



Call for action:

## **Good Food - Good Farming and a living countryside**

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People around the world are concerned about the future of food and farming. In Europe and the United States, civil society organisations and citizens' platforms like the ARC2020 have shared their skills, resources and knowledge to confront agro-industry and politicians with an undeniable truth: while short-term and blinkered economic policies might indeed cause social, environmental as well as economic disasters in the longer term, the continued industrialisation of farming and food production seriously endangers the very basis of our lives.

We call for action. We wish to further strengthen a broad alliance for good food, good farming and a living countryside. The warning signs must no longer be ignored: climate change, pollution and overexploitation of water; loss of biodiversity and soil fertility; dependence on fossil fuels and imported feed - all make our food supply less reliable and less resilient. Malnutrition in all its forms and the continued use of chemicals and antibiotics put our public health in danger. Growing concentration of market power of agri-food and chemical industries and retail sector, facilitated by unfair trade rules, undermine our farmers and citizens' livelihoods and endanger our food quality. More of the same, wrong policies will not resolve these problems.

We want to work on solutions for future food and farming which are closer to citizens and to nature. We want our plants and animals to be cultivated and reared with greater responsibility and respect, - in rural and urban areas - in a way that secures quality of life and livelihoods for future generations. We want farming to preserve our natural resources, respecting the limits of ecosystems. We want farming and food systems to be based on agroecological principles. These include social and human rights' principles and good stewardship of our nature and our resources.

We know that we have powerful vested interests against us. The global agri-food and chemical industries insist on business as usual, meaning continued economic growth at the expense of the natural and social web of life. Under their influence, recent reform attempts of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and the US Farm Bill have failed. In the EU, our proposals for radical change of farm policies were watered down to a pale "greening" layer - limited measures on monocultures and a shopping list of ideas for member states which might allow farmers to ignore basic agroecological practices.

In spite of this failure, we are encouraged by the many local and regional food initiatives and farmer-citizen movements which are emerging everywhere. People in urban and rural areas have started to build new food and farming systems from the bottom-up. However, industrial and unsustainable food and farming systems remain dominant. The ideology of global competition for growth in output and cheap food and the increasing price for land and

equipment drive farmers out of business, instead of supporting the much needed generational renewal and fundamental transition towards resilient farming practices.  
As European citizens, we want fundamental policy change to happen now.  
Our power will emerge from reconnecting to our food and farming, to our nature and culture.

To achieve this goal, we commit ourselves to value and take good care of OUR NATURAL COMMONS: Land, Water, Plants, Animals, and the ecosystems they are part of.

We join forces to improve and share OUR COMMON KNOWLEDGE:  
On nutrition, health, seed, land, agronomy and the web of life from the local to the global level in Research, Education, Nutrition, and Health.

We want Good Food and Good Farming to strengthen OUR COMMON VALUES:  
In our Food Culture, Cooperation, Transparency, Democracy, Equity, Justice and Solidarity.

We will take ownership and stewardship of our COMMON GOODS and PUBLIC SPACE:  
Including Public Money, Open Data, Markets, Jobs, Trade, and sustainable livelihoods.

Bringing all these elements together and involving all legitimate stakeholders in a productive and joint process of change is what we would call a truly Common Food and Agricultural Policy of the European Union based on the principles of food sovereignty.

We have sketched out the following ARC2020 ROAD MAP for the coming five years.

## A. OUR NATURAL COMMONS

### **LAND**

Too much of our land suffers from unsustainable farming practices causing compaction, erosion and loss of organic matter and soil fertility. Plant and livestock production is too dependent on synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, pharmaceuticals and concentrate feed. Ever more land is unavailable because of the sprawling encroachment of urbanisation. Unless we radically change our land use and farming practices, our soils will lose their capacity to feed us and support life on Earth. Our land also loses too many farmers to produce our food and is concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer owners. Young and new farmers have great difficulties to start and many give up because of unfair competition on land access, unfair distribution of subsidies and poor implementation of sustainable rural development strategies.

