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Title

Local and regional incentives to promote healthy and sustainable diets

Abstract

On 5th July 2018, the European Committee of the Region (CoR) adopted a report on Local and regional incentives to promote healthy and sustainable diets. The aim of the report was to explore possible avenues of actions and to propose tools available at the level of local and regional authorities across the EU to incentivise healthier and more sustainable diets. The CoR suggests inter alia considering changes to spatial planning and infrastructure, as well as use of tools such as taxes, subsidies and legislation. Particular emphasis should be set on the importance of educational programmes in schools in order to promote a healthy and active lifestyle, with a special focus on pre-school and primary levels. The CoR's recommendation would require food producers to use colours on food packaging throughout the EU, providing consumers with clear information on the sugar, salt and fat content.

Among the tools that local and regional authorities (LRAs) can use to promote healthy eating habits, the opinion highlights public procurement. Public institutions – such as hospitals, nursing homes, retirement homes, and prisons as well as kindergartens and schools – could serve as role models by selling and providing healthy, local and seasonal foodstuffs that ensure sustainability.

LRAs have an important role to play in contributing to the sustainability of food systems, by greening public procurements; promoting short supply chains; preventing food waste through designing effective food waste prevention programmes, raising awareness and implementing concrete actions on the ground.

Key references

[Towards a sustainable EU food policy](#), CdR 3170/2016
[Local food systems](#), CdR 341/2010 fin

Key messages

- CoR calls on the European Commission to propose, after examining existing food labelling systems, a mandatory, single European colour labelling system, in which colours would be applied on a basis of 100 g units, on the front of food packaging throughout the EU, providing consumers with clear information on the sugar, salt and fat content, encouraging healthier eating patterns. The CoR proposes that the nutritional labelling also be available online, in keeping with modern technological requirements;

- CoR calls for specific standards to be introduced for products bearing nutritional and health claims on their labels regarding their sugar, salt and fat content. These specifications should be a pre-requisite for any product to be able to make such a claim;
- Public food procurement can be a powerful tool available at the level of local and regional authorities, allowing them to provide healthy, local and seasonal foodstuffs and ensure sustainability in public bodies (including hospitals, nursing homes, retirement homes, kindergartens, schools, prisons and their canteens)