

PROMOTING LOCALLY DEVELOPED, SUSTAINABLE FOOD

The recent health crisis, climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, increasing food insecurity and numerous social movements have made food more than ever a key issue for our society. They have challenged the globalised food system developed in the 20th century, which is not sustainable and must be revisited.

Organising a transition to sustainable food requires pivoting to diets that are themselves sustainable and that, according to the FAO's definition, *"are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimising natural and human resources."* Sustainable local procurement allows us to address the issues of relocating the economy, building a food supply with low environmental impact that relies primarily on local natural resources, and reconnecting citizens with all the issues stemming from their eating habits, well beyond their purchasing decisions alone.

Although collective initiatives and Local Food Projects (PATs) have multiplied over the last few years, enabling a transition towards more resilient models, they remain limited to the most proactive regions and the most motivated actors. Public policies are still too compartmentalised and inefficient. They must contend with the economic strategies of commercial segmentation, with the

risk of reinforcing segregation and threatening the social cohesion that is essential in a democracy.

This observation led the ESEC to take up the issue, whose challenges were amplified by the Covid-19 health crisis. Its work has helped identify certain weaknesses in our food systems, such as the heavy dependence on imports for nutritionally balanced foods (fresh fruit and vegetables, legumes), or the tensions between the current system of food aid and the reduction of food waste.

This opinion, which follows on from the one adopted in March 2019 as part of the national debate, *"Fractures and transitions: reconciling France"*, aims to strengthen public policies in order to achieve the necessary changes in our food production, processing, distribution and consumption models.

The steps taken must be part of a systemic approach involving all stakeholders. Some recommendations concerning the overseas regions in particular have been drawn up by their own delegation. Others are the result of a partnership with the National Food Council. Managers of local food projects also contributed to their development.

For our assembly, these measures are about strengthening food democracy and ensuring that the fundamental right to healthy, balanced, high-quality and affordable food is respected.



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1/ SOCIAL ISSUES

A massive increase in food insecurity, aggravated by the Covid crisis in 2020

x2

In less than 10 years (2009-2018), food aid has doubled in our country



335,000 tonnes of food were distributed in 2018, to **5.5 million** people

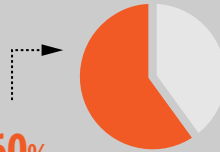


+45%

increase in demand for food aid following the Covid crisis in April 2020, according to Secours Populaire

9.2 Million

food insecure people in 2018, according to the government



60% of food insecure people used food aid in 2018

2/ SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

Curbing agricultural land take to ensure food self-sufficiency

↓ -50%

Available farm area per capita has decreased from 8,300 m² in 1930 to 4,439 m² in 2020
(Study: *Le revers de notre assiette*)



Developing Local Food Projects (PATs)



150 projects supported under the National Food Plan's calls for proposals over the past 5 years



Approximately 40 local food projects, officially labelled

THE ESEC'S RECOMMENDATIONS

STRENGTHENING FOOD DEMOCRACY

- Establish a public policy of creating "sustainable food centres" involving all stakeholders, in order to develop an eco-citizen food programme with concrete measures (tours of local producers, cooking workshops, etc.)
- Invest municipalities and/or EPCIs with authority over sustainable food matters in order to create close ties between social action, institutional catering, drinking water supply, land and urban planning, local commercial networks, etc.
- Encourage municipalities and inter-communal authorities to develop local food ecosystems in order to support local farmers, VSEs and craftsmen (with the granting of "local sustainable food" vouchers to people in need, the promotion of agro-ecological production, the use of complementary local currencies, etc.)
- With the CAP and ESF+, increase funding to food insecurity initiatives that promote local sustainable food and involve the beneficiaries; their coordination could be entrusted to regional food committees (CRALIMs)
- Set up a special school catering programme in each overseas department and region, with priority given to local production and short or local supply chains, and provide each overseas territory with a sustainable food education project to disseminate preventive nutrition messaging

3/ ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

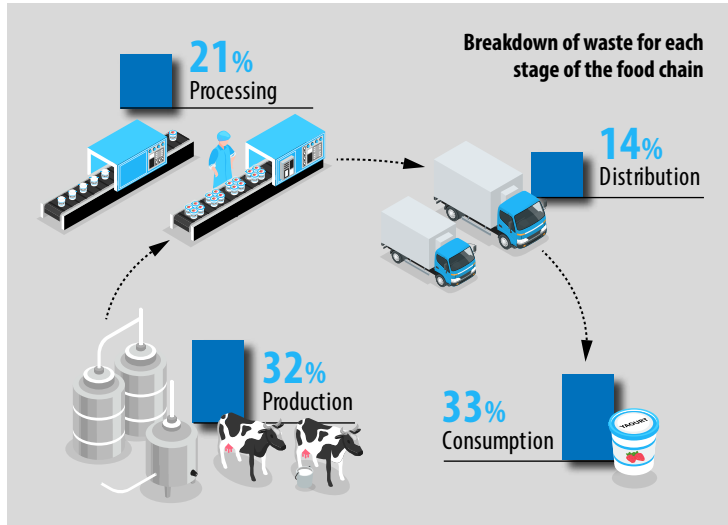
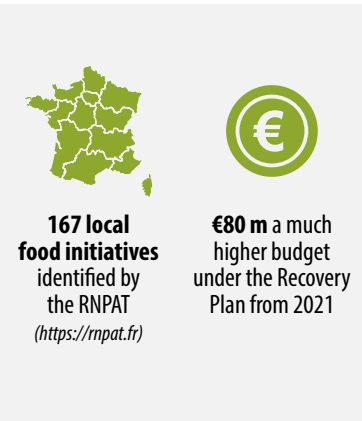
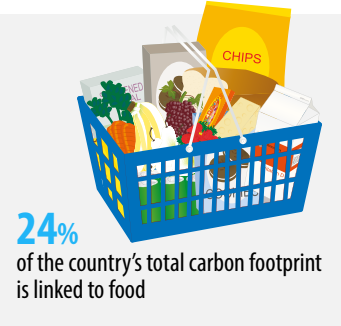


