaranteeing the proper application of the agreements in question by addressing market distortions, strengthening the enforcement of trade and sustainable development chapters and engaging in constructive dialogue with governments and stakeholders;

135. Calls for the EU to help developing countries adopt appropriate national legislation with a view to protecting threatened genetic resources for food and agriculture, guaranteeing the continued use and management of these by local communities, indigenous peoples, men and women, and ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from their use;

136. Takes note of the Commission's study on the cumulative economic impact of EU trade agreements on agriculture, which shows that under both a conservative and an ambitious scenario the EU's trade agreements are expected to generate a positive overall balance for its agri-food trade and greater value until 2030, thus demonstrating that EU trade agreements have a positive effect on the EU agricultural sector;

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137. Emphasises that the EU-Mercosur agreement cannot be ratified as it stands since, inter alia, it does not ensure biodiversity protection, in particular in the Amazon, nor does it bring guarantees as regards farming standards;

138. Notes that trade and sustainable development chapters do not address the potential negative impacts of trade agreements on land use change, deforestation or climate change; considers that European and international environmental, safety, animal welfare and social standards should be comprehensively applied to all chapters in trade agreements in order to prevent any other trade provisions from undermining those standards;

139. Points out that trade agreements should ensure that the parties involved actively engage in the promotion of sustainable development principles and that international standards are in line with the EU's environmental and climate ambitions; considers, furthermore, that these agreements should take account of the binding nature of compliance with the Paris Agreement in order to guarantee a global transition to sustainable food systems;

140. Points out that farming and fishing are vital to the development of sustainable economic activity in the outermost regions and highlights the contribution and added value of these sectors with regard to food security and responding to public demand for sufficient, safe and high-quality products; calls for the structural agronomic and trade constraints of the outermost regions referred to in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to be systematically taken into account during the implementation of the farm to fork strategy and the subsequent legislative proposals, in order to enable those regions to compete on a level playing field and ensure the availability of viable alternative solutions to the agri-food sectors if their means of production and trade flows are restricted;

141. Welcomes the proposed new initiative on climate and trade at the WTO; underlines the importance of using this framework to develop a comprehensive and sustainable agri-food system based on common and ambitious production standards; urges the Commission to engage proactively at the WTO to enable an ecological transition, ensure that trade policy is consistent with the SDGs, continue negotiations on transparent food security stocks and, in particular, prevent situations where agri-food products become the adjustment variable or a collateral victim of trade conflicts, while continuing to develop an ambitious, WTO-compatible sustainable trade policy;

142. Welcomes references to relevant UN processes in the farm to fork strategy; highlights the need for the EU to support the Committee on World Food Security and its civil society mechanism as the foremost multilateral policy platform on food systems; calls on the Commission to promote the global transition towards sustainable food systems and food security in all the relevant international forums, including the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit;

143. Stresses how important it is to share modern technologies and expertise with developing countries and train local and European farmers in order to help them implement innovative agricultural practices, as the agricultural sector is crucial for food security and employment in those regions;

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144. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.