

European Commission
Ms. Stella Kyriakides
Commissioner for Health and Food Safety
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels

Cc: Sandra Gallina, Prof. Nicole Grobert

Brussels, 30 September 2022

Re: Scoping paper “Towards sustainable food consumption”

Dear Commissioner Kyriakides,

On behalf of several European associations along the livestock value chain, we would like to draw your attention to some concerns related to the recent mandate given – upon your request - to the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors to develop a scientific opinion related to the sustainability in the food environment.

As clarified on the website of the European Commission¹, such an opinion is aimed at recommending what tools could be used to overcome the barriers preventing consumers to adopt sustainable and healthy diets.

Whilst we reiterate our strong support to an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable food system, we feel it necessary to highlight our frustration over the rather derogatory reference to livestock included in the scoping paper addressed to the Chief Scientific Advisors.

To be precise, the document, quoting a couple of studies, reports without any context that *“the increased global demand for fish, meat and other livestock products”* is *“contributing to overconsumption, obesity and other health determinants closely related to an increased risk of non-communicable diseases”* and that *“livestock production is associated with greenhouse gas emissions, animal welfare issues, impact on land use, air and water pollution, as well as development and spread of zoonoses and multiresistant bacteria”*.

We want to express our disappointment on reading such a narrative, which rather than scientifically presented, read more like a list of generic and somewhat unfair generalized accusations to the whole sector irrespective of the business practices implemented by our members.

As raised on several occasions over the past years, we perceive such a narrative to be completely against an inclusive implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy and the principle of leaving nobody behind.

Many actors in the livestock value chain are making huge efforts to improve their practices, even before the Farm to Fork strategy was presented, and have implemented the best available

¹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/support-policy-making/scientific-support-eu-policies/group-chief-scientific-advisors/towards-sustainable-food-consumption_en

techniques to decrease the carbon footprint, to improve animal health and welfare, to deliver healthier products and, in general, to meet societal challenges.

The EU animal farming model, based on diversified, local and family farm structures is a key component of European rural and coastal areas. It supports a great number of jobs and sectors, it contributes to a circular and bio-economy, while also ensuring a steady and affordable supply of nutritious foods, needed for a balanced diet.

We find it extremely unfair to depict the sector as *de facto* unsustainable and generically associating the EU livestock chain with “greenhouse gas emissions, animal welfare issues, impact on land use, air and water pollution, as well as development and spread of zoonoses and multiresistant bacteria” in such a throwaway manner.

The undersigned associations believe that in order to promote the sustainability within any sector it is important to ensure a more balanced narrative which differentiates between the more and less sustainable business practices, and avoids divisive and simplistic messages against specific sectors.

We hope that the negative messages against our sector contained in the scoping paper will not lead to the development of tools which will lead to the sidelining of products coming from the livestock value chain rather than stimulating the sustainable production and marketing of animal-based products.

We want to thank you for your attention.

With our kindest regards,

