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1. On a planet with 7 billion people and abundant natural resources, one billion people are hungry or undernourished and, at the same time, two billion are overweight or obese. Worldwide, famine kills one person every second and a child dies every five seconds from the consequences of malnutrition. With the economic crisis, food insecurity affects ever more needy people, even in Europe. Overcoming current imbalances will be key to providing sufficient and adequate food, as well as decent living to all human beings.

2. Food is our most basic need and right. If we cannot secure access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for present and future generations, our health, development and fundamental rights are hampered. However, even though there is no shortage of food in the world, we constantly face food crises, particularly man-made ones. If we fail to address the problems of governance, these will only escalate. The Parliamentary Assembly considers food security as one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. This

- 8.2. concerning more responsible consumption of food,
  - 8.2.1. reduce loss and waste throughout food production, distribution and commercialisation systems;
  - 8.2.2. hold national awareness-raising campaigns on the harmful effects of food waste on food security;
  - 8.2.3. provide the public with proper food education so as to promote healthy eating habits and reduce the increasingly widespread problem of excessive weight and obesity;
- 8.3. with regard to enhancing food safety,
  - 8.3.1. strengthen food controls to better detect economically motivated fraud and irregular substances in the composition of foodstuffs;
  - 8.3.2. ensure that food products are labelled in a transparent, clear and objective way;
  - 8.3.3. increase support for independent research on new or emerging food risks on human health from low-dose but long-term exposure to, notably, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), endocrinal disruptors, nanotechnology and cocktail effects of chemical residues in food, with a view to adjusting the existing reference norms;
  - 8.3.4. ensure that the commercial use of new technologies and chemical substances in the food sector is subject to rigorous scientific examination so as to identify regulatory measures that may be required;
- 8.4. as concerns affordability of food,
  - 8.4.1. strengthen solidarity mechanisms to combat poverty, which obstructs access to food by the population concerned;
  - 8.4.2. increase development aid devoted to agriculture and improved food preservation, and honour aid commitments entered into;

B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Boden, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. Food<sup>3</sup> is a basic human need. It is essential to life and development and so food security underlies all

- the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Constitution of 1965 (the preamble);
  - the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 (Article 11);
  - the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1981 (Articles 12 and 14);
  - the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 (Articles 24 and 27).<sup>9</sup>
7. The right to food is also becoming a common feature of national Constitutions. Among the 24 States that have already incorporated this principle constitutionally are Bangladesh

### 3.1.1. Changing consumption patterns

13. As our planet is getting crowded, we see important changes in consumption patterns of a more numerous urban population and shifts in the composition of diets. This is particularly evident in meat consumption which has grown rapidly in the last decade from about 37 to 42 kilograms per person per year. At the current rate, over 52 kilograms of meat will be consumed per person per year by 2050. According to the FAO, nearly half of the world's cereal production is currently used to make animal feed. As it takes roughly 7 kilograms of cereals and 5 000 to 15 000 litres of water to produce just one kilogram of beef and only slightly less for other types of meat, implications for the future are huge.

14. Despite the energy value of meat, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that the loss of calories resulting from the use of cereals to feed animals instead of human beings represents the annual caloric needs of 3.5 billion people. Reallocating part of these cereals to human consumption could help wipe out famine and malnutrition. However, while there is over-consumption of meat in developed countries, a reasonable increase in meat consumption could play a very positive role in





against the use of food crops to make biofuels, which it found damaging both to food production and the environment.<sup>16</sup> The European Union, for its part, recently had to admit that a target of making 10% of biofuels by 2020 negatively affected reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the indirect change of land use<sup>17</sup>.

27. On the one hand, the increasing use of food crops to make biofuels resulted in a decrease in the food available for human consumption. On the other hand, it has also contributed to an escalation in food costs worldwide. According to a July 2008 World Bank report, agrofuels accounted for 75% of the increase in food prices. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food warns that the current path in producing biofuels for transport is largely unsustainable and could result in violations of the right to food. It is therefore vital to ensure a more rapid transition to the second generation of biofuels made from agricultural waste and non-food crops.