*By 2020 we want to install a European Food and Farming Policy which supports farmers and people working the land, not renters of hectares. Public support shall depend on good management of land and its ecosystems and the investments needed for it. We want policies and measures which increase soil organic matter and soil fertility; and which improve access to land for young people in urban and rural areas, ready to take responsibility for sustainable management of the land and revitalising rural economies based on agro-ecological principles.*

### **WATER**

Water is part of our food and part of our Commons. Where the land suffers from bad farming, industrial pollution and over-consumption, the quality and distribution of water deteriorates. Currently EU rules and laws are too often skewed or ignored, which accommodates

unsustainable farming practices. The loss of water quality and the costs of water decontamination are put on our shoulders. Irrigation is still wasting water in many ways. Water cycles have been altered, causing natural hazards.

*By 2020 we want full enforcement of all water protection laws in member states; we want the polluter pays principle applied in every case of pollution. We want water sources to come back under control of the communities that depend on them in every municipality and city.*

## **NATURAL DIVERSITY**

The unsustainable farming and food system has severely limited the living world's carrying capacity to support humans, especially in Europe where a large share of natural heritage has been linked to low-input farming for many centuries. Each day hundreds of wild plant and animal species become extinct; their natural habitats are shrinking dramatically; entire terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems have lost their capacity to support life. At least 30 % of greenhouse gases responsible for climate change are released from industrial farming and food supply systems; current nature protection measures cannot slow down let alone counter these continued and severe losses.

*By 2020 we want to reinforce existing EU Nature Conservation Policy so it fully integrates protection of cultivated and wild species diversity, landscape management with ecosystem protection, as part of a common farming and food policy. Support for organic and agro-ecological approaches to high-nature farming, forestry and agro-forestry shall rebalance production methods with conservation requirements so that the production of food goes hand in hand with the revitalisation and sustainable management of biodiversity. We want to see the spread of organic farming and organic principles, creating fertile and diverse systems with natural pest control measures, rather than prophylactic use of chemicals that sterilise our ecosystems. (...)*

## **PLANTS**

Plants are the very basis of our food. But we have lost most of the great common wealth of cultivated plants through industrialised farming systems. 75% of cultivated crop species and varieties are gone forever. Just 3 plant species cultivated in Europe (wheat, barley, maize) cover over 55% of the farmed land. Monocultures make plants vulnerable to disease and call for even more chemicals. Genetic engineering of plant varieties and seeds make things even worse, as genetic diversity is monopolised and thus reduced by corporate interests. International seed companies claim exclusive rights for seeds and EU legislation reduces access to the diversity of cultivated plants.

*By 2020, we want the launch of an EU Policy which preserves and enhances plant diversity in European agriculture; strengthens farmers' rights and establishes a fair remuneration of breeders on the basis of broadened plant genetic diversity. We want public money to be invested into highly diversified crop rotation systems in plant production and support for leguminous crops and pulses for human consumption and animal feed. We also want support and real protection for diverse natural pastures, where a large share of Europe's plant diversity is found. (...)*

## **ANIMALS**

Our animals suffer from industrialised farming systems: They are too many; in the wrong places; for the wrong reasons. Too many, because they are not fed on our land but mainly on

imported feed, while extensive grazing would be the best land-use option to produce food on non-arable land; in the wrong places because they are often cramped into unhealthy stables, concentrating pollution and disease; for the wrong reasons, because mass meat is too cheap to cover the true costs of that intensive production. Industrialised farm animals also suffer from bad breeding practices. They are selected to grow fast and in huge densities to fit into unhealthy stalls. They suffer from long transport distances and from mass slaughter often designed for non-living things. The number of animals we raise must be rebalanced with the plants we can eat and the feed we can grow on our land. Breeding should favour animal health and longevity. .

*By 2020, we want the launch of a European animal welfare law which shall phase out factory farming and industrial-scale meat production. We want limits to the size of livestock sheds so as to bring back into balance animal feed, livestock numbers and densities, the use of natural plants in healthier animal diets, and the sustainable use of manure. We want a plan and measures to restructure the European meat processing industry towards decentralisation; favouring local and regional food and feed chains; Slaughter and processing should be as close as possible to farms to reduce animal transport and mass slaughter and to benefit local economies .(...)*

