



Renew Action Plan on Food Security and Response to the Ukrainian Crisis

Abstract:

The effects of the crisis caused by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine have put food security and the resilience of the global food system at the centre of the political agenda. Political resolve, concerted action, and innovative proposals are needed to address these acute challenges. In April 2022, the Renew Europe Group thus charged the Renew Europe Task Force on Food Security and Resilience of the EU Food System to work on short, medium and long-term solutions. The short and medium-term proposals specifically aim to respond to imminent problems caused or aggravated by the war in Ukraine. The proposals are built around four thematic blocks: resilience and sustainability of the food supply chain, the international dimension of food security, the availability and affordability of inputs, and investment in accelerating sustainability and autonomy both in the EU and in developing countries.

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Context

The effects of the crisis caused by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine have put food security and the resilience of the global food system at the centre of the political agenda. In terms of political importance and urgency of response, food security is now placed on an equal footing with energy security, defence and the fight against climate change, both at the EU and international levels.

Russia's war against Ukraine has brought about an increase in food, energy and input prices. This has a severe impact on consumers and the most vulnerable strata of the society. It is apparent that Russia has been strategically targeting Ukrainian food production by destroying key agricultural infrastructure and farms, mining fields and blocking exports of Ukrainian agricultural products via the Black Sea. It is clear that these actions have a double objective, to stifle the Ukrainian economy and to control the global food supply. In this context, Russia undeniably uses hunger as a weapon.

These actions have severe security and humanitarian implications. While millions more people are pushed into a food emergency, the goal of ending hunger and malnutrition by 2030 becomes even less feasible. The consequences at global level are dramatic and have sparked warnings of social unrest, food shortages, famine and mass migration for millions of people, particularly in the Middle East region, Sub-Saharan and Northern Africa.

This crisis has seriously aggravated an already difficult and challenging situation of access to, and affordability, of inputs and is combined with increased speculation on the agricultural commodities markets, the impact of the consequences of the COVID pandemic and the on-going climate crisis. The culmination of these crises calls for a truly transformational approach if solutions are to be found and security and stability returned. Drawing on the ambition of the Green Deal and the Digital Agenda, practical, innovative and new proposals are needed to bring genuine change. Political resolve and concerted action are needed to deliver on the solutions required to address these acute challenges.

To address these developments, in April 2022, the Renew Europe Group charged the Renew Europe Task Force on Food Security and Resilience of the EU Food System to work on short, medium and long-term solutions. The short and medium-term proposals aim to respond to imminent problems caused or aggravated by the war in Ukraine, and they range in scope, scale and ambition. The short and medium term proposals were built around four thematic blocks focused on the resilience and sustainability of the food supply chain, the international dimension of food security, the availability and affordability of inputs, and investment in accelerating sustainability and autonomy both in the EU and in developing countries.

The International Dimension

At international level, the war in Ukraine creates problems of food availability and affordability in countries highly dependent on Russian and Ukrainian grains and oilseeds imports. The consequences on food security of the Russian invasion of Ukraine go far beyond Europe. They are already felt in the reduced availability and higher prices of essential raw materials such as grain, animal feed and fertilisers, due to the exporting role of Ukraine. Russia and Ukraine are the breadbasket of the world. Both countries provide globally around 30% of wheat and barley, one fifth of maize and more than half of sunflower oil. Nearly 50 countries depend on them for at least 30% of their wheat imports and, of these, 26 countries depend on them for more than 50%. The deliberate blockade of Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea is preventing an estimated 19-20 million tonnes of cereals and oilseeds from last year's harvest, from leaving the country and blocking the export of high quantities of food that used to feed around 400 million people. Additionally, Russia and Belarus are also key producers of fertilisers.

The war is already having multiple implications for global markets and represents a crisis for food security, especially for low-income countries. Increased speculation on cereals, reported moves by some countries towards restricting and limiting trade and in some instances stockpiling of essential commodities is further aggravating a tense situation and essentially undermines international cooperation and humanitarian efforts. The situation represents a particular challenge for food producers and farmers all around the world, particularly in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan and Northern Africa, dependent on imports for their food and its production. The UN estimates that an all-time high of 49 million people in 46 countries are at risk of being pushed into famine or famine-like conditions, unless they receive immediate life and livelihoods-saving assistance. Among those, 750,000 people, in five different countries are at immediate risk of starvation or death.

The European Union, even if it does not hold all the keys alone, must act and put all its weight at the international level to limit and respond to the immediate effects of the war on global food security and to create the conditions for enhancing the resilience of our interdependent food systems when facing these kinds of crises.

In the framework of the Task Force, an ad-hoc delegation to Ukraine was organised, namely to the region of Lviv, on 24th to 26th June, where Renew members met with the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, members of the Verhovna Rada Committee on Agrarian and Land Policy, regional representatives, stakeholders, and farmers in order to assess the situation on the ground and see how European policy makers can better help the Ukrainian people to overcome the current crisis. More concretely, solutions were identified to help re-start agricultural production and exports in Ukraine, including by addressing logistical issues and to support the Ukrainian farmers to continue their activity.

Overall, Renew Europe's Task Force's proposals focus on the international and European dimension of food security, availability and affordability and are pragmatic and results-oriented. Firstly, the Task Force proposes measures to support Ukraine to relaunch and stabilise its production. For this purpose, it is necessary to provide support to farmers in order to help them to maintain their activity. Due to the specificity of the agri-food sector, it is less costly to keep farms functioning, even if not at full capacity, than to let them go out of business and start from scratch. It is also necessary to provide financial support to farmers to relaunch their production, for example by setting up a temporary Partnership Fund to purchase the Ukrainian crops directly from farmers.

Regarding logistics and transportation, further facilitation of the transportation and storage of the Ukrainian products, in particular, grains and oilseeds is essential to ensure food security across the country. In addition, it is fundamental to address obstacles to the export of agricultural products, such as the refusal of insurance companies to cover transport risks, to reduce administrative burden with phytosanitary checks for the products and live animals in transit and to create "green corridors" for the transport of Ukrainian agri-food products.

