



Revision of the EU school scheme

Presentation of stakeholders' feedback on the evaluation roadmap/inception impact assessment

Civil Dialogue Group HOS – Fruit and Vegetables sector **1 October 2021**

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OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

1. Introduction: the review of the EU school scheme in 2023
2. The evaluation roadmap/inception impact assessment published for stakeholders' feedback
3. Feedback received by stakeholders: who and what
4. Next steps

1. Context for the review of the EU school scheme: Farm to Fork Strategy (Action 25)



Brussels, 20.5.2020
COM(2020) 381 final

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

A Farm to Fork Strategy
for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system

PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE FOOD CONSUMPTION, FACILITATING THE SHIFT TOWARDS HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE DIETS

Review of the **EU school scheme** legal framework with a view to refocus the scheme on healthy and sustainable food

2023

2.4. Promoting sustainable food consumption and facilitating the shift to healthy, sustainable diets

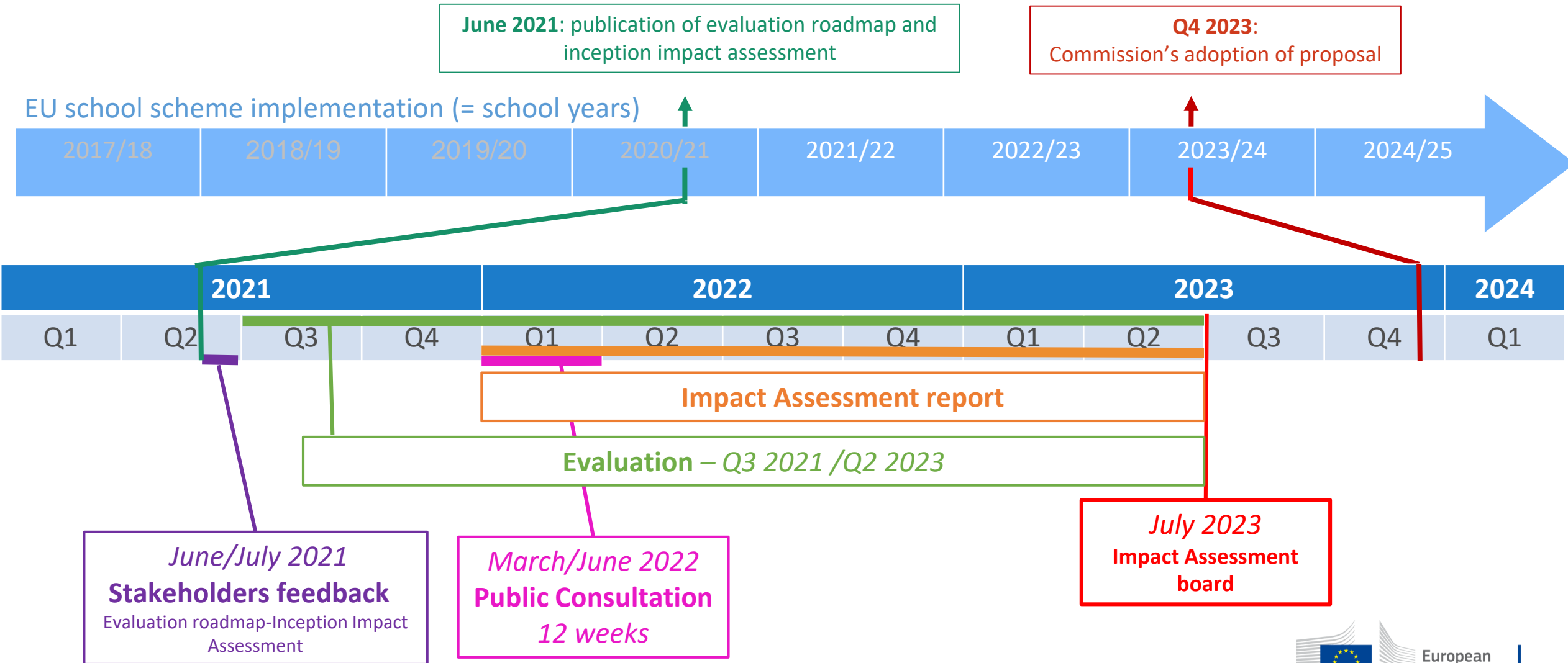
Current **food consumption** patterns are unsustainable from both health and environmental points of view. While in the EU, average intakes of energy, red meat³³, sugars, salt and fats continue to exceed recommendations, consumption of whole-grain cereals, fruit and vegetables, legumes and nuts is insufficient³⁴.

