

14 February 2023

# The EU needs to up its game for global food security

## Executive summary

This briefing paper is an analysis of the EU's response to global food insecurity in 2022. It points out the positive efforts the EU has made on its objective to contribute to a transition toward just and sustainable food systems and highlights the aspects of recently launched initiatives that go against this needed transition.

Our analysis indicates that the EU's response to global food insecurity has focused on quick fixes, lacking political will to promote systemic change. EU leaders have repeatedly referred to the impact of the war in Ukraine on the availability and prices of food worldwide as well as to the need to increase food production, with limited reflection on structural issues undermining global food security, such as unjust international trade rules, dependency on food imports, and lack of political voice and access to resources for small-scale farmers – in all of which the EU has a key role to play.

The EU's overfocus on the provision of a band-aid to the symptoms of our fragile food systems remains improper. It undermines sustainability and comes to the detriment of sufficient political attention and resources to real solutions, like upscaling investments in the agroecological transition, taking a food sovereignty approach and allowing people to take part in decision-making processes related to food systems, and ensuring coherence across policy areas.

Transforming our food systems will require time and changing the industrial agriculture model. It will go against agribusiness' interests and politicians' short-term interests. It will require political will to capture the best of scientific as well as traditional knowledge and to respond to what small-scale food producers, environmentalists, scientists, pastoralists, peasants, indigenous peoples and hundreds of faith-based and civil society organisations have been calling for, for a long time.

## 1. Introduction

As part of its response to rising levels of food insecurity exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine, the EU launched several initiatives to foster food security throughout 2022.<sup>1</sup> Representing countries of considerable wealth, a major contributor to global trade (importer and exporter), a member of the G7 with considerable geopolitical influence,

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<sup>1</sup> For the list of EU initiatives launched in 2022 to respond to the global food crisis and covered in this paper, see Annex 1.

and the world's largest aid donor, the EU is strategically well positioned to provide responsible leadership in the fight against hunger in the immediate, medium and long term.

With that in mind, this Caritas Europa paper presents a critical analysis of EU initiatives launched in 2022,<sup>2</sup> against the urgent need for a transition towards just and sustainable food systems. Our reflection is informed by the experiences of our member organisations<sup>3</sup> and of local Caritas organisations in low-income countries and regions across the world, from previous Caritas positions,<sup>4</sup> and from the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which calls for an economy that serves people and nature, not the other way around. This paper also puts a spotlight on the democratic dimension of the EU's decision-making processes regarding its global food security initiatives, given that accountability, empowerment and the right of the most vulnerable to take part in the conduct of public affairs are essential to safeguard the right to food.<sup>5</sup>

Our analysis indicates that although the EU has been increasingly adopting a holistic perspective to food security – linking food, health, trade, energy, environment, biodiversity – and while it has been dedicating more attention to agroecology and providing some support to smallholder farmers, it continues to promote practices that go against the needed transition towards just and sustainable food systems, while lacking key pillars of such a transition.

This paper aims to address these concerns by reviewing the EU's most recent efforts on global food security. It concludes with policy recommendations to make the EU's response matter and to increase the likelihood of achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 2 – zero hunger – by 2030.

## **2. Insufficient response to food insecurity**

This section lays out the insufficient aspects of the EU's response to global food insecurity. It starts by covering the EU's emergency assistance and short-term goals: the EU Solidarity Lanes, additional funding for humanitarian action outside Europe, and support to local humanitarian actors.

Our analysis then continues to assess long-term objectives – transition towards agroecological approaches and away from synthetic fertilisers, stronger reliance on indigenous knowledge and a food sovereignty approach – and decision-making processes regarding the EU's food security initiatives.

The section concludes with a brief analysis of other key policy areas impacting food security worldwide in which the EU's approach is somehow contributing to rising levels of food insecurity – climate, trade, due diligence, fiscal space, migration, conflict sensitivity and prevention.

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<sup>2</sup> This paper focuses solely on new initiatives launched in 2022 and listed in Annex 1. It does not aim at conducting an exhaustive or detailed analysis of all EU actions (such as those undertaken under the NDICI/Global Europe Instrument or through all Team Europe Initiatives), but rather to assess whether EU high-level decisions in times of crises are aligned with the objective of transforming our food systems.

<sup>3</sup> Caritas Europa has over a dozen member organisations active in international development, implementing livelihoods, agriculture, food security, rural development, and social economy projects in other regions of the world.

<sup>4</sup> Caritas Europa (2014), Food Security Report 2014 – The EU's Role to End Hunger by 2025, <https://www.caritas.eu/the-eus-role-to-end-hunger-by-2025/>; Caritas Internationalis (2022), Position on the state of the food system; Caritas Internationalis (2021), Paper on The Future of Our Food Systems, Our Peoples and Our Common Home; Caritas Africa (2022), Statement on the Urgent action needed to address drought and famine in Africa, <https://www.caritas.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Caritas-Africa-statement-re-urgent-action-on-drought-and-famine-in-Africa-April-2022.pdf>; CAFOD (2022), Discussion paper on food systems reform, <https://cafod.org.uk/About-us/Policy-and-research/Food-systems-and-agriculture/Food-system-reform>.