Product by product, a clear mapping of the potential logistic hubs and connections that could facilitate the stepping up of exports via the neighboring countries must be done as soon as possible by the European Commission, through the mobilisation of all its capacities to tackle bottlenecks. The realisation of this crucial action could be given to a dedicated European task force to coordinate this process with relevant Member States' Authorities, complementary to the digital platform already launched.

Increasing export of grains will help to stabilise the Ukrainian economy and to empty the silos for the current harvest. With the start of the new harvest season, the Ukrainian farmers will lack storage space. In addition, a rapid and simplified procedure for export of live animals in transit through the neighbouring countries will contribute to the economic recovery of livestock farms.

In a broader context, it will be necessary to rethink the integration of Ukraine in the programmes of humanitarian support of the EU, given that Ukraine has been granted candidate status. The EU has to consider Ukraine in the geostrategic perspective in the insurance of the global food security, alongside EU.

Secondly, the Task Force looks at ways to improve transparency on the global market, by providing detailed knowledge and understanding of the real-time situation of prices, stock and input availability and dependencies, in order to avoid simplistic or unsustainable solutions. Transparency of the food market, in particular for the grain stocks, could be achieved through the use of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS). This tool was launched in 2011 by the G20 Ministers of Agriculture following the global food price hikes in 2007/2008 and 2010. It brings together the principal trading countries of agricultural commodities, assesses global food supplies (focusing on wheat, maize, rice and soybeans) and provides a platform to coordinate policy actions in times of market uncertainty.

A regular follow-up and analysis of food prices and food insecurity can be also done through quantitative indexes such as the Global Food Security Index (GFSI). The use of these mechanisms would increase and enhance transparency and will allow better coordination of policies in international food markets by addressing speculation and the rising grain and food prices.

The current war in Ukraine and its impacts on global food security has highlighted once again the importance of exchanging information, monitoring and good practices to develop concerted responses to food supply and international food security crises. In this regard, the establishment of an International Food Security Crisis preparedness and response Mechanism will coordinate and develop a platform to map risks and vulnerabilities, including structural issues, of international food supply chains and its critical infrastructures. In addition and in light of the current situation, the role of the existing Global Network against Food Crises should also be strengthened.

Thirdly, humanitarian and development funding to address hunger and malnutrition needs to be dramatically scaled up. Humanitarian assistance will be key in the immediate term, but as many experts have reported, the primary problem immediately facing developing countries is unaffordable prices, which could quickly escalate into a humanitarian situation if not swiftly addressed. More pledges are needed, but these pledges must be anchored in a triple nexus approach, to tackle both the development and the humanitarian emergencies in the Global South caused by the hike in global food prices. Greater prioritisation and policy orientation in our humanitarian and development funding must be re-focused on food security and nutrition with investment in strategic value chains in order to step up the food sovereignty within and for developing countries.

Finally, the proposals are underpinned by the understanding that global food security is a strategic issue that in the medium to long term requires reconciling productivity and sustainability at the global level. The EU, as a major global player in the agri-food sector, should engage with international partners to jointly develop the benchmarks and international standards for sustainable food systems, in accordance with WTO rules. Due consideration will of course have to be given to our partners in developing countries and countries in a fragile situation regarding food security, for whom special and differentiated treatment would be required.

The European Dimension

At EU level, the current crisis has exposed the structural problems faced by European agricultural and fisheries sectors and it has demonstrated that the EU cannot continue to base our production on the import of gas and fertilisers from third countries. The EU has to invest in the resilience of the food sector. This resilience can be partly achieved through the implementation, in a coherent manner, of the Green Deal, the Biodiversity strategy and the Farm to Fork strategy, which will contribute to the transition towards more sustainable agriculture and fisheries. Sustainability and food security are interlinked and should go hand in hand. The measures foreseen in the Green Deal, in Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies could provide an alternative perspective for farmers and fishers and ensure stable income resources, for example through carbon farming, eco-schemes and selective fishing gear. However, these have to be longer-term measures in order to ensure the predictability of income for farmers and fishers.

The impact that the war in Ukraine is having on input prices and the food system as a whole has started a debate that calls the objectives of these strategies into question, especially considering the possible impact on production levels and food security. Renew Europe defends the proper assessments to support the feasibility of the targets proposed by the European Commission. At the same time, Renew Europe strongly calls to not let the impact of the war in Ukraine change our ambition on sustainability, but rather promote policies that result in synergies for food security, production and sustainability.

We have to look not only at the way we produce food, but also at the way we consume food. It is necessary to draw awareness to the massive amount of food waste generated in Europe and to move beyond this awareness to targeted and effective action to address this unacceptable wastage. While an estimated 20% of the total food produced is lost or wasted, 36.2 million people cannot afford a quality meal every second day (Eurostat, 2020). Reducing food waste is a shared responsibility and food producers, processors, distributors, retailers and consumers must contribute to it.

Another major problem, which is aggravated by the war in Ukraine, is the price of inputs. In its proposals, Renew Europe is looking at how research, innovation and investment in more sustainable and alternative products could help to overcome these obstacles.

There are many technologies in development to reuse high quality nutrients from sediments in artificial water bodies or waste streams such as sewage sludge and wastewater. Further study and development needs to be supported in order for the extraction and processing of the alternative organic fertiliser to be safely applied to soil. Additionally, there are many technologies currently in development, which are able to produce chemical fertilisers without the use of natural gas. Processes

to produce fertilisers that do not require gas already exist and are being developed within EU. They require other sources of energy (electricity) and are coupled with hydrogen production. It is in EU's interest to support this development, both for food security as well as sustainability.

