



## News from Brussels & Member States

### EU Commission Green Deal: Farm to Fork & Biodiversity Strategies

On 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020, the European Commission published the long-awaited From Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies.

Agroecology Europe welcomed these strategies as two positive signals of changes and improvements towards a greener and more sustainable and resilient Europe.

Recognising that *“There is an urgent need to reduce dependency on pesticides and antimicrobials, reduce excess fertilisation, increase organic farming, improve animal welfare, and reverse biodiversity loss”* and that *“Protecting and restoring biodiversity and well-functioning ecosystems is therefore key to boost our resilience and prevent the emergence and spread of future diseases”*, the EU Commission has paved the way for a great environmental transition.

Even better, the EU Commission Biodiversity Strategy recognises that *“Agroecology can provide healthy food while maintaining productivity, increase soil fertility and biodiversity, and reduce the footprint of food production”!*

All these targets can of course not be achieved without the support of the CAP that focuses on the Green Deal, nor without the full cooperation of the Member States and the farmers. As Commissioner Kyriakides stated this afternoon at the live press conference: *“Without a healthy planet, farmers will have nowhere to farm”*.

Like many, Agroecology Europe still considers these targets far from what would be needed to restore biodiversity. But let us be positive today and consider these strategies as a milestone, a turning point, the beginning of a shift of paradigm where sustainability, resilience and the environment will be at the centre of every future policy and legislation.



In a nutshell, the actions will be taken at EU level to achieve the following targets:

- Reduction by 50% of the use of and risk from chemical and more hazardous pesticides by 2030;
- Replacing pesticides with agroecological practices;
- Reduction of nutrient losses by at least 50%, while ensuring no deterioration on soil fertility and reduction of fertilizer use by at least 20% by 2030;
- Reduction by 50% of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 2030;
- Achieving 25% of total farmland under organic farming by 2030;
- Achieving at least 10% of agricultural area under high-diversity landscape features.

For further information, please read the full texts here:

- [Biodiversity Strategy](#)
- [Farm to Fork Strategy](#)



## Reforming the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union in the Framework of the EU Green Deal – The Position of Agroecology Europe

Agroecology Europe (AEEU) developed its position on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) by analysing and drawing on the consequences of the current environmental, social, and economic situation of the agricultural and food system, and by building this position on the solid foundations of:

- the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFUE),
- the priorities for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the 2021-27 period,
- the European Green Deal, and specifically the Farm to Fork approach.

Agroecology Europe recommends **four measures**:

1. **The phasing out of current subsidies by agricultural area and livestock head, and on energy**, large equipment and external inputs...
2. **If basic subsidies are maintained, they should be paid on a full-time equivalent worker (FTE) basis** and not on a hectare (or livestock head) basis
3. **The main part of taxpayer's money spent within the CAP should be allocated to the production of public goods**, i.e. the provision of ecosystem services and the restoration of biodiversity and the ecological network (payment for result-oriented agro-environment and climate measures).
4. **A financial support to the transition** towards agroecological farming

For further information on the full AEEU Position Paper on the reform of the CAP, please click on this [link](#).



### European Parliament Research for the AGRI Committee – “The Farm to Fork Strategy implications for agriculture and the CAP”

In May 2020, the Centre for Research of the European Parliament, and its Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, prepared an in-depth analysis to explore the possible implications of the Farm to Fork Strategy (F2F) for agriculture and the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) and, as a result, on the legislative works of the European Parliament AGRI Committee (Committee for Agriculture and Rural development) over the 2020 - 2023 period.

For further information on this study, please [click here](#).





## Good Food, Good Farming – European Days of Action: Oct. 1-31 2020!

The Good Food Good Farming campaign launched by ARC2020 (the NGO focused on better farming, food, rural and environmental policy and to whom AEEU is member of) is organising again this year the European action days #GoodFoodGoodFarming from 1 to 31 October 2020 to raise the alarm for Good food and good farming.

The objective of the European Days of Action for Good Food Good Farming is to engage civil society, farmers, activists, and citizens to call for a fundamental change of our food and farming system with agricultural policies that promote a transition towards a better and sustainable food system, providing quality food for all.

In the coming months, the European Union and national governments will make vital decisions on the EU Common Agricultural Policy for the next decade. As we enter the crucial phase of the reform negotiations, now is our time to take urgent action and prevent politicians from letting anymore time slip away!

This is why, AEEU will participate to these European action days #GoodFoodGoodFarming and invite you to join us: <https://www.goodfoodgoodfarming.eu>

## News from Belgium – ‘The Sophia Plan’

### A transition plan for Belgium, for a sustainable post-Covid 19 recovery

While the exit from the Covid-19 health crisis is beginning to be mastered, the economic crisis we are all experiencing is only just beginning. The recent situation has shown us that the resilience of the economy is as important as its productivity and competitiveness.

