



News Release

2040 climate target - EU Commission half-heartedly recognises the role of shifting diets

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Brussels - 6 February 2024

Today, the European Commission published [its communication](#) starting the process for establishing a 2040 intermediary climate target on the EU's road towards climate neutrality by 2050, yet **it fails to recognise the full potential of shifting diets to fully achieve these goals**

The final text **no longer includes a reference to a 30% cut in non-CO2 emissions from agriculture**, such as CH4 emissions from livestock and N2O emissions from soils. Similarly, **parts of the communication recognising the role of lifestyle changes, including dietary shifts, in bringing greenhouse gas emissions down have also been dropped**. On a more positive note, the communication stresses **the role of the food industry in contributing to food environments making healthy diets an easy and affordable choice** for consumers.

The last-minute watering down follows the farmers' protests which have unfolded across Europe. Policymakers are responding to farmers' discontent by settling on short-sighted compromises and rolling back climate policies, rather than adopting necessary long-term measures. Yet, **the agriculture and food sectors have great potential to enable dietary shifts, reduce climate-harming emissions and improve human and animal health**.

"The link between dietary patterns and greenhouse gas emissions is now beyond question. It is beyond understanding that the Commission has deliberately ignored it. If we want to be serious on the climate crises, EU policymakers must regulate food environments, and make our food choices healthy and sustainable by default. They must use the One Health approach - in all policies - as a reflex, not a slogan," **Dr. Milka Sokolovic, Director General, European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), commented.**

"Today the Commission failed to recognise the need for shifting to healthy, plant-rich diets and raising fewer animals under much higher conditions to achieve the EU's climate objectives. Without such a transition the EU falls short on its ambitions on animal welfare whilst jeopardising its climate, environmental and health objectives," **Reineke Hameleers, CEO, Eurogroup for Animals, continued.**

"However hard the Commission tries to handle farmers with kid gloves, facts are stubborn things: our food and agriculture systems contribute a big chunk of the EU's climate impact. Consumers are willing to change the way they eat and play their part in the fight against climate change, provided sustainable, healthy food becomes more available and affordable. Now the ball is in the court of the next European Commission, who will have to urgently dust off the overdue Sustainable Food Systems law and put it on the table. Such law must incentivise industry and retailers to better support consumers in the transition," **Monique Goyens, Director General, European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), added.**

ENDS

NOTES

This [short briefing](#) outlines why shifting diets has a positive impact on health and climate.

[Put Change on the Menu](#) is a collaborative project between [BEUC](#), [Eurogroup for Animals](#), and the [European Public Health Alliance](#).

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[Eurogroup for Animals](#) represents over ninety animal protection organisations in almost all EU Member States, the UK, Switzerland, Serbia, Norway, and Australia. Since its foundation in 1980, the organisation has succeeded in encouraging the EU to adopt higher legal standards for animal protection. Eurogroup for Animals reflects public opinion through its members and has both the scientific and technical expertise to provide authoritative advice on issues relating to animal protection. Eurogroup for Animals is a founding member of the [World Federation for Animals](#) which unites the animal protection movement at the global level.

[The European Consumer Organisation](#) (BEUC) acts as the umbrella group in Brussels for 45 independent national consumer organisations. Our main role is to represent them to the European institutions and defend the interests of European consumers.

[The European Public Health Alliance](#) (EPHA) is a change agent, a leading European civil society alliance in Brussels, made up of public health NGOs, patient groups, health professionals and disease groups, working to improve health and strengthen the voice of public health in Europe.