## **B. OUR COMMON KNOWLEDGE**

### **RESEARCH**

There is an enormous gap between our society and farmers' needs for transition towards a more sustainable food system and the dominant farming and food research currently funded and carried out in Europe. Companies and research institutes focus largely on the increase, acceleration and efficiency of output per input unit, at the expense of supporting organic and agroecological solutions. Private and public research investments are serving agribusiness interests instead of solving farmers' problems or supporting local and regional initiatives in sustainable practices. The new *European Innovation Partnerships for agricultural productivity and sustainability* was a good idea to bring farmers and researchers closer together. But again, this has failed to think outside of corporate and sectoral interests. We need to reinvent and redesign research and innovation formats which are at the service of small farmers, local food initiatives, added value chains and enterprises; and which address the urgently needed boost to nature conservation and sustainable resource management. This includes human resources, traditional, local indigenous and public knowledge. Bottom up, open and inclusive process of knowledge generation and sharing are needed. This includes reorganising the governance and evaluation process of research, and an emphasis on publically funded and independent research. We need a more holistic and renewed science in the fields of agronomy, ecology, economics and social sciences.

*By 2020 we want new formats of research and innovation actions launched, which are built upon a sound evaluation of practitioners' needs and which support the transition to sustainable agroecological farming systems; we want more emphasis on participatory research as well as multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches, as a methodological framework for closing the gap between scientists and practitioners. (...)*

### **EDUCATION**

Our knowledge and education system on food and farming has vanished in a cloud of advertisement, convenience and an ever spinning wheel of isolated scientific facts. It must

come down to earth. It ignores the real challenges for future generations. We need better public knowledge and education of our citizens – in particular children - on the connections between, nature, farming, food, health and well-being; on-the-spot learning for students about the practical problems of farming and food supply; exchange of good agronomic practice between farmers; connecting agriculture with gastronomy to improve taste quality; reconnection between farmers and consumers on food quality and prices; rural reality checks for politicians and decision makers; education on how our food system is related to health, environment, the climate and the rest of the economy (...)

*By 2020 we want a common European initiative on education, training and exchange of good farming and food practice which offer solutions for sustainable food systems (...)*

## **NUTRITION**

Our food system has led to a change from diets based on traditional, local seasonal and unprocessed foods to diets high in fats, salt, added sugars, as well as an increased global demand for meat and dairy products – all closely linked with chronic diseases such as obesity, certain cancers, heart disease and diabetes. At the same time this model of food production and consumption is not sustainable because of its negative impact on climate, energy use and resources. At the same time, our practical knowledge about how to choose and prepare the foods necessary for healthy diets is disappearing as highly processed foods have dominate supermarket shelves and are aggressively marketed. Efforts to provide information through labelling have largely failed: and this process has become confusing and misleading. Citizens are demanding more transparency on where their food comes from and how it is produced. Convenience and fast food of negligible nutritional value are a bigger part of our diets, leading to waning interest and knowledge of cooking and nutrition. We are getting more and more dependent on artificial food additives to balance out what is missing in our diets. For making the right choice for a sustainable and fair diet for us all, we need to reduce food waste and take into account the energy and resources used for the food we eat.

Radical change in both production and consumption will be necessary to promote both healthy diet and sustainable diets. This will require making the healthy and sustainable choice the easy choice.

*By 2020 we want sustainable diets, starting from public canteens in schools, hospitals and universities based on community-led approaches; while recognising the role of private SMEs who show real leadership in sustainable procurement; we want to encourage farmers to produce healthy seasonal produce, healthier meat with less reliance on imported feeds and cereals; and more grass- and pasture-land to feed their animals. We want reliable labelling of food, including the origins and production methods, so that consumers can make well informed choices of what they buy and eat. We want to support of new initiatives that make use of new technologies in connecting the food system, shortening food supply chains and improve transparency across the food system.(...)*

## **HEALTH**

Our health depends to a significant extent on the food we eat, the diets we choose and the way food is produced. Many chronic diseases and many allergies are related to diet and food. Malnutrition, especially over nutrition with sugar and fat has resulted in exploding costs to our health care systems and although life expectancy has increased on average, the number of years we live with chronic conditions is increasing. At the same time the way we currently

produce our food relies on overuse of antibiotics, pesticides containing toxins and endocrine disruptors, as well as a growing number of additives in processed foods. This dangerous cocktail is linked to public health problems such as immune system deficiency, reproductive health concerns, hormone related cancers, and even obesity and diabetes. Eating more plant based foods and less meat and dairy of higher quality, produced in systems that are not dependent on chemicals and antibiotics, will contribute to healthier and longer lives.

