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Sustainable food system – setting up an EU framework

Introduction

Background

In the context of the "European Green Deal", the European Commission adopted a comprehensive Farm to Fork Strategy[1], which recognises the inextricable links between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet and aims to address comprehensively the challenges of sustainable food systems.

During the last decades the EU has largely been spared from crises threatening food security. However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Covid-19 pandemic show that our food system can be exposed to such risks. The threats that the world is facing are severe and imminent, but so are the climate and biodiversity challenges that are here to stay.

Sustainability is fundamental to ensure long-term food security. Without a transition such as the one set out in the Farm to Fork Strategy, food security will be severely at risk in the long-term, with irreversible impacts globally. Natural resources, such as land, healthy soils, water and biodiversity, are key inputs into food production, and their growing scarcity in many parts of the world makes it imperative to use and manage them sustainably.

To drive the shift to a sustainable food system, the Farm to Fork Strategy has launched numerous actions, which should contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, preservation of biodiversity and rural livelihoods, reduction of pesticides use and risk and pressures on water, soil and air quality, and better consumer information and animal welfare, while strengthening the competitiveness of the entire food sector and preserving food security.

The Strategy recognises that these individual and sector-specific actions can neither alone, nor in combination with each other fully ensure policy coherence at EU and national level, mainstream sustainability in all food-related policies and strengthen the resilience of food systems. For this reason, the Farm to Fork Strategy announced an initiative for a horizontal framework law, to accelerate and facilitate the transition to sustainability and ensure that

foods placed on the EU market increasingly become sustainable. Such an EU level intervention aims to establish new foundations for future food policies by introducing sustainability objectives and principles based on an integrated food system approach. This initiative will also include, among others, provisions for a sustainable food-labelling framework to empower consumers to make sustainable food choices, and it will explore new governance systems for a more active involvement of citizens and stakeholders at all levels.

Further background can be found in the <u>Inception Impact Assessment on the Sustainable EU</u> food system Initiative, which was published by the Commission in 2021.

The aim of this public consultation is to gather opinions and evidence from the public and relevant stakeholders on the key issues the initiative aims to address, and on the main elements that may be used in the formulation of policy options to respond to those issues. At the same time, it should be noted that this questionnaire is not exhaustive in its scope. The policy design in the initiative for a Framework for a Sustainable EU Food System will draw on other processes which are ongoing in relation to specific aspects, such as for example the one on Imports of agricultural and food products – applying EU health and environmental standards (report) [2], or other initiatives mentioned on the F2F website.

Moreover, more targeted consultations are also planned to take place during this year for specific stakeholder categories.

Who should fill the questionnaire and how to fill it?

The questionnaire for citizens is accessible in all official EU languages. As there may be delays in translating replies submitted in some languages, contributions in English are welcome, as they will help to process the survey more swiftly.

You can pause at any time and continue later. Once you have submitted your answers, you will be able to download a copy of your completed questionnaire. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are compulsory. Those who are interested have the option to develop their responses in a more detailed manner.

Please note that in this questionnaire, we do not intend to obtain data relating to identifiable persons. Therefore, in case you will describe a particular experience or situation, please do it in a way that will not allow linking to a particular individual, whether it is you or somebody else.

Received contributions will be published on the Internet. It is important that you read the specific privacy statement attached to this consultation for information on how your personal data and contribution will be dealt with.

[1] Farm to Fork Strategy (europa.eu)

[2] The report, expected in June 2022, will assess the rationale and legal feasibility of applying EU health and environmental (including animal welfare) standards to imported agri-food products, and will identify the concrete initiatives to ensure better consistency in their application, in conformity with WTO rules. The report will not, however, propose any new initiatives.

Glossary/or explanation of terms used in the survey

The present questionnaire makes repeated reference to a number of concepts, for which it is useful to give indicative explanations upfront (I.e. working definitions for the purpose of this q u e s t i o n n a i r e):

Food system: the food system is understood to include all relevant actors, resources in a broad sense, and activities relevant for the production and consumption of food and beverages and their associated wastes, and their impact on the economy, environment and society (including health)[1]. It considers the processes, infrastructures and interactions involved in feeding a population.