Another area with unexplored potential is organic fertilisers. Organic alternatives to chemical fertilisers can diminish the EU's dependency on chemical fertilisers and contribute to reaching the Green Deal objectives. Examples of these organic fertilisers are products obtained from processed animal manure and sewage sludge. However, these products are not able to replace chemical fertilisers to the fullest, due to legislative barriers. Addressing these legislative barriers, by legislating and implementing criteria for the sale of these products, can offer practical solutions in the short term.

Closing the nutrient loop by reusing more high quality nutrients from different streams, such as waste streams, sewage sludge and wastewater, is a further solution, that will allow to diversify fertilisers input, increase the sustainability of agriculture and the movement towards a more circular economy.

In addition to the unsustainable dependence on fertilisers, the war in Ukraine has also exposed our dependency on chemical plant protection products, which are largely produced in third countries. By accelerating uptake and authorisation of alternative plant protection products, this dependency can be reduced in the medium to long-term. The recently published proposal for a Regulation on the Sustainable Use of pesticides represents an important tool to increase the authorisation and uptake of alternative plant protection products. Farmers need alternatives to chemical plant protection products and synthetic fertilisers and for this, it is necessary to speed up the approval of these products and their introduction on the market.

Furthermore, agri-environmental-climate practices such as agroecology, agroforestry, regenerative agriculture, organic farming, precision and carbon farming have the potential to address climate, biodiversity, environmental, economic and social challenges. While ensuring sustainable production of goods and provisions of ecosystem services, these practices have the capacity to reduce the use of pesticides, fertilisers, antimicrobials and consumption of gas. These practices also limit soil degradation, increase carbon sequestration, and prompt more healthy, quality food production and long-term sustainable, resilient and future-proof production with further implications for animal welfare, agro tourism, and the public perception of the sector.

Another key element of the food production chain affected by the war in Ukraine and which has had a significant impact on agriculture is the increasing cost of feed, an element that is further exacerbated by the shortage of European protein crops. The heavy dependence on imports from third countries has increased price volatility and costs for livestock farmers. A comprehensive action plan, orchestrated by the European Commission, is needed. This plan needs to focus on measures to increase European production in the short and medium term.

Promoting leguminous crops could also have the positive effect of improving the quality of European soils and contributing to the fight against climate change thanks to higher carbon sequestration.

It is equally important to develop new sectors, such as insect farming and new types of aquaculture, which could contribute to accelerating the transition towards circular and more efficient business models in agriculture, upcycling lower-value agri-and aquatic-food streams into high value protein, lipids or frass (insect derived fertiliser). Diversifying the spectrum of inputs that are authorised in insect production activities (i.e. substrates, such as the former foodstuff containing meat and fish) is key to upscaling the production capacity of the sector.

Conclusions and looking forward

These are just a number of proposals on how to tackle this crisis and its immediate and medium-term impact on European and global agriculture, fisheries and food sectors. At the same time as the EU is providing assistance to Ukraine, the Union needs to rethink its responsiveness to crises, the same way it did during the COVID crisis. More concretely, it has to increase the speed of decision-making processes on proposals already in the pipeline and to rethink the link between sustainability and food production.

The policies of crisis management, humanitarian aid, trade, development and cooperation have to be re-thought. Taking into account that the EU is the lead provider of humanitarian and development assistance on food and food systems, it is necessary to integrate the perspective of a close partnership with Ukraine, which plays a complementary role to the EU in providing food security in vulnerable third countries. Instability in these countries and regions will have direct repercussions on the EU.

In order to realise and fully deliver on the ambition and potential of the Green Deal and the Digital Agenda for all in our society, these measures, in the context of environmental objectives, shifting trade instruments, development policy, digital advances, innovation and a well-functioning single market should be followed by efforts to step up investments and scale up innovation and a complete rethinking of the EU agriculture and food policy.

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Short and medium term proposals to address the food security crisis

1. Solidarity Corridors, increasing logistic capacity, EU risk reinsurance on transportation of Ukrainian agricultural products and support for Ukrainian farmers

BACKGROUND

During the ongoing war, Ukrainian farmers have lost parts of their market and are facing severe logistical obstacles to export their foods. The ports at the Black Sea are being blocked or partially destroyed by the Russian aggression. Truck and train shipment is ill functioning and too slow due to very strict control measures and lack of administrative capacity to handle the swift transportation of the food and feedstock essential to combat the food security crisis in the EU and third countries.

The export of grains remaining in stock from the last year's harvest is an urgent need. Many countries around the world, in particular in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan and Northern Africa, are dependent on these imports for their food security.

The export of grains will also help to stabilise the Ukrainian economy and to empty the silos for this year's harvest, as with the coming new harvest the Ukrainian farmers will lack storage space. In total Ukraine has a storage capacity of 75 million tonnes, of which 15 million tonnes are currently unavailable either due to destruction or their location in the occupied territories. Thus, the current grain storage capacity available for the Ukrainian government constitutes around 60 million tonnes. Ukraine still has approximately 15-18 million tonnes of grains left from the last year; this year it is expected to harvest around 60-65 million tonnes of yields.

For the current sowing campaign, the Ukrainian government provided credits to farmers at low interest rates. However, farmers will not be in a position to pay them back due to limited selling opportunities. This creates a problem of liquidity for farmers for the winter sowing campaign. It is highly probable that farmers will not have the necessary resources to acquire seeds, fertilisers and plant protection products. This could eventually lead to bankruptcy of farmers and in some cases; farmers will be reluctant to sow the fields, as they will not have markets for their products, neither internally because there is no demand, nor externally because they cannot export their production. The European Union's help is essential to break this vicious circle.

Regarding the export of Ukrainian products, no alternative means of transport will be able to replace export capacity of the Ukrainian ports. Nevertheless, we believe that the European Union and Member States have to take all measures at their

disposal to increase export capacity efficiency through establishing alternative routes, including by road, railway, as well as sea and river ports. Before the war, Ukraine used to export through ports 5/6 million tonnes per month. In the last three and a half months, Ukraine exported only 4 million tonnes (50% by rail, 40% through Danube and 10% by lorries).