### **3.3. Global markets: serving who's interests?**

28. Food production today is intrinsically linked to its distribution and markets. Although we produce enough food of sufficient quality to feed everyone in the world, too many people do not have access to food or cannot afford enough. Asymmetries in the global trading system aggravate poverty and lead to various forms of abuse, such as food speculation and fraud, which erode food security.

#### 3.3.1. Food trade and speculation

29. Because farming and food production are an important source of income, the terms of international trade agreements are crucial to national food security. In some ways, ongoing trade liberalisation offers new opportunities to farmers and food producers, but it also exposes them to global competition. Many developing countries in the WTO therefore seek to adjust tariffs on key products to protect subsistence farming and sustainable development of local communities. Without safeguard clauses, subsidised agricultural exports from western countries can undermine the capacity of farmers in developing countries to compete internationally and gain a decent income.

30. This can be illustrated with the seed trade. The current trade rules and intellectual property rights protections tend to better serve the interests of large biotechnology/agrochemical companies than those of the many small farmers and consumers. Local farmers have to struggle to ensure a sufficient diversity of seeds available on the market, better protection of traditional seed varieties for sale and their right to have access to non-branded seeds. Without this defence, biodiversity is undermined and our food chain is captured by multinational firms.<sup>18</sup>

31. General economic conditions are also of major importance for food supplies. The onset of the world financial and economic crisis in 2007-2008 depressed the global food trade, provoking hikes in food prices and even food crises. According to the FAO, food prices went up by 22% between January and February 2011. Similarly, the World Bank report in summer 2011 found that staples such as wheat, soybean oil and sugar were



39. Moreover, recent research has established the toxicity of certain substances such as bisphenol A,<sup>24</sup> an endocrinal disruptor, which is widely present in plastic food containers. It is particularly dangerous to babies if used in making feeding bottles. The presence of this substance in the lining of many food and beverage cans also intoxicates the general population. Although the European Union, Canada and the United States have already banned the use of bisphenol A in baby bottles, its mainstream uses in the food sector remain to be addressed. As of 2014, any presence of chemical substances with potential effects on endocrine systems will have to be signalled, in the European Union, through the labelling of food products and any new substances with similar risk potential will be refused certification.

40. The uncertainties over GMOs are another issue worrying European consumers. Although EU rules require GMO contents of more than 0.9% to be signalled through the labelling of food products, GMOs are massively present in the feed for animals that are later used for human consumption. This is despite the lack of scientific proof that food thus produced is safe enough when exposure is frequent and long-term. The latter aspect is highlighted in a recent study that has linked long-term feeding of laboratory animals with GMO maize to cancer.<sup>25</sup> Yet the ensuing controversy and alarm caused among both the scientific community and the

45. In order to address these multiple challenges, European policies on food security emphasise responses to food shortages and food quality problems by puttin

guarantee that food is available to everyone, boost small farmers' incomes and secure our ability to satisfy future needs.<sup>35</sup> Addressing climate change effectively, such as by concluding a binding global agreement on a Kyoto-2 protocol, is an objective that should be firmly supported by all Council of Europe member States.<sup>36</sup>

51. To tackle climate change more comprehensively, possible local solutions include improvements in farming practices. Food crops, land use and irrigation techniques will have to be adapted to the warming climate. In this regard, ecologically intensive agriculture and sustainable farming have a strong potential. They seek to optimise the natural functions of ecosystems in order to achieve yields comparable to those of

### **5.3. Handling food crises, emergencies and waste**

56. In the food sector, it is essential to be proactive and react quickly when crises occur. EU rules<sup>42</sup> allow it to adopt emergency measures on food imports from third countries to protect human health or the environment if the risk cannot be contained by the members States themselves. States