Food system actors are therefore a very broad category, but for practical purposes (including of this questionnaire), we consider the most relevant to be food/feed business operators including primary producers of food/feed, manufacturers, retailers, distributors as well as inputs providers, traders, consumers, financial actors, international traders, advisors and p u b l i c a u t h o r i t i e s.

The food environment concept in this questionnaire must be understood to include physical and digital dimensions. The physical food environment can be defined as the physical, economic, political and socio-cultural contexts in which people engage with the food system to make their decisions about acquiring, preparing and consuming food. The digital food environment refers to the online settings through which flows of services and information that influence people's food and nutrition choices and behaviour are directed. They encompass a range of elements, including social media, digital health promotion interventions, digital food marketing and online food retail.[2]

Sustainable food system: An indicative definition of sustainable food system could be considered the following: "A sustainable food system for the EU is one that: provides and promotes safe, nutritious and healthy food of low environmental impact for all current and future EU population in a manner that itself also protects and restores the natural environment and its ecosystem services, is robust and resilient, economically dynamic, just and fair, and socially acceptable and inclusive. It does so without compromising the availability of nutritious and healthy food for people living outside the EU, nor impairing their natural environment."[3]

[1] JRC: Bock, A., Bontoux, L. and Rudkin, J., Concepts for a sustainable EU food system, EUR 30894 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, ISBN 978-92-76-43727-7 (online), doi:10.2760/381319 (online), JRC126575.

[2] idem

[3] https://www.sapea.info/wp-content/uploads/sustainable-food-system-report.pdf

About you

*Language of my contribution

Academic/research institution

	Bulgarian
	Croatian
	Czech
	Danish
	Dutch
	English
	Estonian
	Finnish
	French
	German
	Greek
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0	Irish
	Italian
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Business associ	ation							
Company/business organisation								
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Environmental o	rganisation							
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secretary@marketac.eu								
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Antigua and Barbuda	Eswatini	Mali	Seychelles
Argentina	Ethiopia	Malta	Sierra Leone
Armenia	Falkland Islands	Marshall Islands	Singapore
Aruba	Faroe Islands	Martinique	Sint Maarten
Australia	Fiji	Mauritania	Slovakia
Austria	Finland	Mauritius	Slovenia
Azerbaijan	France	Mayotte	Solomon Islands
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Central African	0	Iraq		Palau	0	Tuvalu
Republic						
Chad		Ireland		Palestine	0	Uganda
Chile		Isle of Man		Panama		Ukraine
China	0	Israel		Papua New	0	United Arab
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Christmas Island		Italy		Paraguay	0	United Kingdom
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Cocos (Keeling)	0	Japan		Philippines		United States
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Colombia	0	Jersey	0	Pitcairn Islands	0	Uruguay
Comoros	0	Jordan	0	Poland	0	US Virgin Islands
Congo		Kazakhstan		Portugal	0	Uzbekistan
Cook Islands		Kenya		Puerto Rico		Vanuatu
Costa Rica	0	Kiribati		Qatar	0	Vatican City
Côte d'Ivoire		Kosovo		Réunion	0	Venezuela
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Questionnaire

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Do not take position
* The existing EU food system is not sustainable in the long term	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* There is a strong interplay and interdependence between the environmental, social (including health and nutrition) and economic dimensions of sustainability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Sustainability is fundamental for food security and for the resilience of the food system in the long term	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Consumers do not have sufficient information on the sustainability of foods	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* The current food system is not ready to meet future challenges, e. g. climate change, preserving natural resources and reversing biodiversity loss	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* In order to be successful, food systems sustainability must be ensured both in the EU and at global level	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

2. To foster the transition to sustainable food systems, how important (or impactful) are the actions of the actors listed below:

	Very important	Somewhat important	Neither important nor unimportant	Rather not important	Not important at all	Do not know	Do not take position
* Consumers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Primary producers of animal products (e.g. livestock farmers)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Fishers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Aquaculture producers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Primary producers of crops for food and feed (e. g. farmers)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Food/feed manufacturers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Traders (of food commodities or food/feed) importing from 3rd countries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Traders (of food commodities or food/feed) exporting to 3rd countries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Retailers of food/feed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
 Hospitality and food services, including restaurants and caterers 	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business operators active in the area of plant protection products	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Business operators active in the area of fertilizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
*							

Business operators active in the area of seeds and plant propagating material	©	©	©	©	0	0	0
* Business operators active in the area of food contact materials	0	0	©	0	0	0	0
* Business operators active in the area of veterinary medicinal products	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Business operators active in biotechnology relating to the food system	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* EU institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* National governments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Regional governments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Cities, local authorities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Educational system	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Non-governmental organisations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Investors, banks or financial institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Knowledge providers, advisors, research and innovation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Other category: [please specify]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. How easy is it, in your assessment, for the following actors of the food system to make sustainable choices:

	Very difficult	Difficult	Relatively easy	Very easy	D o not know	Do not take position
* Consumers	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Primary producers of animal products (e.g. livestock farmers)	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Fishers and aquaculture producers	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Primary producers of crops for food and feed (e.g. farmers)	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Food/feed manufacturers	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Traders (of agricultural commodities or food/feed), including importers /exporters, wholesalers	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Retailers of food/feed	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Hospitality and food services, including restaurants and caterers	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Business operators active in the area of plant protection products	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Business operators active in the area of fertilizers	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Business operators active in the area of seeds and plant propagating material	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Business operators active in the area of food contact materials	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Business operators active in the area of veterinary medicinal products	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Business operators active in biotechnology relating to the food system	0	0	0	0	0	0
* EU institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0
* National governments	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Regional governments	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Cities, local authorities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Educational system	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Non-governmental organisations	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Investors, banks or financial institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Knowledge providers, advisors, research and innovation	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Other category: [please specify]	0	0	0	0	0	0

Optional: please justify your answer briefly

i	1000 character(s) maximum

4. To what extent do the following factors prevent food system actors from making sustainable choices in the production/processing/distribution/consumption of food products:

	To a high extent	To some extent	To no extent	Do not know	Do not take position
* Long-term/real costs and impacts of food are not reflected in the price and cost of food	0	0	0	0	0
* Food system actors', including consumers', choices are based mainly on short-term costs	0	0	0	0	0
* Increasing competition on global markets	0	0	0	0	0
* No systematic integration of sustainability in the operations of food system actors	0	0	0	0	0
* Lack of common understanding of sustainability among food system actors in the EU single market	0	0	0	0	0
* Lack of common understanding among food system actors at global level in relation to sustainability	0	0	0	0	0
* Lack of transparency on/information about the sustainability of a product or its production /distribution process in the EU market	0	0	0	0	0
* Lack of transparency/information about the sustainability of a product or its production process at global level	0	0	0	0	0
* Marketing and advertising practices	0	0	0	0	0
* Unbalance of market power in the food system, weakening the ability of certain actors (e.g. farmers) to invest in more sustainable practices.	0	0	0	0	0

including c		nabits of food sys	stem actors,	0	0	0	0	0
	onments whic	h predispose to y consumers		0	0	0	0	0
_	-	k (lack of system definitions etc.)	atic	0	0	0	0	0
	geted incentiv inancial, R&I)	es to produce su	stainable	0	0	0	0	0
	Insufficient availability of/accessibility to sustainable processes/products/services			0	0	0	0	0
* Existence	of multiple priv	ate standards		0	0	0	0	0
* Lack of inte	ernational star	ndards on sustair	nability	0	0	0	0	0
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	estment in / ki support meas	nowledge/ acces ures	s to	0	0	0	0	0
* Insufficier interdepen	dencies, co-	on food benefits and tr	systems ade-offs of	0	0	0	0	0
* Other (plea	ase specify):			0	0	0	0	0
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* Regional	0	0	0	0	0
Local	0	0	0	0	0