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DEVELOPING LOCAL, SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

- **Make “logistics contracts” compulsory in each city to rebalance supplies and organise local food resilience, while involving all stakeholders and relying on the National Interest Markets under an overhauled regulatory framework**
- **Create a “Sustainable Quality” label in addition to the “Home-made” label, in order to officially recognise commercial restaurants that comply with the provisions of Article 24 of the EGALIM Law**
- **Provide each overseas territory with a local agriculture and food project supported by the local authorities**
- **Increase funding to PATs using the “sustainable food” portion of the Recovery Plan, the second pillar of the next CAP, regional aid and funding from the Banque des Territoires, and simplify the official recognition procedure**
- **Develop PATs based on a collective assessment and a structured evaluation process:**
 - ensure a systemic approach in line with the objectives of national and local plans (health, environment, etc.);
 - diversify consultation methods to allow non-business actors to participate in their development and implementation;
 - For each PAT, design a system to evaluate objectives and outcome indicators.
- **Incorporate PRADs and food issues into the SRADETs, and develop an assessment at this level (with an analysis of resources and needs, including for institutional catering) in order to organise support for small and medium-sized processing units**
- **Task the CRALIMs with managing the network of PATs in order to provide them with technical assistance, help them find funding, propose exchanges of experience and facilitate inter-EPCI collaboration.**

ALIGN PUBLIC POLICIES TO ACHIEVE A RAPID TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD

👉 Adopt a land law and orient planning policies around sustainable food issues:

- raise awareness among elected representatives and the general public about the spatial footprint of food depending on various modes of production and diets;
- include a local food strategy in development and urban planning documents and combine them with a land strategy that encourages the entry of new producers (Zero Net Land Take, protected agricultural zones, etc.);
- expand the moratorium on peripheral commercial zones to include e-commerce warehouses in order to build a commercial development policy that prioritises activities related to sustainable and local food;
- increase the number of "Cœur de ville" initiatives to support local craftsmen and food traders.

👉 Reform and re-orient the next CAP toward European food sovereignty, organised by region:

- strengthen environmental conditionality and introduce social conditionality;
- increase the proportion of the first pillar devoted to payments for environmental services (practices that support water, biodiversity and permanent grasslands, organic farming);
- implement coupled support (legumes, fresh fruit and vegetables, grassland).

👉 Include a preference for local sustainable food chains in the National Strategic Plan for the next CAP:

- strengthen agri-environment-climate measures (AECMs) to support transitions, particularly in catchment areas;
- create social measures (the inclusion of employment criteria in direct aid, incentives for employers to improve the employment conditions of employees);
- support collective initiatives aimed at farm diversification and autonomy and local network density through processing tools and market places for local products, using Economic and Environmental Interest Groups (EEIG).

👉 Recognise the high social value of employment in agricultural production and agri-food processing:

- incorporate social issues into the specifications for origin and quality labels (SIQOs) and PATs;
- establish guidelines for secondment (industry-wide agreements, transnational control partnerships, etc.);
- promote local employment (develop tools for seasonal recruitment and improve employment and working conditions, in conjunction with the organisations developed by social partners);
- give priority to permanent, quality jobs and promote the development of job sharing (employer groups, etc.).

👉 Implement structured assistance with a support fund financed under the Recovery Plan, to help all institutional catering services achieve the objectives of the EGALIM law:

- build a shared environmental foundation for SIQOs that includes the 6th label ("organic, local and fair trade") and the "Valeur Parc" brand of Regional Nature Parks (PNRs) in the list of quality products;
- enhance information on sustainable food by expanding the use of the Nutriscore;
- make it compulsory to offer a vegetarian meal or a plant-based alternative as a main course every week, taking into account the results of the experiment prescribed by the EGALIM law;
- amend public procurement law at the European level to authorise explicit proximity criteria favouring sustainable food, while making better use of the current legal tools.

👉 Step up the fight against food waste:

- strengthen and better target measures against food waste in the national fund for the circular economy;
- disseminate tools to quantify and qualify food waste; strengthen controls;
- ease marketing standards for fruit and vegetable sizing;
- expand the use of anti-food waste networks (REGALs).

👉 Open a debate on the effectiveness of the right to access locally developed sustainable food, to be conducted with the dedicated consultative bodies and the relevant ministries.