Reversing the rise in overweight and obesity rates across the EU by 2030 is critical. **Moving to a more plant-based diet with less red and processed meat and with more fruits and vegetables will reduce not only risks of life-threatening diseases, but also the environmental impact of the food system³⁵.** It is estimated that in the EU in 2017 over 950,000 deaths (one out of five) and over 16 million lost healthy life years were attributable to unhealthy diets, mainly cardiovascular diseases and cancers³⁶. The EU's 'beating cancer' plan includes the promotion of healthy diets as part of the actions for cancer prevention.

To improve the **availability and price** of sustainable food and to promote healthy and sustainable diets in institutional catering, the Commission will determine the best way of setting minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable food procurement. This will help cities, regions and public authorities to play their part by sourcing sustainable food for schools, hospitals and public institutions and it will also boost sustainable farming systems, such as organic farming. The Commission will lead by example and reinforce sustainability standards in the catering contract for its canteens. **It will also review the EU school scheme to enhance its contribution to sustainable food consumption and in particular to strengthen educational messages on the importance of healthy nutrition, sustainable food production and reducing food waste.**

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:ea0f9f73-9ab2-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

1. Planned timeline for the review of the EU school scheme



2. The evaluation roadmap/inception impact assessment published for stakeholders' feedback

Review of the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme

Have your say > Published initiatives > Review of the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme

In preparation

Roadmap

Feedback period

29 June 2021 - 27 July 2021

FEEDBACK: CLOSED

UPCOMING

Public consultation

Consultation period

First quarter 2022

FEEDBACK: UPCOMING

Commission adoption

Planned for

Fourth quarter 2023

FEEDBACK: UPCOMING

About this initiative

Summary

The EU school scheme supports the supply of fruit, vegetables, milk and certain milk products to children together with educational activities teaching them about agriculture and developing healthy eating habits. The Commission will review the EU school scheme as well as the measures fixing this EU aid, building on the lessons learnt from its implementation since 2017. The review will contribute to promoting sustainable food consumption, in line with the Farm to Fork Strategy.

Topic

Agriculture and rural development

Type of act

Proposal for a regulation

Category

REFIT

Roadmap

FEEDBACK: CLOSED

Type

Inception impact assessment

[More about roadmaps](#)