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Legislative and non-legislative proposals

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

Administration and certification of bottlenecks that require rapid solutions increase of the logistic capacity and direct support for Ukrainian farmers.

ACTION POINTS

1. Administration and certification of bottlenecks that require rapid solutions:

Currently the **phyto-sanitary checks for the products in transit** are as complex as for the products for the internal market. We trust it would be useful to temporarily simplify rules for transit of Ukrainian goods as much as possible.

A rapid and **simplified procedure for export of live animals in transit** should be introduced via Romania and Bulgaria. Despite the existence of numerous export markets for animals in Middle East and Central Asia, their export is currently impossible due to the rules in place. The export of animals is essential for the economic recovery of livestock farms, which have already kept animals for several months beyond the production cycle.

Despite the fact that the European Commission has published the communication on "Solidarity Lanes", the problem of long lines of lorries persists. It takes several days for a truck to cross the border between Ukraine and neighbouring EU Member states: Romania or Poland. For this reason, establishment of **"green lanes" for cereals** is urgently needed. The **customs clearance procedures should also be simplified for other goods**. There must be the possibility of customs clearance for just one truck, when there is a convoy of trucks, with cargo to be transported in the same ship.

Mandatory electronic customs clearance for grain cargos should be introduced by the Member States in order to speed up customs clearance so that the trucks do not spend more than 15 minutes at customs.

2. Increasing the logistic capacity:

It is imperative to **increase efficiency of exports through the port of Constanta (RO), Gdansk (PL) and Danube river port Sulina (RO)**. In particular, in Costanta, the Romanian government shall ensure the efficient functioning of the port in order to avoid concurrence between Ukrainian and Romanian farmers. It should be taken into account that Romanian farmers will also start exporting their grains in the coming months.

In addition, it is instrumental to increase the number of captains with permission to navigate the Danube river in Sulina. In order to significantly increase the number of ships in transit, the Romanian government should prioritise training for crews for navigating this part of the Danube river.

It is imperative to open more border crossing points and to **increase the number of customs officers** at the border with Ukraine, both at the river and land border, in order to augment capacity of the crossing. **Joint customs control** should also be considered, in order to increase the capacity of the crossing. Increasing the working hours of these crossing points (24/7) is also necessary.

The European Commission should assess possibility to **provide reinsurance for transport companies**. The Ukrainian authorities have introduced a reinsurance system, but these companies do not trust the country's ability to cope with it. We suggest the European Commission consider the introduction of such a system, which would help to overcome reluctance of insurance companies. Without reinsurance, availability of trucks in Ukraine will remain limited and insufficient.

We believe that the authorities should also consider construction of **reloading terminals** on both sides of the border, in Romania and in Poland.

Furthermore, it is necessary to **increase storage capacity** as some silos still have grains from the previous harvest and some of the storage facilities have been destroyed. For the storage of grains, the EU can provide simple technology, such as sleeves (have the capacity to store up to 200 tonnes) or grain rings that are already in use in countries such as Canada and USA. In addition, it is necessary to help farmers to buy new refrigerators, as a large number of them was destroyed.

3. Support for the Ukrainian farmers:

To set up a temporary **Partnership Fund** that would allow the acquisition of grains directly from the Ukrainian farmers. A direct partnership could be established between the EU and the World Food Programme (WFP) and/or other partner humanitarian organisation to purchase grains directly from farmers. This would considerably reduce the number of intermediaries between farmers and recipients of the humanitarian aid. Additionally, this Fund will help to stabilise food security in the most vulnerable countries, mainly located in Northern Africa, Middle East and Sub-Saharan regions.

Support for the Ukrainian farmers will facilitate keeping the Ukrainian economy running and will also stabilise international markets. In the regions where farms were partially destroyed, we believe it would be useful to help farmers with restoration and to provide them with financial guarantees in order to ensure they will be able to sell their products (e.g. through the temporary Partnership Fund). It is also important to help farmers to continue the activity on their farms so that they remain operational, even in cases of limited capacity. It should be taken into account that due to the specificity of the agri-food sector, it is much more costly to re-start the activity from scratch than to restore and maintain it.

On the ground, we have observed that the Ukrainian farmers are confronted with two different realities. In particular, in Eastern and Southern part of Ukraine, in the active zone of conflict, or in the areas that were under occupation, farms have been destroyed and need **financial support for reconstruction as soon as the conditions on the spot allow it**. In the Western part of Ukraine, although farms still have capacity to produce, it is necessary to **restore the agri-food and input supply chains** that have been disrupted. For these reasons, we believe that different measures have to be adapted to these two realities on the ground.

Another problem is related to the fact that a number of fields have been mined. The EU should allocate necessary funds for **demining**. The staff and equipment should be ready to start the demining process as soon as the situation on the ground allows.

The EU has to take immediate action to support Ukrainian agricultural sector, focusing on urgent measures. In order to achieve **better coordination** between the Ukrainian authorities and the Member States bordering Ukraine, we suggest creating a Task Force or a temporary working group between Ukraine, Poland, Romania and the European Commission (DG AGRI, DG ENVI, DG MOVE, DG SANTE). This Task Force will help to increase efficiency and effectiveness of response to the current challenges faced by the Ukrainian farmers and traders.

2. Transparency on global stocks/AIMS & Ensure a regular follow-up and analysis of food prices and food insecurity through quantitative indexes such as the Global Food Security Index (GFSI)

BACKGROUND

The Global Food Security Index (GFSI) considers the issues of food affordability, availability, quality and safety, and natural resources and resilience across a set of 113 countries. The index is a dynamic quantitative and qualitative benchmarking

model constructed from 58 unique indicators that measure the drivers of food security across both developing and developed countries.