An ecological and social transition will avoid, delay or mitigate the effects of future crises. This is why, in Belgium, the Resilience Management Group, made up of scientists and entrepreneurs in the field of ecological transition, has developed a draft plan of measures to help the Belgian authorities to achieve this: the so-called 'Sophia' ('Wisdom') plan.

More than 100 scientists and 182 companies from the KAYA Coalition, the Belgian business coalition of ecological transition companies, worked collaboratively to propose a transition plan for their country, Belgium. Together, they combined their thinking and field experience to create a plan containing more than 200 measures in 15 areas, in order to stimulate debate and help politicians to meet the many challenges: energy, mobility, relocation, jobs, health, agriculture and food, taxation, sustainable consumption, construction, democracy and public authorities, the new social contract, education, development cooperation, ...

The goal? To immediately begin the transition to a sustainable economy, to avoid new systemic crises that would be inevitable if the recovery were to proceed in the same way.

For further information, please visit the following [link](#) to access the complete document and view testimonials.





## News from France – The Shift Project is working on the French Economic Transformation Plan

The Shift Project, a French think tank advocating the shift to a post-carbon economy and chaired by Jean-Marc Jancovici, has made available on its [website](#) some twenty fact sheets on the progress of its 'French Economic Transformation Plan' (Plan de transformation de l'économie française (PTEF)). Each fact sheet can be read separately.



Initiated last May 2020, thanks to a crowdfunding reuniting 3700 donors, they provide an overview of the work already carried out by this recognised association of general interest whose mission is to shed light on and influence the debate on energy transition in Europe.

This first report gives the overall vision of the French Economic Transformation Plan (PTEF), the potential of technology to decarbonise in the short term, sectoral vision sheets and the precise reasons why our economy should be transformed.

"These measures should make it possible to initiate a transformation trajectory to decarbonise our activities at the right pace and make society resilient to shocks," the association says on its website. Building these proposals, sector by sector, through the mobilisation of the stakeholders concerned, will be the subject of the next phase of the PTEF project, which will begin in autumn 2020.

Amongst its twenty fact sheets, one fact sheet is focusing on agriculture and food. Drawing on the studies already carried out on agro-ecological transition and the construction of sustainable and resilient food systems, the Shift Project is proposing three transformation axes for this sector by 2050. The first axis concerns the re-territorialisation of certain agricultural and agri-food activities. The second axis focuses on decarbonation and the resilience of agricultural systems. And the third axis focuses on the evolution of diets.

For further information, please visit the [Shift Project's website and its fact sheet on agriculture and food](#).

## STUDY PROGRAMMES

### News from Italy – New Study Programme: Master in Agroecology and Food Sovereignty at the University of Gastronomic Sciences (Bra, Italy)

The new Master in Agroecology and Food Sovereignty will start in September 2020 at the University of Gastronomic Sciences (Bra, Italy).

The Master was developed within the frame of the Nextfood project (H2020) with an action-learning approach. The Master has attracted the passionate activists around the world with different backgrounds and high interest in Agroecology and Food Sovereignty. Besides various (theoretical and practical) didactic activities, the Master aims at creating a worldwide network that will embrace the students, Slow Food Terra Madre communities and the academic world.

The expected outcomes of the Master include strengthened knowledge on Agroecology and Food Sovereignty, mutual practical benefits for farmers and for the students, and the Booklet with the students' research and rural experiences.

- **CLUB OF ROME CONFERENCE – Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020,14:00, Brussels**

The Club of Rome EU-Chapter, in collaboration with Agroecology Europe and IPES-Food (International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems), is organising a conference on 'From Farm to Fork' - Sustainable Food Systems and the EU Green Deal, on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2020 in Brussels.

Our current food system is not sustainable. It should be dramatically changed if we want to achieve the goals of the European Green Deal and Agenda 2030 to build a better and more resilient society. This conference will address how should the CAP be reformed to comply with this vision of a sustainable future and what should be the roles of the consumers/citizens, the farmers, the agrobusiness and the authorities? Interested in some answers?

Please note that this conference is public, open to all interested in food, agriculture and environmental quality.

Should you wish to participate to it, please visit the [Club of Rome dedicated website](#).

- **AGROECOLOGY EUROPE 3<sup>rd</sup> FORUM, Barcelona – Spain, 9-12 June 2021 – Save the Date!**

Agroecology Europe is organising its 3rd Agroecology Europe Forum to support exchange, reflection and bottom-up contributions, bringing together local farmers, universities, social movement organisations, local administrations and non-governmental organisations.