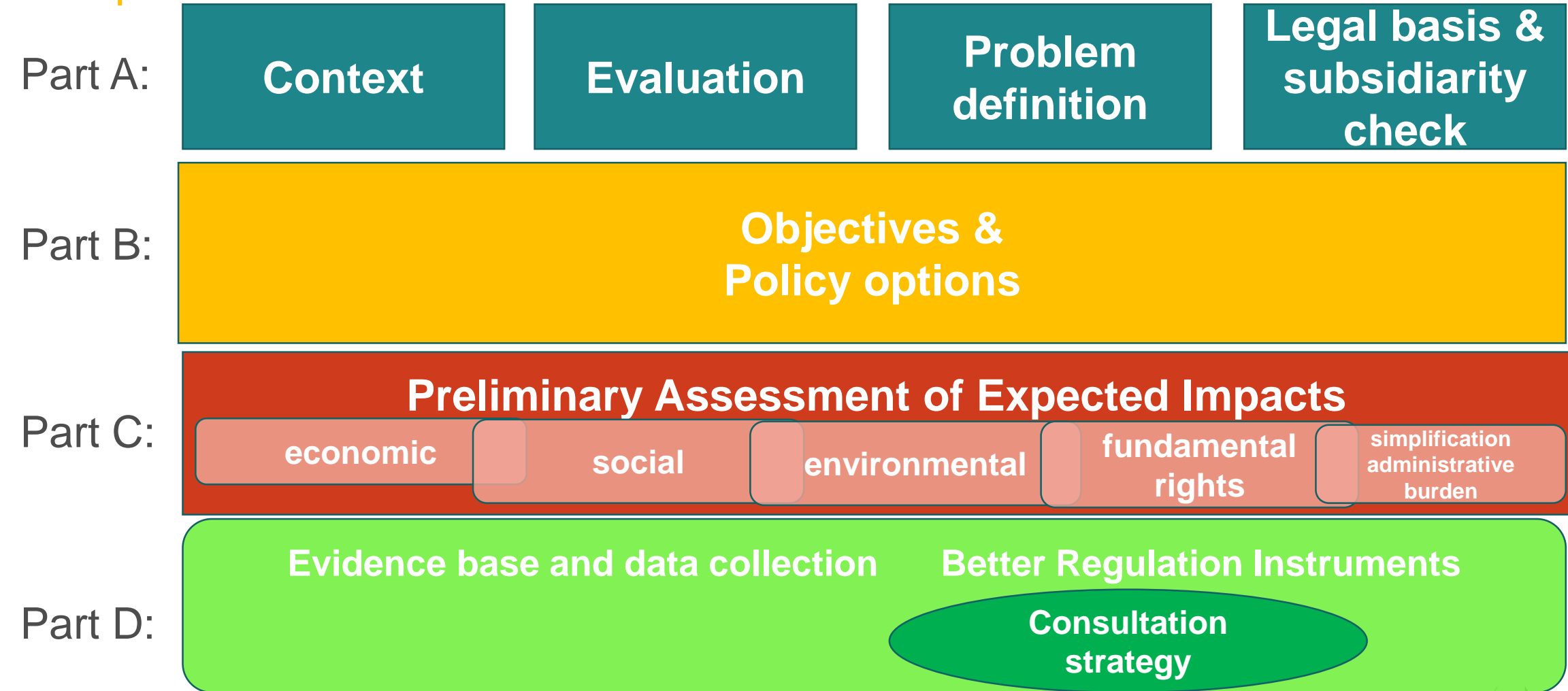
Feedback period

29 June 2021 - 27 July 2021 (midnight Brussels time)

[View feedback received >](#)



2. The evaluation roadmap/inception impact assessment



2. The evaluation roadmap/inception impact assessment

Context, Evaluation, Problem definition and Subsidiarity check

Context

- CAP reform
- Farm to Fork Strategy
- Beating Cancer plan
- Organic Action Plan
- European Child Guarantee

Evaluation

- Effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, added value
- Identify unnecessary administrative burden and scope for simplification
- External independent analysis + synthesis country evaluations
- 27 MSs + UK until 2020

Problems to be tackled

- Coverage / target group
- Scope of eligible products
- Distribution model
- Educational measures
- Governance
- Budget use

to be further developed
(evaluation)

Legal basis and subsidiarity check

- Common Agricultural Policy: Articles 42 & 43 of Treaty
- EU-wide problem
- Regulation for homogeneous approach
- Review for more coherence and performance

2. The evaluation roadmap/inception impact assessment

B. Objectives and policy options

Objectives: contribution to sustainable food consumption + strengthen educational messages on healthy nutrition, sustainable food systems, reducing food waste + more efficiency/performance of the scheme

Preliminary elements to be considered – impact assessment will identify preferred option or mix

Coverage

- Age brackets or school level
- More inclusive approach

Educational measures

- Minimum share of budget
- Content and priority topics

Simplification

- Management/control/monitoring/evaluation
- Improve efficiency/performance

Eligible products

- Sustainability objectives
- Food based dietary guidelines and nutritional recommendations
- Eligibility criteria or conditions

Implementation

- Set quantified targets
- Performance for budget allocation

Distribution model

- Possibilities to enlarge (breakfast initiatives and/or distribution of regular school meals)
- Food packaging and food waste issues

Governance

- Public authorities in charge of agriculture, education, health, social and environment
- Economic & social partners

2. The evaluation roadmap/inception impact assessment

C. Preliminary assessment of expected impacts

Economic impacts

- Direct impacts on
 - Children & families;
 - Producers and supply chain
- Short/medium term
 - Increase consumers' demand for, and food business operators' supply of, nutritious and sustainable food
- Long term
 - Reduce health and environmental related costs and benefits of a shift in diets

Social impacts

- Employment/added value/growth in rural areas (local sourcing)
- Consumer's health and quality of life
- Social inclusion
- Education: increased knowledge on food/nutrition/health/agrienvironment
- Reconnect children with cultural value of food, agriculture

Environmental impacts

- Reduce impacts from food systems
- Food waste / Food packaging
- Boost demand for organic products and contribute to practices that promote circularity & animal welfare