The AMIS (Agricultural Market Information System) tool, set up and promoted by the G20, is an inter-agency platform aimed at enhancing food market transparency and policy response for food security focusing on public global grain stocks. Set up after the global food price hikes in 2007/2008 and 2010, it brings together the principal trading countries of agricultural commodities and assesses global food supplies.

In light of regrettably high levels of speculation and increase on grain and food prices, we should aim to use the AMIS and GFSI tools in order enhance transparency and better coordinate policies in international food markets.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Non-legislative

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

Inform the members of the Renew Task Force on the latest recommendations regarding the challenges and opportunities to tackle food insecurity and enhancing food supply chains as well as food systems transformation.

Building upon AMIS's function to monitor *public* global grain stocks, we should aim to expand it to include *private* capacity.

TIMELINE

Coming months. We should also take into consideration the next meeting of the AMIS members, G20 meeting the 15-16 November 2022 or, longer term during the next meeting of the Rapid Response Forum.

ACTION POINTS

- Inform and share relevant information on analysis of food prices and food insecurity by quantitative indexes on a regular basis and when new information is available.
- Exchange with relevant stakeholders in DG AGRI, from the FAO and from the AMIS structure.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

Information about stocks (public or private) is always sensitive and strategic. Countries and stakeholders will not agree to share it unless it comes from a global decision.

3. International Food Security Crisis preparedness and response Mechanism

BACKGROUND

In the framework of the current war in Ukraine and its impacts on global food security, it has become clear the importance of exchanging information, monitoring and good practices to develop concerted responses to food supply and international food security crises. In this framework, providing a contingency plan, early monitoring and reporting of supply chain disruptions, price increases, crisis evolution, post-crisis assessment and lessons learnt, are of strategic importance to enhance global preparedness to current and future food security shocks and crisis.

This initiative also takes stock of the ongoing European Food Security Crisis Preparedness and Response Mechanism, as part of the deliverables of the Farm to Fork Strategy. It shall also embrace a collaborative approach between all public and private parties, including farmers, fishers, aquaculture producers, food processors, traders and retailers as well as carriers and logisticians - being part of the food supply chain.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Legislative

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

The establishment of an International Food Security Crisis preparedness and response Mechanism will coordinate and develop a platform to map risks and vulnerabilities, including structural issues, of international food supply chains and its critical infrastructures among others through a dedicated study. This mechanism will include a dedicated group of experts involving public authorities from Member States (MS) and non-EU countries as well as stakeholders and its rules of procedures.

ACTION POINTS

- Include this specific call in Renew's parliamentary work both at Committee and plenary level.
- Exchange with the Commission team responsible of the global response to food security challenges also in the context of the war in Ukraine regarding this proposal and the possibility to link it to the European Food Security Crisis Preparedness and Response Mechanism.
- Exchange with experts on developing recommendations relevant to global preparedness for, and response to, food supply and food security crises.
- The role of the existing Global Network against Food Crises should also be strengthened.

4. Proposal for prioritising Food Security in the EU external action funding

BACKGROUND

Humanitarian and development funding to address hunger and malnutrition needs to be dramatically scaled up to properly address the impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security. The commitments made at the 2021 Global Food Summit have not been honoured, and the appeal is likely to increase sharply in 2022. Humanitarian assistance will be key in the immediate term, but as many experts have reported, the primary problem facing developing countries is unaffordable prices, which could quickly escalate into a humanitarian situation if not addressed. More pledges are needed, but these pledges must be anchored in a triple nexus approach, to tackle both the development and humanitarian emergencies in the Global South caused by the hike in global food prices. Greater focus on our humanitarian and development funding must focus on Food Security and nutrition in the Global South.

The rapid response pillar of NDICI could be an adequate way to provide greater financial support for global food security. The European Commission could also call upon Member States to provide additional "externally assigned revenue" (which by default is earmarked) to fund this action. Given that the "cushion" of unallocated funds for the present year is almost exhausted, food security should be a top priority for the year 2023. Another opportunity to strengthen the EU's financial support to food security will be the mid-term revision of the Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs).

There has already been an international donors' conference, co-hosted by Sweden and Poland, which aimed to mobilise financial support for the humanitarian response to the Ukrainian people. Given the severity of the secondary impact of the war on Ukraine on countries that may already be food insecure, the European Commission and EU Member States should consider ring-fencing some of the resources mobilised in international initiatives in the future to off-set the impact of the war in Ukraine on the food security of developing countries.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Legislative & non-legislative

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

Continue putting food security as a strong priority within NDICI and its programming exercise.

ACTION POINTS

- Calls on the European Commission to establish a programme under the rapid response pillar and increase the budget line on the crisis mechanism.
- Calls on the European Commission to organise an EU pledging conference.
- Calls on EU MSs to provide additional externally assigned revenue to fund this programme (Recovery and Resilience Facility and Cohesion funds) and stresses that no transfer should come from other programmes so as not to impact upon their effective implementation.
- Calls on the European Commission to make food security a top priority of the 2023 cushion of unallocated funds.
- Mobilisation of special instruments to put funds in the NDICI.
- Revision of the MFF to increase the ceilings for Heading 6.
- Calls on the European Commission and EU Member States to participate in international donors' conferences & propose to international partners that part of resources mobilised be ring-fenced to support developing countries in addressing challenges related to food security.

5. Promoting sustainability standards at the international level

BACKGROUND

Today only safety standards related to marketed products are recognised in the Codex Alimentarius, meaning that there is no obvious way of requiring products to respect standards that concern environmental protection or other sustainability criteria at international level. In the interest of advancing also on environmental and sustainability ambitions globally, incentivising producers and rendering the system more resistant to food shocks overall, work on developing a coherent and cooperative approach to increase sustainability standards in production systems among global partners should be undertaken.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Legislative/non-legislative

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

In the medium to long-term, the EU, as a major global player in the agri-food sector, should advocate for higher global sustainability criteria, and engage with international partners to jointly develop the benchmarks and international standards for sustainable food systems, in accordance with WTO rules, working progressively towards achieving higher and ambitious standards in line with the objectives of the Green Deal.

