

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Friday, 16 July 2021 12:00 GMT +03:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	The Role of Food Labelling in Sustainable Food Systems
CONVENED BY	Petros Kokkalis - Member of the European Parliament
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/31743/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	European Union, Greece

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE



PARTICIPATION BY GENDER



NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR



NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP



2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

Acting with urgency: Urgency was reflected on the selected topic, which is a burning issue for the food system in Greece, strongly affecting food quality, consumer choices and overall competitiveness of the agrifood sector. Committing to the summit: Commitment to the UNFSS was reflected on all communication materials produced by the organisers (animation video, social media assets and posts, press release, Eventbrite page, Miro canvas) which ensured visibility of the UNFSS logo, hashtags, as well as dissemination of the five Action Tracks and objectives in the Greek language. Be respectful: Online meetings and a detailed brief for facilitators enabled the allocation of clear roles and the agreement of an online event etiquette which ensured active listening, respectful argumentation and co-creation throughout the Independent Dialogue. Recognise complexity: The experimental nature of the online co-creation process used for the Dialogue was identified early in the process, acknowledging limitations in terms of timing, technology and representativity of the participants in a co-creative discussion on Food Labelling for the first time in Greece. Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity: Selection of a neutral Curator and guest speakers who shared insights from the policy, science, practice and civil society perspectives, as well as targeted invitations aimed to engage a wide range of food system stakeholders, considering both geographic, sectoral, gender and generational diversity. Complement the work of others: The topic was selected by recognised food actors from the policy, science and activist sphere and was complementary to ongoing debates at national and EU level. Guest speakers acted as ambassadors of the Dialogue to decision making bodies, aiming to maximise impact and the sustainability of the Dialogue outcomes. Build trust: The Dialogue was organised by KOSMOS, a citizens initiative which is consistently advocating for the implementation of the SDGs in Greece and has gradually built trust with key sustainability champions in the country

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The Dialogue was based on a scientifically robust process curated by an interdisciplinary researcher and ensured the necessary political support of a Member of the European Parliament. A Focus Group of thematic experts was engaged in the organising team, ensuring diversity of opinions and insights to an admittedly complex topic, trust building across sectors and complementarity with ongoing research and political processes. The Principles of Engagement were reflected on the co-creation process, as well as the virtual facilitation tools that were used. Each discussion group was assigned a facilitator and a rapporteur, who received clear guidelines for successfully embracing their role: 1) Remember it's not about them; 2) Provide meaningful questions instead of easy answers; 3) Practice active listening; 4) Help gather as many ideas as possible; 5) Remain objective. During group discussions, they welcomed participants, framed the topic and invited participants to share insights. After a first round of inputs, facilitators indicated emerging patterns of identified challenges and opportunities which led to concrete recommendations. Rapporteurs kept notes on the Miro whiteboard, ensuring that all inputs were adequately documented. The language and visual elements used in the communication materials of the Dialogue aimed to reflect the Action Tracks and objectives, while promoting an uncomplicated, inclusive and engaging setting for the discussion. Personal invitations addressed to key stakeholders by the organising team, wide press and social media visibility, the creation of a user-friendly online environment for the Independent Dialogue as well as a follow up with an evaluation questionnaire and the Dialogue outcomes were essential to boost engagement and build trust with participants. The Dialogue achieved the objective of putting Greece on the map of the UNFSS, while providing a safe space for unheard voices of key stakeholders to be heard, concrete challenges and opportunities to be documented and consensus on actionable recommendations to be reached.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

The Independent Dialogue requires careful planning of all organisational aspects (e.g. timing, tools, process design), taking into consideration the specificities of facilitating co-creation processes in virtual environments. The selection of the right day and time for hosting such an event is important, in order to engage the right stakeholders and ensure both quantitative and qualitative inputs to the Dialogue. The length of the event was consciously limited to two hours, acknowledging that a longer event during the Greek summer would significantly reduce the number of participants. Nevertheless, the evaluation questionnaire indicated that more discussion time would have been appreciated by most participants. Free online events tend to attract high registration numbers who do not necessarily convert into active participants on the day of the event. The event was organised assuming 50 percent no show up, and the methodology was set up in a flexible manner, so as to enable adaptation of group discussion numbers and size according to the actual number of participants connecting live. Our experience demonstrated that lower participation numbers can enable deeper interaction in smaller groups of 5-10 people, especially when break-out time is limited. The Dialogue was hosted on the popular online conferencing platform Zoom in order to facilitate sign in and online engagement. At the same time, the online whiteboard platform Miro was used for three group discussions, providing visual documentation of the key issues under discussion. Simultaneous use of such tools requires providing clear instructions during the plenary session and engaging a facilitator that can offer technical support in

each discussion group. When engaging people of different levels of technological literacy, it is important to offer the option of following the discussion without having to log in to Miro, through the shared screen of the facilitator, and to foresee a “rapporteur” who keeps online notes while people exchange ideas.