*By 2020 we want an integrated and coherent food, farming and public health policy which reduces the costs of unhealthy diets. We also want independent evaluation bodies at EU and national levels (...)*

## C. OUR COMMON VALUES

### CULTURE

In past decades, our wide European diversity of food and farming cultures has been ploughed under by a standardised industrial food and farming system. Real food has given way to food ingredients and raw materials for an increasingly concentrated processing industry. Citizens have noticed this loss and look increasingly for local and regional food. But hygiene and prohibiting market rules, along with reduced local market and distribution facilities, often do not allow the diversity of products to be available. This puts farmers and SMEs – the backbone of sustainable rural and urban economies - out of business. Our whole food culture, including knowledge of seasonal and locally grown food, landscapes related to the local food systems, even the time we spend growing, sourcing, preparing, eating and sharing food, is losing space and appreciation in our lives.

*By 2020, we want to raise more awareness throughout Europe for a sustainable food culture to become an integrated part of EU culture programmes. This should include strengthening of farm to school, farm to hospital and similar programmes that provide options for healthy, locally and regionally grown foods and support and build deeper ties between farmers and consumers, starting with children. (...)*

### COOPERATION

The ideology of global competitiveness as the only orientation for farmers' investments is destroying and devaluating the old and important tradition of cooperation in our villages. Farmers now pay for services instead of practicing mutual aid; many even lose competence on land management because of this. In the new member states, cooperation often has the connotation of forced collectivisation and is still rejected. However, cooperation between farmers and with local and regional food processors is much needed to keep the added value in our villages and to become less dependent on the volatility of international markets. Cooperation in private as well as private-public municipal partnerships, as part of distribution channels and value chains is especially efficient in providing multiple goods and services (e.g. food, nature protection, recreation, education) of public interest.

*By 2020 we want support for cooperation in rural development to be substantially increased, especially for small farmers' and community-based agriculture, food processing facilities and innovation in marketing (...)*

## **DEMOCRACY AND TRANSPARENCY**

Good governance of our food and farming systems need a new democratic approach. Too many decisions have been taken away from citizens, either by a centralised food industry or inaccessible political and administrative decision-making bodies. During consultation procedures on legal acts the opinion of civil society and scientific findings are often ignored. As our common goods and values need more attention and management at local level, more democratic space must be gained by local and regional farming and food initiatives based on the mobilization of appropriate knowledge. This space must emerge and be created from the bottom-up. However, top-down EU initiatives like LEADER and "Community-Led Local Development" (CLLD) can greatly back this process. We want to rediscover and take ownership of our local and municipal commons. But this needs fundamental changes also in governance at higher levels: we regularly see the massive power and influence of unelected and anti-democratic international corporations that have the ear of the top national and EU decision-makers, pushing an agenda for the benefit of their profits and not the public good.

*By 2020 we want citizens' initiatives to be recognized and supported as equal partners of other forms of representative governance and call for full transparency on the influence of big business (...)*

## **SOLIDARITY**

From the outset of the European project, solidarity between countries and people has been a uniting common European value. It was and still is somehow applied though higher payments from the EU Structural Funds to member states and regions with lower living standards or natural and structural disadvantages. However, in the case of farm and food policies, these principles have been applied to nurture rural "structural change" and support the development of industrial farming in favoured regions without stopping depopulation and economic downturn in disadvantaged regions.

On a globalised agricultural market, the European Union still represents the heritage of past colonialism. Solidarity must also entail those regions and rural producers in developing countries from where we import food, feed, fibre and other agricultural goods and commodities, so international trade must be fair, and EU food and agriculture policies must be coherent with our development objectives and "do no harm".

*By 2020, we want new support criteria to be applied in the EU structural funds for a more local and regional farming and food infrastructure and facilities (...)*

## **D. OUR COMMON GOODS**

### **PUBLIC MONEY**

The bulk of taxpayer's money in the EU is used to subsidize an outdated and destructive model of industrialised farming. It rewards rich farmers for being rich and penalises poor farmers for being poor. It undermines farmers still working or already pioneering on agroecological principles. This destroys the value of our food in the fierce competition of discounters and supermarkets. This subsidy system is not good for our farmers, not good for consumers, not good for the environment and destroying the markets of local farmers in developing countries through dumping of exports. We have seen that the most effective use

of public money is to spend it on sustainable systems that increase fertility, resilience and boost local economies: Taxpayer's money must only be invested into the transition towards sustainable farming and related education, knowledge exchange of good practices and new public localised infrastructure. It should only be available for good agroecological performance and access to healthy food and should only be used where markets fail to remunerate much needed public goods provided by farmers.