Fundamental rights

- European Child Guarantee
- Consumer and environmental protection
- Equal access to healthy and nutritious food

Simplification / administrative burden:

- Evaluation will underpin concrete areas and actions for simplification for public authorities and beneficiaries
- ... offsetting possible additional costs

2. The evaluation roadmap/inception impact assessment

D. Evidence base, Data collection and Better Regulation Instruments

Evidence and data collection:

- Implementation
 - Member States strategies
 - Member States annual monitoring reports + evaluations (2023)
- Consumption statistics and trends
 - Fruit & Vegetables - EUROSTAT
 - Milk and dairy products...
- Health and diets:
 - Knowledge gateway – JRC
 - WHO
 - OECD
- Sustainability

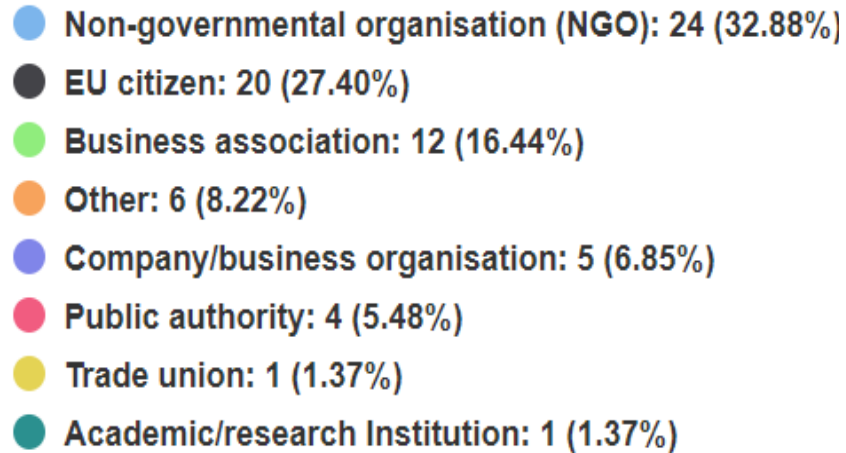
Consultation strategy

- Mapping of stakeholders
- Scope of consultation (backward and forward)
- Envisaged activities
 - Online public consultation
 - Public conference
 - Eurobarometer survey
 - Meeting with stakeholders
 - Discussions with Member States
- Publication of a factual summary report of results
- Synopsis report with results of all consultation activities in annex to the impact assessment report