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

Yes

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

Creating food systems that provide healthy food to everyone today and in future generations without exploiting human or planetary resources is one of the greatest challenges of this century. Sustainability is multifaceted and food systems represent not only environmental factors (ecology), but are also sensitive to the health of the population today and in the future (nutrition, food security), and society as a whole (ethics and social welfare). Trust and transparency in the food system is essential for any sustainability intervention to be meaningful and motivate change in individuals or industries.

Food Labelling Systems have the ability to accelerate the transition to sustainable and healthy food systems and a sustainable future, by increasing transparency along the food chain. They are themselves dynamic and complex, involving a multitude of changeable and inter-related activities, actors, and infrastructure from the production to the consumption and recycling or disposal of food. At every point there can be multiple environmental effects related to biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions (e.g., carbon dioxide, methane), and the use of land, water, or other resources. All these factors complicate the ability to create a metric or index that can trace a product as it journeys through the food system to assess its environmental, health, or social impacts.

Food consumption and dietary choices can make an important contribution to meeting current environmental challenges, informing the consumer in a way that can promote sustainable and responsible consumption. As a result, the development and use of sustainability labelling has the potential to play a role in moving towards sustainable and healthy food systems and a sustainable future, as outlined in the aims of the “Farm-to-Fork Strategy” and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The reach of food labelling is considerable and could increase public awareness of how food is produced and consumed.

The Independent Dialogue convened in Greece in the context of the United Nations Food System Summit explored the issue of sustainable food labelling, under the lens of the Summit’s five interconnected Action Tracks. Being the only contribution of Greece to the UNFSS, the aim of the Independent Dialogue was to raise awareness of the Summit and the importance of food labelling in fostering sustainable food systems. Participants engaged in a participatory process on sustainable food labelling schemes that integrate the Summit’s five Action Tracks. To complement this process, a Public Survey (September to December 2021) is going to assess consumption habits and perceptions towards different food labelling systems in Greece. The outcomes of the Independent Dialogue and the results of the Public Survey are expected to provide useful insights for informing sustainable food system policy at the national and EU level.

ACTION TRACKS

- Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Finance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Policy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Innovation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Data & Evidence |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Human rights | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Governance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Women & Youth Empowerment | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trade-offs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environment and Climate |

MAIN FINDINGS

The UNFSS Independent Dialogue in Greece has achieved three key objectives:

- 1) Direct contribution to the UNFSS as the only input from Greece. This is the first time that a perspective from Greece is officially submitted to a key UN sustainability event in an independent and bottom up manner. In the absence of efforts to create awareness of the Summit by state officials, KOSMOS has developed a national Focus Group of experts to successfully organise the event according to UNFSS guidelines.
- 2) Bringing together diverse actors to discuss the role of Food Labelling in promoting sustainable food systems. This is the first public discussion on the topic of food labelling taking place in Greece, aiming to shed light on the existing key challenges and opportunities. The outcomes of the Independent Dialogue include concrete recommendations for advancing four UNFSS Action Tracks. These recommendations are applicable to Greece, but also have relevance to the international context of food systems sustainability.
- 3) Generating community-led insights for evidence-based policy making. This is the first time that an elected official from Greece (Member of the European Parliament) invites a citizen-led multi-stakeholder consultation connected to an official UN process. Through an open, participatory process and robust scientific support, the identified challenges, opportunities and recommendations provide useful insights for smarter and evidence-based policy making promoting sustainable food systems at the national and EU level.

The intention of the organising team and the Focus Group of the Independent Dialogue is to continue convening as a Community of Practice, aiming to advance the UNFSS Action Tracks in Greece; generate new knowledge and evidence for the promotion of solutions for food systems sustainability; and advocate for better, evidence-based and science driven policy.

In this context, it aims to launch an online Public Survey (September to December 2021) to assess consumer behaviours and perceptions on food labelling in Greece. The results of this Public Survey are going to be analysed and published in due course to a peer-reviewed scientific journal, therefore contributing to scientific knowledge and public awareness on the state of food systems in Greece.

