

**Subject: Plenary vote on a motion for a resolution on food security in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine**

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

On 24 March, you will vote on a motion for a resolution dealing with the impacts on food security of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation, welcomes the high consideration given to this critical issue for the EU – and even more so for Ukraine and those countries in the world that are highly dependent on imported grain from Ukraine and Russia to feed their populations.

Ahead of the vote, we respectfully wish to draw your attention to some key elements that we think should be reflected in the final motion for a resolution.

- The motion for a resolution must clearly **distinguish between threats to food security resulting from a lack of access to food (i.e. food poverty) as opposed to those linked to insufficient food supply**. Consumers are not at risk of facing food shortages in the EU, except maybe for a few specific products (e.g. sunflower oil) which can be substituted. This message needs to come across clearly, as it can help reassure consumers, many of whom have already started rushing to the shops to stock up on pasta, flour, and vegetable oils – thereby artificially emptying supermarket shelves. On the other hand, many European consumers risk facing difficulties in accessing food because of the rise in prices (which was already marked before the war and is largely triggered by the energy crisis). As such, **the resolution must stress the need for social measures** to buffer consumers against the risk of food poverty. In Spain, for instance, consumer group OCU [is calling on the government](#) to create food vouchers for vulnerable households. In Germany, BEUC's member vzbv [has called for abolishing VAT on fruit, vegetable, and pulses](#) to make healthy eating more affordable.
- The motion for a resolution must also **distinguish between short-term measures that may be necessary to alleviate the immediate impacts of the crisis and more long-term actions to ensure food security**. It must clearly recognise that opposing food security to food sustainability is a false dichotomy, as a sustainable food system is a prerequisite for guaranteeing food security in the long run. Echoing [the letter](#) by the ENVI Committee Chair (and supported by a majority of ENVI Coordinators) to Executive Vice President Timmermans, the motion for a resolution must stress without any ambiguity that the current crisis calls for **accelerating the transformation of the EU food system into a resilient and sustainable one** by implementing the EU Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

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- The motion for a resolution must clearly **indicate for which commodities/crops the EU heavily relies on imports from Ukraine and for what purposes** – as this is critical in terms of adopting the right measures to mitigate the war's impacts on agri-food markets. Indeed, as some academics [wrote in an open letter to the European Commission](#), imports from Ukraine to the EU are often used as livestock feed to produce animal products (dairy, meat), much of which are destined for export out of the EU. With >70% of the EU farming land being used for feed and fuel production, measures meant at altering the EU's demand for crops for feed and fuel use could help freeing up food for countries that rely on imports from Ukraine to feed their populations.
- Linked to this, **the motion for a resolution needs to address the issue of diets.** [In a statement released last week](#), over 400 scientists from the EU and beyond recommended accelerating the shift towards healthier diets with less (and better) animal products, which they said could substantially alleviate pressure on global grain supplies. Next to calling for reducing food waste, the motion for a resolution should therefore also **call for supporting a shift to healthy plant-rich diets with reduced consumption of animal products** as a key element of the transition to a sustainable and resilient EU food system.

We thank you in advance for considering the above and remain at your disposal for any question(s) you may have.

Yours faithfully,

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