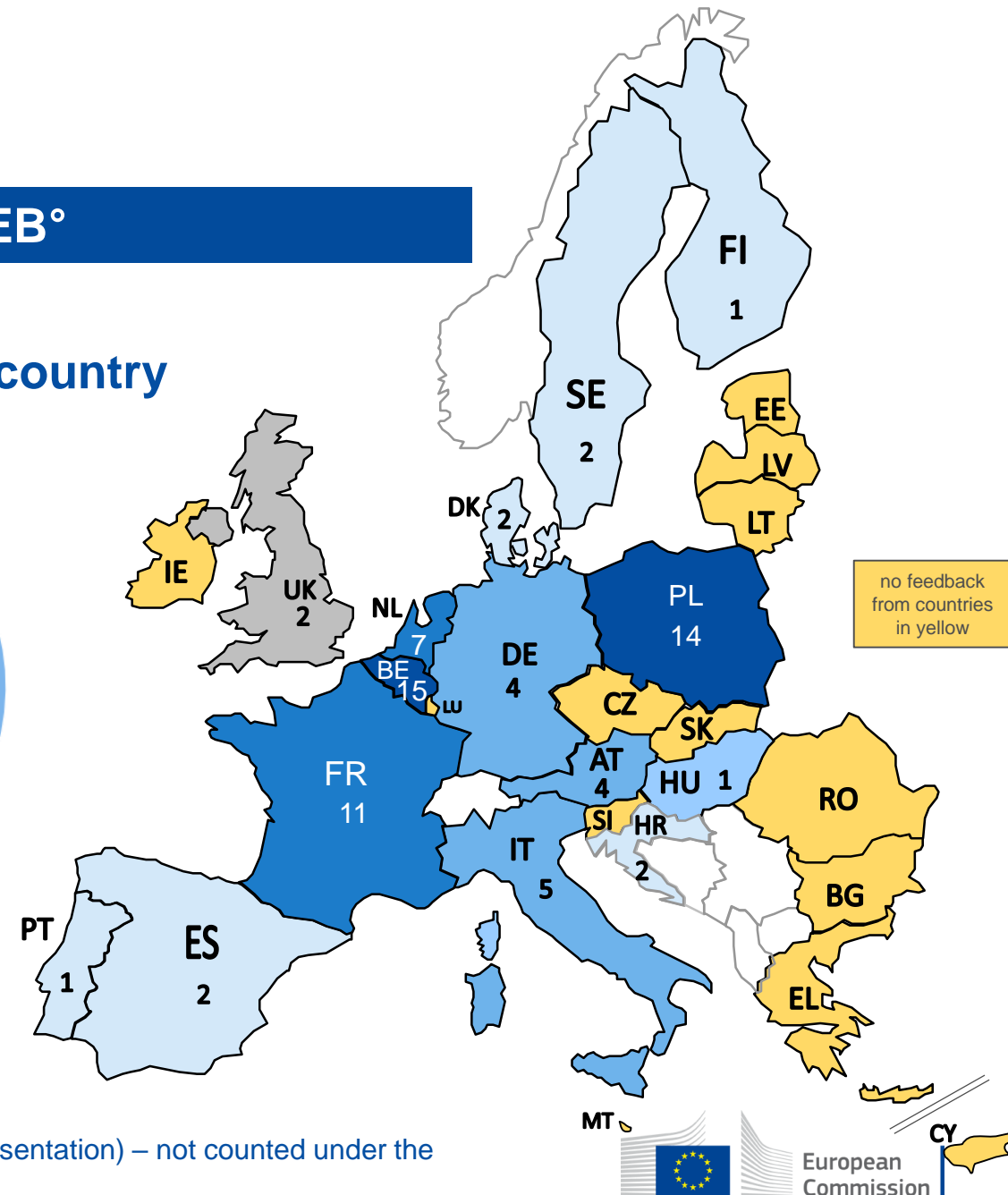
3. Stakeholders' feedback - who

73 CONTRIBUTIONS + 2 AD HOC OUTSIDE WEB°

By category of respondent



By country



° Contributions available in the Europa webpage, Have your say, [here](#).

Two contributions outside the web page: Freshfel + French public authorities (permanent representation) – not counted under the statistics but taken into account

3. Stakeholders' feedback - who

Health: 2 NGOs + 1 academia

- European Public Health Alliance • European Heart Network (BE)
- CNR (National Research Council)-SIPREC (Society for Cardiovascular Prevention) (IT)

Environment: 2 NGOs

- Greenpeace France (FR) • Green REV Institute (PL)

Nutrition/Vegetarian: 5 NGOs

- Association végétarienne de France, • V-entrepreneurs (FR), • 2x Voedingscentrum – Dutch nutrition centre (NL), • European vegetarian union (DE), and • ProVeg C.I.C. (UK)

Citizens

11 PL, 3 FR, 2 HR, 2 AT, 1 ES
+ 1 UK

Animal Welfare/Protection 11 NGOs + 1 consultancy

- Four Paws/Vier Pfoten, • Compassion in World Farming Brussels, • Humane Society International, • Eurogroup for Animals (BE), • ALI - Aquatic Life Institute, • PAZ – Paris Animaux Zoopolis, • L214 – Ethique et Animaux (FR), • LAV – Anti vivisection league (IT), • Essere animali – Being Animal (IT), • Animal protection (DK), and • Fundacja Międzynarodowy Ruch na Rzecz Zwierząt Viva! - Animal movement foundation Viva (PL); • Animal Law Europe (BE)

No feedback by
Education/Schools/
Children rights

Agriculture

7 farmers' organisations and chambers

- Copa-Cogeca, • MTK - Central Union of Agri Prod. (FI); • 2x AT Chamber of Agri (AT), • Cia-Agricoltori – IT confed. of Farmers (IT), • Nat. Chamber of Agri (HU), • Fed. of the Açores (PT)

6 Fruit & Veg organisations

- PROFEL - European Association of Fruit and Vegetable Processing Industries, • Polish Fruit Growers' Association (PL), • Danish Horticulture (DK), • ASPROCAN – Association of Banana Producer Organisations in the Canary Islands (ES), • INTERFEL- Interprofessionnel Fruits et légumes frais (FR); • GroentenFruit Huis (Fresh Produce Centre) (NL)

