

PROTEIN ACTION PLAN

Key points for consumers

Why it matters to consumers

Consumers need **affordable and accessible** healthy and sustainable plant-based foods. The European Commission's [Protein Action Plan](#) recognises the role of greater EU plant protein production in supporting a more resilient and sustainable food system.

Unhealthy diets are a major risk factor for **chronic diseases**, including cardiovascular diseases (CVDs). Yet, **European food systems** still push unhealthy options by being more prominent and cheaper.

Read
our Blueprint



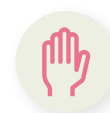
While the Protein Action Plan acknowledges the need for more diversified diets, it lacks the ambition and concrete measures to support a broader transition towards richer plant-based diets. To achieve this goal, policymakers should pay greater attention to consumer demand and ensure that plant-based foods are available and attractive to consumers. The table below presents BEUC's takeaways on the Action Plan and associated policy recommendations:



what BEUC supports



what can be improved



what BEUC considers problematic

TOPICS

RECOMMENDATIONS

EU-PLANT PROTEIN PRODUCTION FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

The only measurable target in the Action Plan is to increase the share of EU-produced protein from oilseeds and protein crops used as animal feed from 25.8% to 35% by 2035.



This is a missed opportunity, as 64% of EU's protein consumption derives from animal products, and plant protein consumption has declined over the past decade. Science **recommends** eating less meat to reduce environmental and health impacts. Most consumers are open to eating more sustainably, yet **face hurdles** to eat more plant-based alternatives.

The Commission should have included a clear objective to increase the share of EU-grown plant proteins for human consumption, instead of just focusing on crops for animal feed.

A measurable target would encourage collective action and provide a clear benchmark to monitor progress and help identify areas needing further action.

DEMAND SIDE MEASURES INVOLVING THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The Plan acknowledges that price and availability shape consumer choices. It rightfully identifies public procurement, including through the EU School Scheme, amongst possible tools to support more diversified diets. It should go further.



These measures should be part of a comprehensive strategy to shift consumption patterns.

EU institutions should focus on existing and new tools. The revision of the Common Market Organisation Regulation and Public Procurement rules brings an opportunity to **introduce nutritional and sustainability procurement criteria that favour healthier and more sustainable food choices**. This should include robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure the impact of Member States implementation.

PLANT BASED FOODS PRICES

The Commission identifies taxation as one of the measures Member States can use to improve access to affordable foods. However, the Plan does not announce concrete actions to make healthy and sustainable plant-based foods more affordable and accessible for consumers.



The Commission should facilitate best practices sharing amongst Member States with practical tools on VAT reduction on plant-based foods (fruits, vegetables, pulses, wholegrains, etc.).

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) should rebalance food production towards healthier foods such as fruits, vegetables and legumes. The CAP's Performance Framework should also include **consumer affordability indicators**.

PROTEIN CROP-ONLY FOCUS

The Plan focuses primarily on protein crops as a way to strengthen the EU's strategic autonomy and reduce its dependence on other countries such as Argentina, Brazil and the United States. From a human consumption perspective, the scope is too narrow.



Policymakers should **build on the Blueprint for an EU Action Plan for Plant-Based Foods** and address the gaps left by the Protein Action Plan.

This means looking beyond protein crops and taking a whole food-system approach, from what the EU produces to what is ultimately available, affordable, and attractive to consumers, through a comprehensive EU plan.

MENTIONING OF THE DANISH ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan mentions the [Danish Action Plan on Plant-Based Foods](#) as a key example for Member States of how to support the value chain for plant-based foods.



The EU should support Member States to **develop and implement national Action Plans** taking inspiration from existing examples.