To this end, the EU should support partner countries to set high environmental objectives, as well as assist and guide them in this transition when needed. Due consideration would be given to partners from developing countries and countries in a fragile situation regarding food security for whom special and differentiated treatment would be required

TIMELINE

A European Commission report titled 'Imports of agricultural and food products – applying EU health and environmental standards' was published on 3 June 2022

Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission 14/11/2022-18/11/2022

Codex Alimentarius Commission meeting 21/11/2022-13/12/2022

ACTION POINTS

Work on a Parliament response to the Commission's report and prepare to request that this issue be discussed in the Codex Alimentarius Commission at the first available opportunity.

Exchange with the relevant representatives from the European Commission in DG AGRI/DG ENVI.

Exchange with relevant stakeholders at the FAO and WHO (Codex Alimentarius Commission) in order to hone the process/agenda for advancing on this subject.

6. Setting and promoting a Renew position regarding food security in light of the objectives of the EU Green Deal

BACKGROUND

The Green Deal, the Biodiversity strategy and the Farm to Fork strategy set targets for a transition to more sustainable agriculture and fisheries. The impact that the war in Ukraine is having on input prices and the food system as a whole, has started a debate that puts these target into question, especially considering the possible impact on production levels and food security. In previous resolutions, Renew Europe has called for proper assessments to support the feasibility of the targets proposed by the European Commission¹. At the same time, Renew Europe has called to not let the impact of the war in Ukraine change our ambition on sustainability, but rather promote policies that result in synergies for food security and sustainability.

In the ongoing debate and for upcoming resolutions, Renew Europe could play a key role in emphasising that sustainability and food security are interlinked and should go hand in hand.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Mainly Non-legislative - through INI reports and contributions to debates.

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

To position Renew Europe as a kingmaker in this debate, to ensure a balanced

¹ For example in the EP Resolution on the Farm to Fork strategy.

position in the EP that safeguards environmental ambition while covering concerns on production and food security.

TIMELINE

Short to medium term.

ACTION POINTS

- Set clear Renew position in the INI Report: *'Ensuring food security and long term resilience of the EU agriculture'* that is starting up in the AGRI Committee (Dacian Cioloş appointed shadow rapporteur), which emphasises and promotes synergies between food security and sustainability.
- Extend the previous calls of Renew Europe for proper impact assessments to also reflect the possible impact on food security and production.
- Call for a new target in the Farm to Fork strategy: for increased/kept food production inside the EU, while achieving the relevant environmental objectives. The production – of both conventional and organic food – should correspond to consumer demands.

7. Reducing food waste

BACKGROUND

By the end of 2023, the European Commission will propose legally binding targets to reduce food waste across the EU. However, it will take quite some time before the work on this proposal is completed. Food waste could be prevented or significantly reduced in the EU if best-before and use-by date marking on food were correctly interpreted by consumers. In the framework of the Farm to Fork strategy, the European Commission is reviewing the rules on this information to make it easier to understand and plans to adopt a proposal in the fourth quarter of 2022.

It is necessary to bring awareness of the massive amount of food waste. While an estimated 20% of the total food produced is lost or wasted, 36.2 million people cannot afford a quality meal every second day (Eurostat, 2020). Reducing food waste is a shared responsibility and food producers, processors, distributors, retailers and consumers have to contribute to this objective.

It is urgent to change the perception over “Imperfect food products”(product that does not meet market standards in terms of appearance - too big, too small, too curvy, off-colour – that have no impact on flavour or nutrition).

Member States should also improve measurement of food waste, to monitor the food waste across the supply chain and implement effective food waste prevention programmes.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Recommendation

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

Ask the European Commission and Member States to accelerate the implementation of all those measures.

It seems appropriate to speed up the actions aimed at reducing food waste in the entire food supply chain. Those measures would have a double positive impact on the environment and on food availability.

In addition, the European Commission could also encourage the expansion of private initiatives such as “Too good to go” in order to create communication networks between consumers and food operators (shops, industry HORECA, retailers).

Organise EU institutions campaigns to address the rejection/waste of “Imperfect food products” (product that does not meet market standards in terms of appearance - too big, too small, too curvy, off-colour – that have no impact on flavour or nutrition).

ACTION POINTS

Organise consultations with the European Commission to examine the feasibility of speeding up the actions aimed at reducing food waste.

Meet with experts in that field and representatives from the Member States, which have undertaken actions on this matter. Identify good practises and suggest actions based on them.

8. Closing the nutrients loop

BACKGROUND

We need to reuse more high quality nutrients from different streams, such as waste streams, sewage sludge and waste water, in order to diversify fertilisers input, increase the sustainability of agriculture and go towards a more circular economy.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Revision of the Waste Framework Directive (2023)

Revision of the Sewage Sludge Directive (2022/2023)

Revision of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (2022)

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

End-of-waste criteria for sewage sludge should be developed to incentivise the recovery of nutrients.

Reuse and recirculate more nutrients by acknowledge the potential to recover nutrients of high quality from sewage sludge.

Reuse and recirculate more nutrients by making it an EU obligation for large wastewater treatment plants to recovery high quality nutrients from wastewater.

TIMELINE

The directives are up for revision during 2022-2023.

ACTION POINTS

- By putting forward amendments and making it a priority for the group.
- Submit written questions to the European Commission ahead of the publication of the proposal to push the European Commission to develop end-of-waste criteria as part of the proposal.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

Waste incineration plants will have less waste with which to make energy. Opposition from wastewater plants due to high implementation costs of the regulation.