7. Which level of government can best accelerate the transition to a sustainable food system?

(tick all that apply)

	No role	Limited role	Important role
* Global (international organisations)	0	0	0
* EU	0	0	0
* National	0	0	0
* Regional	0	0	0
* Local	0	0	0

8. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Do not take position
*To encourage and accelerate the transition to a sustainable EU food system, it is necessary to establish EU-wide general objectives, principles and definitions relevant for the sustainability of the food system	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* At EU and national level competent authorities should ensure that sustainability is mainstreamed in all food related policies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* EU trade policy, in particular, should be consistent with the objectives of the transition to a sustainable EU food system	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Business operators active in the food system should have mechanisms in place to ensure that operations/processes and/or products within the businesses under their control satisfy any sustainability-related requirements of EU law	0	0	0	0	0	0	©
* Sustainability objectives for the EU food system should be translated into specific requirements by sector where not available	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* A sustainability analysis in the form of a global analysis of the sustainability profile of a product or operations is needed to accelerate the transition to sustainable food systems forward	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Business operators of different sizes should have different levels of responsibility	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Best practices contributing to achieving a sustainable EU food system should be shared across the EU and nationally	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Optional: If you wish	, please briefly justify you	ır answer	
1000 character(s) maximu	ım		

9. How important would you consider that the activity of a food system actor (to be considered as covering their internal operations /processes and/or products, within their businesses and under their control) should not significantly harm the following aspects:

	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Do not know	Do not take position
* Climate change mitigation (e.g. reduction of greenhouse gas emission)	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Climate change adaptation (e.g. improvement of irrigation efficiency)	0	0	0	0	0	0
* The sustainable use and protection of land	0	0	0	0	0	0
* The sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources	0	0	0	0	0	0
* The transition to a circular economy ("reduce, reuse, recycle")	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Pollution prevention and control of air, water and soil	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Environmental protection (Minimise or improve all environmental aspects linked to the food system in a holistic way)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prevention of slavery and forced labour	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fair and just working conditions	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Fair and just remuneration of primary producers (farmers and fishers)	0	0	0	0	0	©
Prevention of child labour and protection of young people at work	0	0	0	0	0	©
Food safety and risks to human health	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Availability of food supplies	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Affordability of sustainable food	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Accessibility of sustainable food	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cultural/culinary habits	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Quality nutrition, to promote human health	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Animal welfare	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Animal and plant health	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Impact on developing countries	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Other [please specify]	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Do not know	Do not ta position
* Global	0	0	0	0	0	0
* EU	0	0	0	0	0	0
* National	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Regional	0	0	0	0	0	0
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Optional: Please elaborate on its activity and your role in it

1000 character(s) maximum

14. What role do you see for platforms/dialogue groups/initiatives in the transition to and governance of a sustainable food system?

2500 character(s) maximum

For the purpose of questions 15, 16 and 17 of this questionnaire, sustainability information to consumers (or sustainability labelling) covers, as specified in the Farm to Fork Strategy, information on the nutritional, climate/environmental and social aspects of food products. Social aspects include amongst others animal welfare and socio-economic aspects.

* 15. On which of the below aspects of sustainability, should consumers receive information to

emp	ΟW	er	them	to	make	sustainable	food	choice
and	the	e last be	eing the le	ess impo	rtant)	ance, the first bein		' importan
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	:	Climate						
	:	Environme	ent					
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	:	Other asp	ects (please	specify)				
If "ot	he	r aspec	ts", please	e specify	У			

16. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Do not take position
* Consumers pay more and more attention to the sustainability of the food they buy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Sustainability information currently provided to consumers on food products is reliable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Sustainability information currently provided to consumers on food products is clear and easy to understand	0	0	©	0	©	0	0
* Sustainability information currently provided on food products allows consumers to choose sustainable food products	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
*The multiplicity of sustainability labels on food products are confusing for consumers	0	©	0	0	0	0	0
* Providing information to consumers about the sustainability of the food they buy is a useful tool and it will accelerate the transition to a sustainable food system	0	0	0	0	©	0	0
* Reliable and evidence-based sustainability labelling of food products would also help incentivising operators to supply more sustainable products	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Food businesses should be subject to the same rules on sustainability information to consumers across the entire EU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* A dedicated sustainability label which allows comparing the sustainability of food products would help consumers to make sustainable food choices	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