The Focus Group also commits to promote and expand the scope of the UNFSS Independent Dialogue, by addressing more topics and reaching out to diverse audiences in Greece and internationally. A report on the outcomes of the Independent Dialogue and launch of the Public Survey will take place during a dedicated event: "Thought for Food: Food Systems in the 21st Century", taking place in Athens and online on September 24, 2021 under the occasion of the UNFSS taking place in New York.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

- Finance
- ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Human rights
- Women & Youth Empowerment
- ✓ Policy
- ✓ Data & Evidence
- ✓ Governance
- Trade-offs
- ✓ Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

The role of Food Labelling in ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all and advancing equitable livelihoods.

Food is a life-giving element of every human on Earth, responsible for our nutrition and health. Millions of people work every day in the food system: whether it is in farms, in the sea, in logistics and supply chain management, in professional or home kitchens and even the street. Food is something much more than something that fills our stomachs, since the food economy is influencing the lives of billions and its performance is a key influencer of environmental sustainability, economic prosperity and social justice. Therefore, with its social and cultural dimensions, food is highly political, especially during periods of crises.

The group discussion of the Independent Dialogue has identified a number of challenges, opportunities and recommendations for advancing the role of Food Labelling in ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all and advancing equitable livelihoods.

CHALLENGES

- Difficulties observed in the certification process of small-scale producers, as a result of bureaucracy and lack of clear and consistent information available by official public authorities.
- High certification costs cannot be afforded by all food producers or manufacturers, potentially generating inequalities and deficiencies in food labelling. At the same time, higher prices of certified products create the impression that they are luxury foods that can only be afforded by an elite and not by everyone.
- Reduced awareness is connected to a lack of confidence towards certification agencies and the process of their accreditation.
- Creation of short supply chains and direct connections between food systems stakeholders to reduce the consumption cost of healthy, nutritious food, while ensuring fair prices to the producers.
- Aging farmer population and the associated digital gap is making the adoption of innovation and food certification and labelling schemes more difficult.
- Need to democratise technological innovations, including 'smart agriculture' solutions, so they can benefit everyone and not just few technologically savvy producers and food systems actors.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Food labelling has the potential to promote consumer awareness on processes taking place in the different steps of food production, manufacturing and distribution. This can eventually have an effect in rewarding sustainable producers and manufacturers, while applying peer pressure for better controls and the elimination of unsustainable practices.
- Better consumer awareness is connected to the need for harmonised terminology and a common language in communicating food certification, so that misunderstandings and false interpretations are avoided.
- Technological innovations can strengthen transparency in the food certification process, promote synergies among diverse actors and efficiency in supply chains, while improving consumer access to sustainable and ethically produced food.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthening of the national Agricultural Knowledge & Innovation Systems (AKIS) to support food producers and other food systems actors in the transition towards sustainability, with emphasis on ethical production.
- Promotion of Participatory Guarantee Systems for the development of local food supply chains and quality assurance systems, which promote resilience on the basis of active participation of stakeholders, social networking and knowledge exchange.
- Support consumer awareness on food provenance, build trust and empower transparency by connecting food certification with digital producer profiles (i.e. QR codes, videos, mapping of farms)
- Developing and expanding the role and scope of urban Agrifood Councils as liaisons between local authorities and citizens for the promotion of local, fair and sustainable food systems.
- Empowering conscious and informed food choices through wide diffusion of information on food systems aspects, including familiarising consumers about food labelling and sustainability.

ACTION TRACKS

- Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

- Finance
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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

The role of Food Labelling in shifting to sustainable consumption patterns.