3 Dairy organisations

- EDA - European Dairy Association, • Eucolait – European Association of Dairy Trade; • Nederlandse Zuivel Organisatie (Dutch Dairy Association) (NL)

3 Organic organisations/businesses

- IFOAM - International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements - Europe (BE), • DE Organic Processing and Trade Association Europe (DE), • Bio Netherlands (NL)

2 Whole Grain • Whole Grain Initiative, • NBC (NL)

3 Plant-based organisations/businesses

- European Alliance for Plant-based Foods (BE), • Oatly (SE), • Växtbaserat Sverige - Plant-food Sweden (SE).

2 Catering/Supply organisations

- Federazione Italiana Ristorazione/Federation of catering (IT). , • LPL82 - Barquette & Cie (FR)

Public authorities

3 nat./reg. + 2 local

- DE Federal Ministry of Agriculture • Min of Env and Consumer of North Rhine-Westphalia (DE) • FR perm rep • Service public - Région Bruxelles Capitale (BE) • Gemeente Westland (NL)

3. Stakeholders' feedback – what*

CONTEXT

POSITIVE REMARKS ON THE REVIEW

- Great opportunity to align with ambitious targets in Green Deal, Farm2Fork, Beating Cancer, EU Child Guarantee and Organic Action Plan
- Fully agree with objectives to reconnect children with agriculture and teach about healthy eating habits

POSITIVE REMARKS ON THE SCHEME

- Positive experience; excellent scheme at national level
- Wide outreach and simple, free of charge access to healthy and sustainable nutrition for all children regardless of their status
- Key action to develop healthy eating habits

DE Public authorities

CRITICAL REMARKS

- School milk and dairy products
 - associated with cancer risks
 - not viable for animals
 - not sustainable
 - may counter objectives to reduce overweight/obesity
 - detrimental on fair competition (alternatives)

Animal Welfare/Vegetarian or Vegan NGOs

OTHER

- Whole grain may mitigate risks of childhood obesity

*NON-EXHAUSTIVE SUMMARY (for this and following slides): full feedback in Europa [webpage](#)

3. Stakeholders' feedback - what

BENEFICIARIES

ALL CHILDREN

- **No children left behind:** all kind of schools, from nurseries to upper secondary, all age brackets, in all countries

BUDGET

- Budget stability or increase to reach everybody
- Part of budget may be earmarked for groups in need

NOT ONLY IN SCHOOLS

- Consider **extending to families** or, occasionally, a basket could be brought home
- Consider **sports clubs and extra-school activities** (3-18 years), **university students, leisure centers and summer camps**

POSSIBLE TARGETING

- First all children ...**then possible targeting** of groups more in need
- **Member States** best placed to set target criteria
- Given areas and **not groups of children** within classes
- Very important to reach the **most vulnerable groups**/more attention to children with lower socio-economic conditions
- For children with **less access to healthy, sustainable diets**

VS

AGAINST TARGETING

- To **avoid increased administrative/control** costs
- To **avoid discrimination**

3. Stakeholders' feedback - what

PRODUCTS

KEEP FRUIT, VEGETABLES & MILK PRODUCTS

- For varied and healthy diet and for maintaining EU production and stimulating rural activity
- Milk products essential for healthy and balanced diet
- In recent pandemic, with children at home, marked increase in milk consumption (shows value for families)

⇒ *Dairy stakeholders + Farmers' associations + FR public authorities (ad-hoc contribution)*

REMOVE MILK PRODUCTS

- No EU aid for milk products, and more broadly, animal products
- Negative environmental impact
- No public health reason, as overconsumption of animal proteins in children's diets and alternative sources of calcium exist

OR LIMITS/CONDITIONS FOR MILK PRODUCTS

- No milk products from intensive farm systems
- Only organic
- Only from high-welfare systems such as organic and agro-ecology and preferably from cow-calf systems
- Future-proof the scheme with EU animal welfare label under consideration

⇒ *Citizens + Animal Welfare, Vegetarian, Env NGOs*

3. Stakeholders' feedback – what

PRODUCTS

ADD PLANT-BASED PRODUCTS

- **Reduce share of dairy** by offering plant-based alternatives
- **Replace dairy products with plant-based drinks** or low carbon and nutritionally rich alternatives (soya, almonds, broccoli..)
- **Integrate plant-based foods** for equity and education
- Plant-based products included **in a mandatory way**
- **Priority to fortified plant-based drinks**

