

A far-sighted approach to EU food systems security and resilience must include a shift towards more plant-based diets

Brussels, 23 March 2022

The European Alliance for Plant-based Foods (EAPF) welcomes the European Commission's communication on safeguarding food security and strengthening the resilience of food systems, as a response to the impact of the Ukraine war on the agri-food value chain worldwide. A shift towards more plant-based diets – including the development of a strong EU plant protein sector for food purposes – is as urgent as ever to strengthen the EU's long-term autonomy in critical agri-food commodities, under the framework provided by the EU Green Deal and the EU Farm to Fork Strategy.

The current war in Ukraine is heavily impacting the EU agri-food value chain, and requires a forward-looking, strong political response in order to reduce Europe's dependency on imports of critical agri-food commodities, ensuring that the EU remains on track to reach the objectives set in the EU Green Deal and the EU Farm to Fork Strategy. While understanding the need for measures to counteract the immediate impacts of the war, these should not be a deterrent to slow down the achievement of the EU's sustainability ambitions. On the contrary, the current situation provides a major incentive to step up actions that could strengthen the long-term resilience of European food systems, such as **promoting a shift towards more plant-based diets**¹. In this regard, EAPF welcomes the reference to plant-based diets in the EC Communication².

A transition towards more plant-based diets implies **redirecting a great share of crop production towards food applications and human consumption**. In the short term, this could encompass scarce commodities such as grains – addressed primarily to food instead of feed – and oil crops (e.g. sunflower oil) – used for food purposes rather than for the production of biofuel; in the medium to long-term, the EU needs to strengthen its autonomy on plant protein crops – such as legumes – and prioritise food over other applications. In this regard, EAPF supports Member States' call for an **EU protein strategy** to increase domestic production of plant protein crops, as stated in the Versailles Declaration³, in the European Parliament's Joint Motion for Resolution⁴, and debated at the last Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting⁵.

The spike in commodity prices will also have implications for **food affordability**. It is therefore critical to ensure that healthy and sustainable foods are also the most affordable option. In this regard, EAPF reiterates the potential of using financial and taxation instruments (e.g. VAT rates) to help **level the playing field for plant-based products**, making them more affordable and accessible to consumers and further accelerating the shift towards more plant-based diets.

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 sustainable food systems, promote plant-based innovation and advance the transformation towards plant-based foods. The Alliance represents the entire plant-based value chain: Food producers and manufacturers, NGOs, nutritionists, research & academia, and consumers.

¹ [We need a food system transformation – in the face of the Ukraine war, now more than ever](#), 18 March 2022

² [Communication COM\(2022\) on safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems](#), 23 March 2022, p. 9 and 12

³ [Informal meeting of the Heads of State or Government - Versailles declaration](#), 11 March 2022, p. 8

⁴ [Joint motion for a Resolution on the need for an urgent EU action plan to ensure food security inside and outside the EU in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine](#), point 39 and 40.

⁵ [Enhancing the potential of plant-based proteins in Europe in line with the objectives set out in the European Green Deal](#), 26 March 2022