CHALLENGES

- Building trust and strengthening the credibility of food labelling systems, by preventing misleading information and greenwashing practices observed by unsustainable and industrial food manufacturers.
- Knowledge gaps are still observed among food chain actors on the role of food labelling and key sustainability criteria (i.e. meaning of labels, consequences and benefits of certain processes in human and environmental health).
- Many food chain actors and consumers are still not familiarised with the use of ICT. Only mature and reliable technologies should be applied in food labelling systems, at a scale that can be adequately taken up by the sector.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Sustainable food labelling offers opportunities for the promotion of personalised diets and conscious consumption patterns in support of sustainable land use and farming practices.
- Openly distributed information through appropriate food labelling is an integral part of sustainable consumption, by promoting a new approach to food and supply chains putting emphasis on local production-consumption systems, lower carbon footprints, trust and public engagement for improving individual food habits.
- Strengthening traceability by integrating new open technologies in food certification and accreditation systems to enable wide diffusion of food supply chain information, including information on raw ingredients.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Food labelling should enable sustainable food to become the easiest, most convenient and most affordable choice, with information conveyed in a way that is comprehensive and understood by everyone, including children.
- Strengthening the role of formal and non-formal education in promoting food systems sustainability. Schools should introduce sustainable food education with the application of transformative learning concepts, equipping children with knowledge and skills to recognise and understand the food supply chain processes reflected on food labels. Non-formal education should focus on developing skills to all food chain actors with a special focus on consumer education on sustainable food labelling.
- Upgrade the role of food labelling in creating new food sustainability cultures by connecting individual health with environmental safety and societal resilience.
- Use of new technologies to increase direct connectivity and interaction among food systems actors. Special emphasis should be given to the potential of using personal mobile devices to promote consumer awareness and informed food choices (i.e. mobile applications and QR-codes linking to information on production and manufacture processes).
- Promote transparency and the role of state controls in ensuring that food safety sustainability standards are publicly and clearly disclosed and regularly monitored for their performance in ensuring climate resilience, contributing to the national and local economies and reinforcing public health. The obligation to comply with environmental sustainability standards should not be left entirely to the "invisible hand" of the market, and market actors involved in food labelling schemes should clearly state any existing biases or conflicts of interests.

ACTION TRACKS

	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
✓	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
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KEYWORDS

	Finance	✓	Policy
✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
✓	Human rights	✓	Governance
	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

The role of Food Labelling in boosting nature-positive production.

Food producers are holding the future of our food in their hands. They do not only support the competitiveness and sustainability of agricultural economies, but they are also the ultimate managers of our natural resources and the environment. Although they are a significant part of Greece's food supply chain, their incomes are under pressure and the countryside is becoming desolate. To accelerate the transition to sustainability, new actions and bold policies must be in place to ensure the future of food through a sustainable and fair production-consumption model.

The group discussion of the Independent Dialogue has identified a number of challenges, opportunities and recommendations for advancing the role of Food Labelling in boosting nature-positive production.

CHALLENGES

- High costs related to food certification are preventing small-scale producers from presenting adequate food labelling in their products.
- Gaps are observed in nature-positive food labelling schemes in Greece, i.e. there is no certification scheme for biodynamic or regenerative farming although early efforts for the introduction of new criteria exist.
- Too many food labels might be overwhelming and confusing to consumers. There is a need for clear information about production practices to reach the consumer in an comprehensive and concise manner.
- On-boarding food labelling schemes might generate scepticism to certain food producers who are resisting innovation. There is a need to build trust through increased transparency and awareness on the benefits of the certification process.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Supporting the transition to agroecology and organic farming and other forms of climate-resilient land use and agriculture systems.
- Current high popular demand for nature-positive produced food is mainly manifested in the interest for agroecological and/or organic products from nature-positive farming systems. At the same time, consumers are also interested in the provenance of their food, with informed choices supporting shorter supply chains and local economies, where more benefit returns to their community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Financial support to small-scale, nature-positive food producers and manufacturers who cannot afford relevant certification, especially in view of new EU policies (e.g. Farm-to-Farm Strategy) envisioning the increase of organic farming.
- Create awareness on the positive effects and benefits of food labelling in support of agroecological and/or organic food that is produced in nature-positive farming systems. Consumers should be able to understand the production processes reflected on a food label.
- Synergies with other sectors for mainstreaming food systems sustainability and nature-positive production, i.e. by integrating the UNFSS Action Tracks into cultural activities.
- Introduction of stronger sustainability criteria in food labelling and relevant certification, i.e. biodiversity conservation and valorisation, local provenance, carbon footprint).
- Introduction of more concise food labelling that is not overwhelming to the consumer and provides clear information about the production processes.

ACTION TRACKS

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<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

ACTION TRACKS

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| | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment and Climate |

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Independent Dialogue Greece - Table 1 Canvas**
https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/IndependentDialogueGreece_Table1.png
- **Independent Dialogue Greece - Table 2 Canvas**
https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/IndependentDialogueGreece_Table2.png
- **Independent Dialogue Greece - Table 3 Canvas**
https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/IndependentDialogueGreece_Table3.png

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Independent Dialogue on Eventbrite**
<https://unfss-greece.eventbrite.com>
- **Independent Dialogue on Facebook**
<https://tinyurl.com/y5j8wkjc>