⇒ *Animal Welfare, Vegetarian NGOs + Plant-based businesses*

ADD WHOLE GRAINS

- **Important for healthy** and sustainable diet
 - Children should discover **new products** not always popular
- ⇒ *Whole grain initiative, NBC, European Public Health Organisation, French authorities*

CAUTION ON PLANT-BASED PRODUCTS

- **Not nutritionally equivalent to dairy** (calcium, zinc, vitamin B12 and thiamine)
- Replacing dairy products in a healthy and nutrient compensating way **does not result in a significant decrease of environmental footprint**
- **Need for prior examination by health authorities**

⇒ *Dairy stakeholders + Farmers' associations + FR public authorities*

ADD ALGAE

⇒ *Aquatic Life Institute*

ADD NUTS

⇒ *BUT already possible under the scheme (fruit)*

3. Stakeholders' feedback - what

CRITERIA OR CONDITIONS FOR PRODUCTS

SEASONAL - FRESH vs PROCESSED

- Focus on **fresh products** + children should be aware that products **are not available all year round**
- **Caution with** more flexibility on **added salt, fat, sugar** as this may favour **processed** products over fresh

VS

- **Healthy processed products** can play an important part in the scheme and help reduce food waste due to extended shelf life and easy portion control

⇒ *Farmers' organisations ... vs processing industries*

PACKAGING

- **Sustainable** packaging
- **No individual** packaging

⇒ *Farmers' org., Supply company*

NUTRITIONAL PROFILE & HEALTH FIRST

- Apply **nutrient profiling** to determine which processed fruit/vegetables and which milk products, according to their level of salt, saturated fat, sugar, may be distributed
- **Focus on healthiest products** and add sustainability criteria on top of health criteria; 'organic' and sustainable are not necessarily the same, nor is 'organic' equivalent to health

⇒ *Health and nutrition NGOs*

EU-NATIONAL-LOCAL ORIGIN

- Consider **mandatory supply of EU products**, if it can be guaranteed; quality criteria adapted to EU production
- **Preference to local**
- **Cultural products** from the region and/or short supply chains
- Better incentives to **local and sustainable products**
- Ensure **fair price** for producers / **reward** for producers

⇒ *Farmers' organisations, Supply company*

3. Stakeholders' feedback - what

CRITERIA OR CONDITIONS FOR PRODUCTS

GO FOR ORGANIC

- **At least 25% organic** in future scheme, as per Organic Action Plan. A **higher share (50 to 100%)** would show that the Commission is serious on Farm to Fork goals
- Aim at **% of organic similar or higher of those already established** in certain Member States. E.g. in public mass catering in Italy, at least 50% of fruits and vegetables; 100% for milk, yoghurt and fruit juices.
- **Differentiate EU and non-EU organic**

⇒ *Organic & Farmers' organisations*

IF DAIRY then go for ORGANIC:

- **If milk** products end up being eligible, **only organic**
- Only sourced only from high-welfare systems such as organic and preferably from cow-calf systems

⇒ *Environmental NGOs*

NOT ONLY ORGANIC AND NOT MANDATORY

- Organic should **not be the only criterion for sustainability**; **regional and seasonal** count more, especially if organic products are important
- Consider also **quality products** recognised at national level
- Organic as an **option and not as an obligation**: procedures would be more **cumbersome for applicants/administration + costly** so number or size of portions would be reduced
- Concerns that **organic target could counter shift to more plant-based diet** if fortified plant-based foods can't be labelled organic

⇒ *Farmers' organisations, DE-BE authorities, Plant-based business*

3. Stakeholders' feedback – what

DISTRIBUTION

IN OR OUT OF REGULAR SCHOOL MEALS

- Distribution of vegetables outside **regular school meals** might be a challenge
- F&V may be allowed to form **part of prepared dishes** (easier for children/adolescents to eat vegetables)
- Review existing restrictions and support distribution as **breakfast, lunch if consistent** with recommendations of national health/nutrition authorities

vs

- **Not part of regular school meals** to avoid control burden and deadweight (replace products that are distributed anyway)