<sup>5</sup> The right to adequate food is recognised under Article 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and under Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR – 1966) ratified by all 27 EU Member States.

## 2.1. Immediate response falls short of needs and of localisation commitments

### *EU Solidarity Lanes and food exports*

In the context of the war in Ukraine, the EU claims to have played a key role in unblocking and facilitating the trade of food products from the country through Solidarity Lanes, which are essential corridors for Ukraine's agricultural exports. This initiative has been considered an essential component of the immediate response for global food supply and security. Even more so in the case of countries dependent on imports from Ukraine for their food security.

In November 2022, European Commission President Von der Leyen declared that, along with the Black Sea Grain Initiative coordinated by Turkey and the UN and supported by the EU, the EU Solidarity Lanes had allowed the export of millions of tonnes of agricultural products from Ukraine, especially to the countries most in need.<sup>6</sup> However, there is currently a **lack of transparency** regarding the destinations of the 17 million tonnes of grain, oilseeds and related products exported from Ukraine through the EU Solidarity Lanes initiative. Available information suggests that the **majority of grain exports have remained in European markets instead of reaching the countries facing the most severe impacts of the global food crisis.**<sup>7</sup> Similarly, through the Black Sea Grain Initiative, those most benefitting from food exports from Ukraine have been upper-middle or high-income countries (including European countries such as Spain, Italy and the Netherlands), whereas only around 4% of exports have reached countries most affected by food insecurity (such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen).<sup>8</sup> Moreover, despite claims to the contrary, the EU's sanctions have prevented the supply of Russian fertilisers worldwide, increasing the danger of famine in Africa.<sup>9</sup>

### *Additional humanitarian funding for food security*

Another key component of the EU's immediate response has been the allocation of additional humanitarian funding specifically for food assistance. This includes €210 million pledged at the G20 summit in November 2022.<sup>10</sup> While considerable, it is not sufficient in comparison to the \$22.2 billion the World Food Programme estimated was needed to meet the needs of 160 million food insecure people in 2022.<sup>11</sup> Since 2020, the UN has had a specific system to launch appeals for 13 countries that are experiencing "crisis" levels of malnutrition or worse, 8 of which are in Africa. But, in 2022, startlingly only 7% of these appeals were filled.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Statement by President von der Leyen at the "Grain from Ukraine" Summit, 26 November 2022,

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH\\_22\\_7212](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_22_7212)

<sup>7</sup> Yaroslava Bukhta (2022), "Ukrainian grain barely reaches countries in need via 'solidarity lanes', Commission says", Euractiv, 13 July 2022,

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/news/ukrainian-grain-barely-reaches-countries-in-need-via-solidarity-lanes-commission-says/>

<sup>8</sup> United Nations (2022), Black Sea Grain Initiative Joint Coordination Centre, <https://www.un.org/en/black-sea-grain-initiative/vessel-movements>

<sup>9</sup> German Foreign Policy (2023), "EU verhindert weiterhin die Belieferung Afrikas mit russischen Düngemitteln. UNO warnt vor Hunger. Deutscher Politiker zieht die Nutzung von Hunger als Druckmittel in Konflikten in Betracht.", 6 January 2023, <https://www.german-foreign-policy.com/news/detail/9124>; Politico (2022), "EU agrees to ease Russia fertilizer curbs after row, angering Ukraine", 15 December 2022,

<https://www.politico.eu/article/fertilizer-row-holds-up-eu-latest-russia-ukraine-war-sanctions-package-famine-food-supplies/>

<sup>10</sup> European Commission (2022), "G20: €210 million in food assistance for most vulnerable worldwide", 14 November 2022,

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_22\\_6448](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_6448)

<sup>11</sup> World Food Programme (2022), WFP Global Operational response Plan 2022, [https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document\\_download/WFP-0000144406](https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document_download/WFP-0000144406)

<sup>12</sup> Action Against Hunger (2022), "As Famine Looms, Only 7% of UN Appeals for Hunger Relief Are Filled", 12 October 2022,

<https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/press-releases/famine-looms-only-seven-percent-un-appeals-hunger-relief-are-filled/>