9. Addressing legal barriers to allow the use of organic fertilisers as alternatives to chemical fertilisers.

BACKGROUND

- The war in Ukraine has further exposed our dependency on chemical fertiliser and has resulted in a dramatic rise in fertiliser prices for our farmers.
- Organic alternatives to chemical fertilisers are available, which use can both limit our dependency to chemical fertilisers and contribute to reaching Green Deal objectives. Examples of these organic fertilisers are products obtained from processed animal manure and sewage sludge.
- However, these products are not able to replace chemical fertilisers to the fullest, due to legislative barriers. Addressing these legislative barriers now can offer a solution in the short term.
- The Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) completed a study on recovered nitrogen from manure and proposed criteria for its safe use above the threshold established by the Nitrates Directive in a similar way as a non-organic fertiliser. The concerned materials are called RENURE, from 'REcovered Nitrogen from manURE'.
- The European Parliament has repeatedly called for the European Commission to facilitate increased use of organic nutrient sources to replace chemical fertilisers. In its Resolution on the Circular Economy Action Plan, the European Parliament called on the European Commission to take measures to increase the use of recycled animal manure and other organic nutrients. In its Resolution on the need for an urgent EU action plan to ensure food security inside and outside the EU in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the European Parliament called on the European Commission to take legislative measures to enhance the use of organic fertilising products, including RENURE products, to serve as replacements for chemical fertilisers.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Legislative:

The European Commission is developing Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan (4Q2022) in order to stimulate the markets for safe and sustainable recovered nutrients. The marketing of the organic fertilisers is to be treated in the new Fertilising Product Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2019/1009).

By implementing criteria developed by the JRC on the safe use of RENURE products in the Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan and by exploring how these criteria can be implemented in the Nitrates directive, we can ensure that organic

fertilisers are used without additional risk for nitrates pollution, and thus safely replacing chemical fertilisers.

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

The aim of the proposal is to have the European Commission find a legislative solution to implement criteria for the safe use of RENURE products to replace chemical fertilisers. The use of these RENURE products should only be stimulated in a manner that does not lead to any increased risk in Nitrates pollution.

ACTION POINTS

- Sending a letter on behalf of the Taskforce to urge the European Commission to take action as soon as possible.
- Getting in contact with other political groups to coordinate actions.
- Exchange of views with experts of the European Commission and the JRC to find the most suitable legal solution.
- Possibly, ask the EPRS to do research on the issue and possible legal solutions.

INTERLOCUTORS

- Industry stakeholders, which can provide case studies and practical information.
- JRC and EPRS for technical and legal knowledge in addressing the issue.
- If an amendment of the Nitrates Directive is needed: all institutions.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

The JRC study regarding the criteria for the safe use of processed manure above the threshold established for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones by the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), can be found here: publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC121636.

10. Acceleration of the uptake of ecological agricultural practices which will reduce farmers' dependence on external inputs and deliver on objectives of the Green Deal, Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies

BACKGROUND

Opposing food security to food sustainability is a false dichotomy, as a sustainable food system is a prerequisite for guaranteeing food security in the future. The EU Green Deal and its Farm to Fork Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy aim to transform the EU food system into a resilient one ensuring short and local supply chains, food security, self-sufficiency and reducing environmental and climate footprint and loss of biodiversity.

Establishing healthy agricultural ecosystems is a precondition to help farmers avoid the increasing of seasonal crop failures and stave off the impact of climate change and biodiversity loss on agricultural land.

The agri-environmental-climate practices such as **agroecology, agroforestry, regenerative agriculture, organic farming, precision and carbon farming** with the potential to address the climate, biodiversity, environmental, economic and social challenges, while ensuring sustainable production of goods and provisions of ecosystem services, have the capacity to reduce the use of pesticides, fertilisers, antimicrobials and consumption of gas. These practices also limit soil degradation, increase carbon sequestration, and prompt more healthy, quality food production and long-term sustainable, resilient and future-proof production with further implications for animal welfare, agro tourism, and public perception of the sector.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Legislative/non-legislative

Allocation in the CAP Strategic plans.

MS and EC to ensure in the process of approval of the CAP strategic plans that these contain incentives for farmers such as result-based payment schemes and interventions addressing the nature restoration issues effectively such as peatland rewetting, paludiculture practices, conservation agriculture, agroecology, agroforestry, regenerative agriculture, organic farming and carbon farming.

Proposal for nature restoration law to comprise restoration targets in agricultural ecosystems.

Restoration measures to be put into place, including in the areas not currently covered by the EU birds and habitats directives to enhance the biodiversity of agricultural ecosystems across the EU eventually underpinning the food security.

Restoration measures such as restoration of peatlands, soil organic carbon, high-diversity landscape features, restoration targets for birds and pollinators, reduction of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers, etc.

Proposal for soil health law to comprise targets such as restoration of peatlands, soil organic carbon.

Knowledge transfer, support for advisory services, share of best practices.

An informal European Commission expert group established at the level of the Commission's DG AGRI/ENVI with overall mandate to support the EC, MS and farmers in the transition to ecological practices and achieving the targets of F2F strategy can be a good tool supporting knowledge transfer.

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

Deployment of agri-environmental-climate practices such as agroecology, agroforestry, regenerative agriculture, organic farming and carbon farming, fit for the delivery on the goals of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies, energy independence and quality food production by accelerating investment and knowledge transfer.

TIMELINE

Short term, mid-term, long-term

ACTION POINTS

- Urging Member States to accelerate investment support, funding programmes and project calls for transition to ecological practices.
- Working on the upcoming proposals for nature restoration law and soil health law during the co-legislative procedure.
- Urging European Commission and Member States to set up, promote and support a platform for knowledge transfer and share of best practices.
- Invite experts, pioneer farmers in the field and European Commission representatives for consultation.
- EPRS study on feasibility of uptake of the practices.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

Knowledge transfer (from science (to farm advisors) to farmers),

Preventing possible negative impact on production.

11. Acceleration of the uptake of alternative plant protection products by identifying and addressing barriers

BACKGROUND

- Besides the dependence on fertilisers, the war in Ukraine has also exposed our dependency on chemical plant protection products, which are largely produced in third countries.
- By accelerating uptake of alternative plant protection products, this dependency can be reduced in the medium to long-term.
- The European Commission published the revision of the sustainable use of pesticide directive in June 2022.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Both legislative and non-legislative.

