



# EAPF Position on the public consultation on the EU Promotion Policy

Brussels, 18 June 2021

The European Alliance for Plant-based Foods (EAPF) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the open public consultation on the revision of the EU promotion policy.

Agricultural and food promotion policies have an important role to play in reaching the key objective of the European Green Deal: Achieving a carbon-neutral Europe by 2050. All EU policies and strategies released since December 2019 have consistently converged towards creating the right **regulatory framework for sustainable food systems**. The Farm to Fork Strategy recognises the environmental and health benefits of more plant-based diets<sup>1</sup> and the European Parliament has called for specific actions to promote plant-based foods.<sup>2</sup> Last but not least, Europe's Beating Cancer Plan explicitly called for increased promotion of plant-based foods and healthy diets to improve cancer prevention<sup>3</sup>.

A **shift towards more plant-based diets** is a pillar of sustainable food systems<sup>4</sup>, fundamental to rebalance the global emissions of the agricultural sector and mitigate climate change<sup>5</sup>. Including more plant-based and less animal-based foods in European diets could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 84%.<sup>6</sup>

**The EU's agricultural promotion policy should therefore proactively encourage plant-based food production and diets**, in line with the Commission's ambition to incentivise better sustainability and quality of agri-food products.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ["A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system"](#), 20 May 2020, page 13.

<sup>2</sup> Draft report on the Farm to Fork Strategy, ENVI-AGRI Committees, European Parliament, 17 December 2020, page 10.

<sup>3</sup> ["Europe's Beating Cancer Plan"](#), 3 February 2021, page 11.

<sup>4</sup> ["Food System Impacts on Biodiversity Loss: Three levers for food system transformation in support of nature"](#), Chatham House, 3 February 2021; "Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT-Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems", The Lancet, January 2019, 1-147.

<sup>5</sup>; Clark, M. A., Domingo, N. G., Colgan, K., Thakrar, S. K., Tilman, D., Lynch, J., ... & Hill, J. D. (2020). "Global food system emissions could preclude achieving the 1.5° and 2° C climate change targets", Science, 370(6517), 705-708; IPCC Report "Climate Change and Land", Section 5, August 2019.

<sup>6</sup> "Health and nutritional aspects of sustainable diet strategies and their association with environmental impacts: a global modelling analysis with country-level detail", Springmann M., Wiebe K., Mason-D'Croz D., Sulser T.B., Rayner M. and Scarborough P., The Lancet, 2018 (2), 451-461; [Plant-based meat for a growing world](#), the Good Food Institute, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> ["Trade policy review: An open, sustainable and assertive trade policy"](#), 18 February 2021, page 19.



## Promoting sustainable production and consumption

Farming stands at the beginning of the agri-food supply chain: The environmental impact of the food we eat starts from the way the primary ingredients are produced. Therefore, the development of sustainable food systems is intrinsically linked with sustainable farming practices. In this context, the EU promotion policy is an important instrument to showcase how the EU farming sector can drive the sustainability of the whole agri-food chain. To encourage sustainable production and consumption, **the EU should thus focus on promoting less carbon-intensive agricultural practices.**

Greater incentives for plant-based diets are also aligned with **evolving dietary habits**: Consumers are increasingly turning towards plant-based foods out of environmental, medical, health and/or ethical concerns<sup>8</sup>. Growing demand is driving the development of the plant-based food sector, which is projected to become a €7.5 billion market in the EU by 2025. Retail sales grew at an average of 10% per year between 2010 and 2020<sup>9</sup>, and in some EU countries peaked up by 49% in the last two years<sup>10</sup>. The growth of the plant-based food sector would allow farmers to diversify agricultural crops, thus contributing to the EU's better resilience to climate change, while opening new economic opportunities<sup>11</sup>.

And yet, plant-based food stood for a minimal share of the promotion policy budget for the period 2014-2020. While raw materials (crops, fruit and vegetables) production, exports and consumption are well supported (overall budget of € 209 million), plant-based foods – processed foods made from crops, fruit, vegetables, pulses and fermentation-derived products – have been relatively absent of the EU policy. Only a few plant-based products (vegetable oils, some processed fruits in the form of jam or compote, and fruit juice) have been financed up to now. Their share only represented about 20% (€ 45 million) of the budget allocated to meat and dairy products (€ 223 million) over the past seven years<sup>12</sup>. This imbalance should be corrected if the EU aims to encourage plant-based diets.

## Aligning promotion policy and plant-based diets

The EU's overarching strategies – such as the Farm to Fork Strategy and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan – should be the reference points for the review of the promotion policy, ensuring maximum alignment across the initiatives. This would in turn maximise the added value of the

---

<sup>8</sup> "One bite at a time: Consumers and the transition to sustainable food. Analysis of a survey of European consumers on attitudes towards sustainable food", BEUC, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> "Growth of meat and dairy alternatives is stirring up the European food industry", ING Report, October 2020.

<sup>10</sup> "[Plant-based foods in Europe: How big is the market?](#)", the Smart Protein project, 25 February 2021.

<sup>11</sup> "[The development of plant proteins in the European Union](#)", 22 November 2018, page 6-7.

<sup>12</sup> "[Marketing Meat: How EU promotional funds favour meat and dairy](#)", Greenpeace, April 2021.



policy as a tool to encourage consumers to adopt healthier diets and ensure they have access to a variety of sustainable food, including plant-based food.

Enabling the shift towards more plant-based diets, the EU's agricultural promotion policy should **widen the scope of eligible products** listed under Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 1114/2014<sup>13</sup> **to include plant-based foods and plant-based proteins made from EU crops**. This is in line with the Council's call for an EU Protein Transition Strategy, to stir EU autonomy in the production of plant protein crops for food consumption<sup>14</sup>; it is also critical to further build the resilience of the EU agri-food sector and enable a post-COVID19 green recovery which taps into the sustainability potential of plant-based foods.

### Recommendations for calls for proposals

EAPF calls on the European Commission to **review the EU's agricultural promotion policy in line with its ambitions set forth in the main overarching strategies, prioritising the promotion of more environmentally-friendly food products, such as plant-based foods**, with the ultimate aim to boost the uptake of sustainable and healthy diets, good for the people and the planet.

To achieve this, EAPF recommends the following topics for the upcoming calls for proposals under the EU programme for the promotion of agricultural products:

- Information and promotion of plant-based food products;
- Information and promotion of sustainable plant-based proteins;
- Promotion of quality food products valorising crops, pulses, algae and fermentation-derived products.

*The European Alliance for Plant-Based Foods (EAPF) brings together like-minded organisations in the plant-based value chain around a unique mission: To put plant-based foods at the heart of the transition towards more sustainable and healthy food systems. The Alliance represents companies and organisations supporting and promoting plant-based foods.*

<sup>13</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 1114/2014 on information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products implemented in the internal market and in third countries and repealing Council Regulation \(EC\) No 3/2008](#)

<sup>14</sup> Council's conclusions on the Farm to Fork Strategy, October 2020.