*17. If an EU sustainability label was established:
(please select only one answer)
Such a label should be a voluntary label identifying only sustainable food
products
Such a label should be a voluntary label- identifying sustainable and non-
sustainable food products
Such a label should be a mandatory label informing on the sustainability of all
EU food products
Such a label should be a mandatory label informing on the sustainability of all
EU and imported food products
A EU sustainability label is not necessary / desirable
Don't know
Other (please specify)
* 18. To what extent should schools and public institutions consider sustainability when
purchasing food?
None
Limited
Moderate
Great
Do not know
No opinion
19. If "moderate" or "great", how important do you think such an action would be for the
transition to sustainable food system?
Very important/impactful
Moderately important/impactful
Neutral
Only with a limited importance impact
Not important/impactful at all
I do not know
I do not take position

20. In relation to **public procurement of food served in schools and public institutions**, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Do not take position
* The meals should be enjoyable and tasty	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* The meals should be accessible to all, at an affordable price	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Plant based alternatives should be offered more frequently	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Food produced locally should be offered more frequently	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Nutritionally well balanced meals (e.g. alternatives lower in sugars and fats) should be offered more frequently	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* More fruits and vegetables should be offered	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Food produced from traditional and locally adapted varieties, in particular for fruit and vegetables, should be offered more frequently	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Production of food of animal origin should respect high animal welfare standards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Organic meals/ingredients should be offered more frequently	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* The social impact of the meals offered (e.g. human rights , workers rights) should be taken into account in procurement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* The environmental impact of the meals offered should be taken into account in procurement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* The nutritional quality of meals offered should be taken into account in procurement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Food services companies that respect social values beyond the sectoral collective agreements should be favoured in procurement	0	0	0	0	©	0	0
* The school has an educational role to play concerning the sustainability of food	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Information about the nutritional composition, of the meals served should be provided in the canteens of public institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Information about the environmental impact of the meals served should be provided in the canteens of public institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Information about the social impact of the meals served should be provided in the canteens of public institutions.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Information about the animal welfare standards respected should be provided in the canteens of public institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

21. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Do not take position
* Food composition targets for sugars, salt, and saturated fat for all food categories should be set	0	0	0	0	©	0	0
* Targets for added sugars, salt and saturated fat for processed and ultra-processed foods and meals should be set	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* When designing policies that impact food prices (such as subsidy schemes and taxation), competent authorities should consider how these policies can encourage a higher consumption of whole grain cereals, vegetables, fruits,legumes and nuts, and a lower consumption of red meat and foods high in sugars, salt, and saturated fat	©	©	•	©	•	©	•

22. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Do not take position
* The marketing, advertising and sales promotion, including online, of foods high in saturated fat, salt or sugars to children should be restricted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Marketing techniques should be restricted unless the products they relate to are of high nutritional standard (e.g. low in saturated fat, salt or sugars)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
* Sponsorship activities that result in advertising during big events (e. g. sports events) should be restricted for products high in saturated fat, salt or sugars	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
*The merchandising of foods (i.e. the way food products are presented in retail outlets) should promote healthier food choices	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

23. What incentives would be most effective in stimulating sustainable production/processing /distribution/consumption methods and techniques?
1000 character(s) maximum
*24. Do food system actors have sufficient knowledge and skills for the transition to
sustainable food systems?
Yes
No
Do not know
I do not take position
*25. Are there food system actors that are better prepared for the transition than others?
Yes
No
Do not know
I do not take position
Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire!
Document upload
Please feel free to upload a concise document, such as a position paper. The uploaded document will be published alongside your response to the questionnaire which is the essential input to this public consultation. The document is optional and serves as additional background reading to better understand your position.
Please upload your file Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

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