Humanitarian principles impose impartiality and full distance from any politicisation of humanitarian aid; however, these figures raise concerns about this aspect. In fact, while the €210 million provided by the EU is welcome and necessary, it seems rather frugal in comparison to the amount of aid dedicated to the humanitarian crises resulting from the war in Ukraine.<sup>13</sup> While, on the one hand, the EU has allocated an additional €500 million to respond to the Ukraine crisis, on the other hand it has not increased the overall 2023 humanitarian aid budget.<sup>14</sup> There is thus a clear **disparity between the EU's ability to rapidly mobilise funding for Ukraine** (not only through humanitarian assistance, but also through the European Peace Facility and beyond), and the overall **funding deficit for humanitarian action worldwide**. As concluded in a recent European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) analysis, "the EU's response to the food crisis has been limited compared to the scale of need and the EU's own objectives. Ultimately, support for Ukraine took precedence."<sup>15</sup>

### *Support to local actors*

As a key member of the Grand Bargain Facilitation Group,<sup>16</sup> the EU is clearly at the forefront of support for the vital role of local humanitarian actors, which was further highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is estimated that, between 2018 and 2021, 48% of all aid went to three humanitarian agencies<sup>17</sup> and that in 2021, only 1,2% of total international humanitarian assistance was provided directly to local and national actors.<sup>18</sup> Such data for the year of 2022 is not available yet, but similar patterns are expected, raising solid concerns on the implementation of the commitment by the donor community, including the EU, to step up cooperation with local responders and illustrating the **need for further diversification of implementing partners**. While EU food security initiatives refer to "**anticipatory mechanisms**" for food crises<sup>19</sup> – which would require strengthening local capacities and locally-led humanitarian action – they still **do not clarify the implications of such an approach for funding and programme implementation**, including the possibility for increased leadership and direct funding to local actors, or higher overhead cost allocation.

*"The current Horn of Africa crisis is insufficiently funded, in part because of the political energy that is absorbed by the conflict in Ukraine. In our region, it is mainly the local organisations that have been addressing humanitarian needs and hunger. Local humanitarian and development organisations like our diocesan Caritas are receiving all the distress calls from the community, distributing scarce*

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Devex (2022), "Deep dive: The humanitarian crises overshadowed in 2022", 8 August 2022, <https://www.devex.com/news/deep-dive-the-humanitarian-crises-overshadowed-in-2022-103612>

<sup>14</sup> The EU's 2023 humanitarian aid budget, decided in 2022, will be €1.8 billion rather than the €2.5 billion encouraged by civil society organisations; See VOICE (2022), "Increase the humanitarian aid budget line: our advocacy at EU level continues", 22 September 2022, <https://voiceeu.org/news/increase-the-humanitarian-aid-budget-line-our-advocacy-at-eu-level-continues>

<sup>15</sup> ECDPM (2022), Discussion paper No. 330 – The EU's capacity for crisis response: A look at the 2022 food crisis, <https://ecdpm.org/work/eus-capacity-crisis-response-look-2022-food-crisis>

<sup>16</sup> The facilitation group was established to provide continued momentum to the Grand Bargain process. The Grand Bargain is an agreement to which the EU has adhered, and which aims to improve the way humanitarian aid is delivered, including through increased coordination with local responders.

<sup>17</sup> ALNAP (2022), 2022 The State of the Humanitarian System (SOHS), <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/2022-the-state-of-the-humanitarian-system-sohs-%E2%80%93-full-report-0>

<sup>18</sup> Development Initiatives (2022), Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2022: Chapter 4 – Recipients and delivery of humanitarian funding, <https://devinit.org/resources/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2022/recipients-and-delivery-of-humanitarian-funding/>

<sup>19</sup> European Commission (2022), Communication on Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:5391557a-aaa2-11ec-83e1-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:5391557a-aaa2-11ec-83e1-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

*relief supplies to people suffering and witnessing the despondency of the pastoralist households that cannot light fires in their houses and have almost given up on life.”*

**Isacko Jirma, Director at Caritas Marsabit, Kenya, sharing on the difficulties faced by grassroots organisations in receiving sufficient funding and institutional support in 2022**

## 2.2. Insufficient investments in local knowledge and agroecology

*Agroecology vs climate-smart agriculture*

**EU initiatives launched in 2022 are marked by a welcome increase in the recognition of agroecology<sup>20</sup>** as ecologically sustainable agricultural production. The European Commission Communication on safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems (released in March 2022) announced the Commission’s support to research on agroecology and agroforestry.<sup>21</sup> On its turn, the EU Council Conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity (adopted in June 2022) announced investments in agroecological approaches, agroforestry, healthy food and reduced fossil fuel dependence.<sup>22</sup>

**However, despite these positive steps forward, new EU initiatives also heavily invest in climate-smart<sup>23</sup> and industrial agriculture,<sup>24</sup> which goes against the resilient agriculture we would all – the EU included – like to see.**