⇒ *Farmers' organisations, FR authorities vs DE authorities*

SUPPLIERS – PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

- **short supply chains**;
- **reasonable price**, interesting enough to participate
- ensure **fair price for producers / reward for producers**
- **favour producer organisations/associations** that agree directly with responsible for distribution/delivery to schools
- do **not favour large organisations**
- better **incentives to local and sustainable products**

⇒ *Farmers' organisations*

- consider mechanisms to transition the scheme into an instrument to fund **healthy and sustainable public food procurement** in schools
- support more **sustainable procurement policies** for public institutions, such as setting **minimum sustainability criteria** requirements

⇒ *Health organization and Animal Welfare NGO*

3. Stakeholders' feedback – what

EDUCATIONAL MEASURES

DESIGN AND SET-UP

- Sourcing of products and educational elements should be **combined into one consistent activity**
- Material should be **science-based**, validated by **independent** sources, not be influenced by commercial interest or contain indirect marketing or advertising
- **Hands-on activities** should be promoted
- Education for **school** and **kitchen staff, children** and their **parents**

⇒ *NGOs, Organic organisations*

BUDGET

- A **minimum share of the budget** should be set and the expected level of quality should be defined
- vs
- **No compulsory share of EU budget:** increase administrative costs, and in many cases school curriculum already provides nutrition education measures

⇒ *Farm organisations, supply companies vs DE authorities*

THEMES

- Sustainability, environmental impact and impact on **animal welfare** of different diets should be part of educational activities
- Educational measures should promote the uptake of healthy, **sustainable, primarily plant-based**, diets
- Greater emphasis on **food production/preparation** and impacts for **secondary level students**
- **Healthy eating habits** should be the priority for most educational measures; more could be done about **European agriculture** and its characteristics in the Member States
- Organic farming should be communicated as the only legally defined farming method for sustainable agriculture (and not be confused with “fresh”)

⇒ *NGOs and farm organisations*

3. Stakeholders' feedback – what

IMPLEMENTATION

BUDGET

- need for a **strong budget** that should not decrease even if it not fully used in all Member States
- **steep increase** necessary to reach more children, involve as many schools as possible and ensure schools regularly distribute products
- **gradually increase** the budget and **raise co-financing rates for schools in economically deprived areas** where vegetable/fruit intake is low
- ensure national strategies **make full use of budget**
- poor implementation in last two years linked to COVID: **budget can be increased in the future**
- If crisis, **allow redirecting funds to other schemes**: e.g. fruit/vegetables cheques to disadvantaged families

⇒ *Farm organisations, Health organisations, Public authorities, F&V business*

SIMPLIFICATION

- **Simplification and reducing administrative burden**
- Suggestions: remove deadlines for submitting aid applications (left to Member States), review system of reduction of payment after deadlines, increase flexibility in transfers and reallocation of budget, allow remote checks also after the pandemic
- **more stability in national rules** and security for applicants, particularly on duration of approval
- if not simple scheme, schools will not join

⇒ *Farm organisations, Public Auth., Supply business*

OTHER

- **advance payments**
- **grassroots participation** could boost impact of scheme
- consider **sharing best practices**

⇒ *Public Auth., Supply business*

3. Stakeholders' feedback – what

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS, CONSULTATION STRATEGY

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

- very successful programme reaching large parts of children population but expectations should not be too high
- environmental impacts of animal production to be considered when evaluating inclusion of dairy products
- comparative analysis of competitive advantages for dairy (discrimination between producers justified/ proportionate);
- assess activities related to milk consumption under article 10, 14 and 21 of Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU

⇒ *Public auth., NGOs*

CONSULTATION STRATEGY

- animal protection, environmental, consumer and food NGOs are not listed as stakeholders

⇒ *NGOs*

OTHER

- Vending machines in schools have food high in fat, sugar, salt and calories. A clause in new tenders could ask for at least 50% of products in medium to small size, low in saturated fat (and without trans fats), low-salt, low-calorie, and no added sugar

⇒ *Academia*

4. Next steps

- Feedback will be taken into account in impact assessment
- Thank you for helping us to fill in the gaps (e.g. data to underpin the evaluation and impact assessment)
- Public consultation in Q1 2022, based on questionnaire ⇒ 12 weeks followed by conference, for wide participation
- Questions? Agri-school-scheme@ec.europa.eu