A revision of the sustainable use of pesticide directive is taking place. This legislation should be the main legislative tool to increase the authorisation and uptake of alternative plant protection products. In addition, the EU plays a key role in the development of alternative plant protection products through investment aid.

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

Accelerate legislative work on the sustainable pesticide directive to increase uptake of alternative plant protection products.

ACTION POINTS

- Possible exchange of views with the European Commission on the sustainable use of pesticide directive, in the context of the war in Ukraine and possible impact on food security.
- Organising discussion with the taskforce on the sustainable use of pesticide directive.
- Stakeholder event to identify further legislative barriers and investment needs.

12. Targeting investment aid to sustainable fertiliser production in the EU

BACKGROUND

To reduce the Union's dependency on fertilisers produced in third countries, there are many technologies in development to reuse high quality nutrients from sediments in artificial water bodies or waste streams such as sewage sludge and wastewater. Further study and development need to be supported in order for the extraction and processing of the alternative organic fertiliser to be safely applied to soil.

Additionally, there are many technologies in development, which are able to produce chemical fertilisers without the use of natural gas. Processes to produce fertilisers that do not require gas already exist and are being developed within EU. They require other sources of energy (electricity) and are coupled with hydrogen production. It is in EU's interest to support this development, both for food security as well as sustainability.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Non-legislative

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

The aim of the proposal is to identify sustainable alternatives of fertiliser products and to support the development of its production in the EU.

TIMELINE

Medium-term

ACTION POINTS

- Consult the European Commission to see which funding sources could be directed towards the development of sustainable fertiliser production (e.g. budget line for EIT under Horizon Europe (01 02 03 03) which is increasing every year in the financial programming of the 2021-2027).
- Consultation with stakeholders, farmers, EC, MS representatives.

13. Develop the EU's Protein Strategy

BACKGROUND

The war in Ukraine has further highlighted the insufficient production of proteins for livestock feed in the European Union. The problem has been dragging on for more than two decades; following the banning of animal meal for livestock feed. The heavy dependence on imports from third countries has increased price volatility and costs for livestock farmers. A comprehensive action plan is needed, orchestrated by the European Commission, with measures to increase European production in the short and medium term.

Member States should incentivise, through coupled payment and, as from 2023, the new sectorial support adopted in last CAP reform, the production of protein crops. Promoting leguminous crops could also have the positive effect of improving the quality of European soils and contributing to the fight against climate change thanks to higher carbon sequestration.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Non legislative

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

Urge the European Commission to present an EU strategy aimed at reducing the EU's dependence on animal feed, while contributing to meeting the objectives of the Green Deal.

TIMELINE

ASAP

ACTION POINTS

RE hearings.

EP report.

Discussions in COMAGRI.

14. Invest in EU's protein and fertiliser autonomy - unleashing the circularity potential of insect farming in Europe

BACKGROUND

Insect farming contributes to accelerating the transition towards **circular** and more **efficient** business models in agriculture, upcycling lower-value agri-food streams into **high value protein, lipids or frass** (insect derived fertiliser).

Diversifying the spectrum of inputs that are authorised in insect production activities (i.e. substrates, such as the former foodstuff containing meat and fish) is key to **upscaling the production capacity of the sector**.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Legislative

Authorising former foodstuffs with meat and fish as feed for insects.

Non-legislative

Own initiative report of the European Parliament on the contribution of insect farming to the EU Farm to Fork objectives (e.g. strengthening food and feed self-sufficiency, reducing the food waste burden, accelerating progress on the 25% target on organic agricultural land).

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

Upscaling insect production;

Reducing the food waste burden;

Providing solutions to EU's deficit in terms of high-pro protein feed ingredients.

TIMELINE

1 year – 1,5 years

ACTION POINTS

Parliamentary questions on the support measures offered by the European Commission for upscaling insect production;

EPRS quantitative analysis on the possible contribution of insect farming to the Farm to Fork;

EP own initiative report;
European Commission action plan;
Incentives in MS's CAP strategic plans.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

Insufficient/diverse level of awareness about benefits of insect farming.

15. Ensure that national programs under EMFAF are operationalised without delay

BACKGROUND

The new EMFAF Regulation has entered into force but we still need the national programs in order to make the fund operational and ensure that fishers and aquaculture farmers can draw benefits from the fund and ensure that we are using it to enhance sustainability and reclines in these two strategic sectors.

The national programmes will also be crucial to ensure that the two sectors will recover from the effects of COVID and the current war in Ukraine. The European Commission has also activated the mechanism for crisis support under the EMFAF and in order for the money to reach the beneficiaries the Member States will have to include these supports in their national program. Member States can also use the funds already before the national programs has been adopted. However, Member States are reluctant to use the fund before the national programs has been approved by the European Commission - despite the assistance and encouragement from the European Commission to do so.

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Increase the pressure on the Member States to submit their national EMFAF programmes for approval to the European Commission and put pressure on the European Commission to approve the plans as soon as possible.

In order to make the crisis funds available asap we should propose to the European Commission that they should take further steps or make further commitments so Member States feel confident that they already now can start using EMFAF funds under the funds crisis mechanism.

AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

To ensure that predictability for fishers and aquaculture farmers are increased and that they know what funds would be available for them in order for them to invest in their operations to make it more resilient and future proof when recovering from the COVID crisis and managing the crisis caused by the war in Ukraine.

Especially we would seek to ensure more security for Member States to start using EMFAF funds under the crisis mechanism to ease the current pressure the sector feels especially when it comes to energy input.

TIMELINE

Actions needs to be taken during Q3 2022.

ACTION POINTS

Letters to Member States and the European Commission.

Resolution to increase the political pressure.

Bilateral meetings with the European Commission or specific Member States, especially how to move forward on the EMFAF crisis mechanism funding.

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