It will take place on 9-12 June 2021 in Barcelona, Spain, at the premises of the Barcelona City Council, in the building of the Fàbrica de Creació de Barcelona (Centro Fabra i Coats).

Following the 2 first successful editions of the Forum in 2017 in Lyon, France and in 2019 in Heraklion, Crete, the third edition will have the following theme: "Agroecology for regeneration of our food systems and communities".

More information on the programme will follow in due time.

Save the date & stay tuned for further information coming soon!





## Stories from the field

### A holistic transition from a mixed farming system combining annual crops and dairy cattle to agroecology, Jean-Marie and Arnaud VELGHE, Peruwelz (Belgium)

After three key transformation phases towards more agroecology, Jean-Marie Velghe and his family is now considered as pioneer of sustainable farming practices in Belgium, thanks to his many efforts to develop techniques such as direct seeding, green manures, farmyard manure composting, herbaceous field margins, barn hay drying instead of grass silage, a large self-sufficiency in fodder for livestock feed and the reduction of the use of pesticides and fertilizers.

Jean-Marie Velghe started in a first phase to enlarge its farm size from 20 ha up to 100 ha and up to 70 dairy cows. He then became more specialised and converted the dual-purpose cattle breed into a specialized high merit Holstein-Friesian dairy cowherd. At that time, crop and livestock yields were increased, and this was achieved by an intensive use of fertilizers, pesticides, animal feed which induced high production costs.

In a second stage, he decided to diversify his activities by adding to the traditional crops of the region, cereals and sugar beet, the production of more profitable industrial products such as potatoes, spinach, green beans and peas. And in order to reduce his production costs by increasing forage self-sufficiency of dairy herd: replacing green maize silage and soybean meal by forage of legume-based temporary grassland, basing dairy cow diet now to a large extent on grass completed by on-farm produced cereal and pulse grain, and adopting a dynamic rotational grazing system. All expenses linked with commercial animal feed were stopped. The rate of forage self-sufficiency is now close to 100%. As regards crops, the Velghe's family intended to reduce progressively the use of soluble fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides and insecticides.

Finally, as a third stage of transition towards more agroecology practices and increase of his quality's products, Jean-Marie Velghe changed his product processing and focused his marketing on short and local marketing chains. Despite the obligation to reimbursing important loans, he adopted a new audacious daring strategy: decreasing the number of dairy cows, crossbreeding the high-yielding Holstein-Friesian cows with lower milk yielding but higher quality Normande breed, decreasing the proportion of milk production sold to the dairy factory, processing the remaining part of milk for making raw milk hard-cheese, and selling it in short and local marketing chain in a new farm shop. As a consequence, profitability increased and three new jobs have been created.

In one generation, a very small farm, created by an immigrant farmer, has become a large and efficient farm that is considered as an exemplary agroecological system. It has innovated in various areas related to fertilization, weed, disease and pest control, simplified tillage techniques, animal feeding, grazing system, grass/legume forage mixtures, forage conservation, conservation of forage, and the carbon storage in soils and the reduction of pollution.

All this has also had a positive impact on biodiversity above and below the soil surface.



## JOIN US & BECOME A MEMBER!

### Why becoming a Member?

The goals and objectives of the association are broken down into activities, where each member can participate and become active. Becoming a member includes to get access to the intranet with resources such as list of members, minutes and reports of meetings and working groups, conference proceedings, papers, etc. Also, members can vote and can get elected in the General Assembly, initiate, and participate in working groups, participate at reduced fees for Agroecology Europe conferences or workshops.

### How to become a Member?

The Association is open to all individuals, groups and institutions interested in promoting agroecology, and aims to define its agenda through their participatory engagement. Membership is automatic after payment of an annual subscription (civil year).

#### The membership of the Association consists of six categories:

- Ordinary Members: 80 Euro
- Supported Members: 30 Euro
- NGO members: 100 Euro
- Private companies: 160 Euro
- Sustaining Members: minimum 160 Euro
- Honorary Members: free

**Ordinary Members:** Any individual in Europe or elsewhere interested in the objectives of the Association. Ordinary members include for instance professionals and seniors.

**Supported Members:** Students (including PhD students), low-income and unemployed people.

**Honorary Members:** Distinguished persons proposed by the Board. Honorary Members are persons who have made an outstanding contribution to the Association.

**Sustaining Members:** Organizations or individuals willing to provide financial support for the Association.



Please pay the membership fee to the following bank account and inform the Secretariat ([info@agroecology-europe.org](mailto:info@agroecology-europe.org)) and Treasurer ([alain.peeters@agroecology-europe.org](mailto:alain.peeters@agroecology-europe.org)) about your payment.

We will then acknowledge your membership once the payment received.

Account holder: Agroecology Europe aisbl

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