R2new Towards an agroecological Europe by 2030

Proposer: FYEG
Agenda item: 4. Resolutions

Motion text

The cultivation of the Earth along with forestry activities has been vital for our survival as humankind. Unfortunately, the continuous push for the industrialization and globalisation of the world's agriculture and food supply systems threatens the future of humanity and the natural world, which are deeply interconnected. The Covid-19 pandemic and the trade implications of the war in Ukraine have made more visible the vulnerabilities of food systems across the globe that are not able to ensure a sufficient and healthy diet for everyone. In Europe, the hegemonic agro-industry model developed in the last decades has entailed a reduction in crop diversification, a depletion of soil and biodiversity, and the pollution of aquifers and water reserves due to the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, along with antibiotics in animal farming. The exploitative labour conditions in agriculture of migrant workers, mainly in southern Europe, are also part of this model, a region which is the most vulnerable of the continent to desertification and the sustainability of any form of agriculture in the following decades.

Jointly addressing the challenges of sustainable food for the European and world population, the preservation of biodiversity and natural resources and the response to climate change requires a profound transition of our agricultural and food system. A shift towards an agroecological paradigm based on the phasing-out of pesticides and synthetic fertilisers, and the redeployment of extensive grasslands and landscape infrastructure would allow these issues to be addressed in a coherent manner. In this sense, there is a wide scientific consensus in the capacity of agroecology to nourish all Europe and to nourish all people better, expressed in the reports of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier de Schutter. A step from the status quo is needed to put the health of people and ecosystems first than the interest of the big landowners and seed producers in agro-industry, a shift that has to be ensured from political institutions. Hence, it is not just about rigorous ecological and social standards, but about transforming the way food is produced, distributed and consumed, giving room for local knowledge and food sovereignty, and the functioning of food systems as a source of shared prosperity.

To generalise organic agriculture is not enough, we can see it in the greenwashing made by agri-business by meeting the minimum requirements for their production to be labelled as "organic" but not making significant changes in the way food is produced and distributed. In addition, we need a structural change in a situation where consumption patterns are still far from meeting a diet that is within planetary boundaries, marked by an overconsumption of meat and ultra-processed food that damages the health of the people and the planet. We have to overcome the false dichotomy between prioritising nourishing the whole world and ensuring long-term sustainability of the soil: both are possible under agroecology, improving public health and making possible the mitigation and adaptation to the climate crisis. Under agroecological principles, farmers and peasants are agents of change, carrying out ecosystem services along with the production of healthy, organic and accessible food through short supply chains that ensure food security and are the materialisation of food sovereignty. The projects rooted on the social and solidarity economy such as cooperatives, food hubs and local associations should be the engine of these transformations.

For all these reasons, the Federation of Young European Greens makes a call to all political entities across Europe to create a legal and policy framework that fosters the up-scaling of agroecology, urgently transitioning to agroecological production and consumption and minimise food waste, while increasing the ambition and reshaping the goals of the Farm to Fork strategy. The redesign of the CAP also has to stop the discriminatory practice of countries not receiving the same amount of subsidies, mainly punishing farmers in the newest EU member states.

- **Facilitate the rapid abandonment of the use of hazardous pesticides and fertilisers and the funding of research behind and use of the use of biocontrol and natural barriers and predators, biopesticides, polyculture, the phase-out of bioenergy crops and vegetable protein imports, the increase of the share of legume crops in rotation, the redeployment of natural grasslands and extension of agroecological infrastructures (hedges, trees, ponds, stony habitats). A cut in funds from intensive farming to redirect them to agroecological initiatives is also key.**

- **Decrease support to reductionist agricultural research and increase investments in public research on agroecology and organic farming, creating Agroecological Living Labs and learning hubs. Transitioning to agroecological systems needs a life-long learning, transdisciplinary and multistakeholder approach, in formal and non-formal education and research. Agricultural sciences curricula should be transformed into agroecological curricula. Additionally, educating on the benefits of agroecology in rural areas to empower youth initiatives should be a priority of educational policies, increasing the visibility of certification programs in agroecology, exchanges of good practices and networks of support and knowledge.**

- **Rethink the relation between urban and rural societies and territories, taking into account the interdependence between cities and ecosystems. We need to create an alliance based on short supply chains with surrounding territories, as indicated by the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. To link transformative production and consumption initiatives is essential for the up-scaling of agroecology.**

- **Aim for the objective of 100% organic, local and fair trade products by 2027 in public restoration with vegetarian and vegan options everyday. Entities of the social and solidarity economy should be prioritised and supported by public administrations through this policy and other measures designed at all political levels. The relocalization of production through agroecological initiatives and the progressive increase in the ecological and social requirements of public purchase are central to reach this goal. The public sector has to take this leadership role for the transformations to come as soon as possible in the rest of economic and societal spheres.**

- **Agroecological laws at all legislative levels should be enacted to ensure a just transition from conventional agriculture to agroecology (up-scaling agroecology). Some Latin American countries have been pioneers in this kind of legislation, such as the case of Uruguay in 2018.**

- **At the EU level, we demand the taxation on imported commodities whose methods of production do not comply with the EU environmental and human rights standards. Determination of compliance with said standards is done by an independent body. Such an evaluation should be reassessed at least every 4 years. Where this especially harms smallholder producers, profits from such a taxation will be invested in initiatives that incentivise production meeting such standards. This is particularly important in the sector of protein crops, where the ban on imported soya in the EU could phase out synthetic fertilisers responsible for high greenhouse gas emissions and close the nitrogen cycle at the finest territorial level. A redesign of the Common Agriculture Policy is needed in order to halt the disproportionally advantageous treatment of large agricultural companies and to put small and medium organic and agroecological practices at the centre of public support, to ensure just prices for local producers, reduce the distance food travels between production and consumption and minimise food waste, while increasing the ambition and reshaping the goals of the Farm to Fork strategy.**

- **Develop European, state-level as well as local and regional programs to facilitate access to land for all and especially for youth through Land Banks, for instance, in the form of council land redistribution. This would generate new job opportunities and rural development and promote safe and decent working conditions and wages. A gender perspective has to be integrated in all the measures taken, as well as mechanisms to ensure**

equity for ethnic minorities

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- Develop local and regional programmes designating public land most accessible by communities, such as those in the heart of communities, for sustainable community projects and facilitating and stimulating the cultivation of such projects. These projects, such as community gardens, are to be decided by communities themselves through local forums, councils, or other local participation initiatives.

To European civil society:

- **FYEG supports the Agroecology Europe Barcelona Letter and any other organisation or movement working in the lines of an agroecological transformation.**

- **We make a call to join forces in the advocacy and action towards a truly sustainable food system that places the health of people and the planet over profit, a transformation in the food system that cannot wait if we want genuinely resilient territories for the decades to come.**

Reason

We need to envision the concrete steps towards a food system that really protects and puts the health of the people and ecosystems over profit. The agroecological paradigm, representing a step forward from organic production, reflects this transition and sets a challenge for the following years and decades if we want liveable places in Europe, mostly in the most vulnerable countries to desertification in Southern Europe, but also a more just food regime globally.