*By 2020 we want our public money to be available only for the transition towards a sustainable farming and food system, not to the broken and flawed system that in fact generates additional public costs (...)*

## **MARKETS**

We want our markets back! Markets should serve society, not blackmail politicians. We want tools for risk management and sufficiently regulated financial markets so that food and feed is no longer exposed to wild swings in prices that make it difficult for farmers to produce sustainably for the long term. Concentration of market power in the agri-food industry has led to destructive practices of dumping, unjustifiable profit margins and sharp inequalities in the food value chain. We want food systems to produce fair income for farmers and prices to reflect the real costs of sustainable food for citizens. Markets must be reframed and regulated to avoid speculation with food, agricultural products and land. Farmers and cooperatives who wish to market locally must not be excluded from markets by unjustified hygienic or bureaucratic rules.

*By 2020, we want to establish market and competition rules which curb dumping practices and unfair competition; we want ceilings for market shares of food companies; and we want public support for small local market infrastructure in rural areas and cities. (...)*

## **WORK AND LIVELIHOODS**

We are told that only continued economic growth can create jobs. This is a myth. Even if the urban food industry still employs many workers- sometimes under unacceptable working conditions and wages- continued rationalisation is killing jobs in great numbers. The situation is worse in rural areas. Every year tens of thousands farmers give up. Today 75 % of farmers in the EU is over 55 and only 7 % under 35 years old. Those who take ruined farms over are under stress to invest into ever more intensive farming practices. Many farmers and SMEs are forced out of business by rules and regulations designed for industrialised food and farming. "Grow or perish" still is the economic imperative of European Agriculture. Depopulation of villages and entire regions is alarming. We need investments; training in local entrepreneurship and transition towards local and regional sourcing based on the true principle of and short food chains, supporting a quality of life for farmers and processors. We need to encourage the flourishing of urban agriculture, which offers opportunities for access and shorter supply chains, especially as populations increasingly urbanise. Employment and livelihoods in farming and rural economies will grow around the new local commons and through sustainable use of resources. Many disadvantaged regions in Europe have shown that this is possible.

*By 2020 we want a European framework which supports rural renaissance in municipalities and member states through national Rural Development programmes, building upon rural people's movements and initiatives; an enlarged LEADER and Community Led Local Development (CLLD) programme in all member states of the Union. (...)*



## TRADE

International trade with food and farm products is under the firm control of a few global players. Increasing volatility of global food prices has destabilised food supply in many regions and has especially hit the poor. Liberalisation of trade has imposed standards for farming practices and food which favour the current agro-industrial model and puts local and regional food systems under pressure. The international corporate trade agenda continuously reduces the sovereignty and power of governments to democratically decide about farming and food policies and to include social and environmental aspects in their legislation. The current Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is an example of this threat and has the potential to set a dangerous precedent for the future, setting the interests of corporations over farmers and citizens on both sides of the Atlantic.

*By 2020, we want to establish trade rules, achieved through a transparent and participatory process, which respect the right to food of every citizen, in and outside Europe, which acknowledge efforts of countries and regions to move towards sustainable farming and food systems and which stops ecological and social dumping practices (...)*

## E. OUR COMMON ROAD MAP

*The Brussels conference held on 10/11 February 2015 is the next stage for developing this road map. In significant ways, the structure and topics of the event reflect the structure and topics of this roadmap. The debates, discussions and contributions at this event will help further advance the road map you are now reading. In particular, the four workshops and the closing plenary will help shape the road map's next stage.*

*Our common ground of working together can have the shape of a jigsaw of different pieces joined together on the basis of respect to diversity, openness, accountability and equity. The use of Open Data can respond to the vast volume and heterogeneity of what has been described as "commons". This entails a culture of collaboration via comprehensive data sharing tools, ensuring their understanding while exploring their potential ways of usage, greater reproducibility and transparency.*