Climate-smart agriculture has been contested for taking profit-driven approaches, presented as “solutions”, offering only incremental interventions that do not change the business model and structural injustices of current agricultural production. While it may contribute to crops better resisting adverse weather conditions and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it does not, for example, invest in diversification or enable farmer empowerment that effectively contributes to enhancing local food systems. In fact, “climate-smart” can include a broad range of practices that dispossess rural people and contribute to control of the land, seeds, markets and labour out of the hands of small-scale farmers by multinational companies.<sup>25</sup>

If we look, for example, at the activities funded through the “use of reserves amounting to €600 million to address the food security in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries”, mobilised by the EU in September 2022,<sup>26</sup> they

<sup>20</sup> Agroecology is an approach to agriculture that is firmly based on science and traditional wisdom; it is founded on ecological principles, the food sovereignty approach, and the right to adequate food. Despite limited institutional support, it is widely practised and has been developed by farming communities worldwide, and it is being promoted by social movements around the globe. Agroecology aims for a socially just and ecologically sustainable transformation of the agri-food system, where food producers, workers and consumers are put at the centre of policymaking and of food systems governance. See CIDSE (2018), “The Principles of Agroecology – Towards Just, Resilient and Sustainable Food Systems”, 3 April 2018, <https://www.cidse.org/2018/04/03/the-principles-of-agroecology/>

<sup>21</sup> European Commission (2022), Communication on Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems.

<sup>22</sup> Council of the European Union (2022), Council conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10066-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>23</sup> The World Bank defines climate-smart agriculture as an integrated approach to managing landscapes – cropland, livestock, forests and fisheries – that address the interlinked challenges of food security and climate change. In other words, climate-smart agriculture approaches seek to increase productivity while reducing carbon emissions in production systems.

<sup>24</sup> Industrial agriculture is the large-scale, input-heavy, intensive production of crops and animals, often involving chemical fertilisers, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms.

<sup>25</sup> Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy (2018), “What’s Smart About Climate-smart Agriculture?” Policy Brief #22, [https://archive.foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Taylor-Climate-Smart-Ag-Food-First\\_-\\_Final-1.pdf](https://archive.foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Taylor-Climate-Smart-Ag-Food-First_-_Final-1.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> European Commission (2022), “Food security: EU allocates funds to the most vulnerable African, Caribbean and Pacific countries hit by food crisis” 24 September 2022, [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/food-security-eu-allocates-funds-most-vulnerable-african-caribbean-and-pacific-countries-hit-food-2022-09-24\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/food-security-eu-allocates-funds-most-vulnerable-african-caribbean-and-pacific-countries-hit-food-2022-09-24_en). For the list of indicative activities per country, see “Annex 1 – Action Document



almost consistently include boosting agroecological systems and approaches. They also foresee other activities that are fundamental pillars of just and sustainable food systems, such as support to small-scale farmers; improving their access to finance, inputs, and local markets; reducing reliance on imported fertilisers, seeds, and inorganic fertilisers and on fossil fuels; making links to social safety net programmes; mainstreaming women's entrepreneurship and gender equality. All of which are welcome. But, it is concerning that the list of activities also repeatedly refers to investing in climate-smart trainings, approaches and practices, increasing access to agricultural technologies and facilitating more efficient and sustainable use of synthetic inputs, all of which pose risks to the resilient agriculture we all want.

The same lack of coherence characterises some of the Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) dedicated to agriculture. The TEI "Climate Smart Agriculture-Based Resilience Building" for Zimbabwe, for example, lists the promotion of agroecological principles as one of its key features, while including a whole range of climate-smart agriculture activities and considering that these have "transformational potential".<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the TEI for the Democratic Republic of the Congo "Partenariat pour les hommes, la nature et une économie verte en RDC" lists industrial agriculture amongst the factors with transformational potential and conducive to a green economy.<sup>28</sup> This raises concerns regarding the extent to which agroecology is being differentiated from more narrowly-focused approaches and the risk of projects claiming to promote agroecology, while in practice being effectively equated to climate-smart agriculture.

What is thus **still lacking is a recognition of the need to abandon – rather than reduce – harmful agricultural practices – today, not tomorrow. Also lacking is consistent and increasing support for transformative food systems transitions** that are based on agroecological principles and combine food quality, biodiversity conservation, environmental protection, response to climate change, human health, decent employment, and social inclusion.

### *Fertilisers*

A similar pattern can be identified when it comes to the EU's approach to fertilisers. It includes encouraging steps: investing in alternative farming practices and alternatives to mineral fertilisers, including organic fertilisers and sustainable agriculture and soil fertility management, promoting agroecological approaches (which do not use synthetic fertilisers), and recognising the current crisis as "an opportunity to accelerate the transition to a sustainable agriculture and a sustainable food system, away from an undue dependence on synthetic fertilisers".<sup>29</sup>

But at the same time, the EU's strategy on fertilisers – implemented also through the G7 Global Alliance on Food Security and the Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission (FARM) – **lies mainly on ensuring availability and affordability of synthetic fertilisers** and facilitating global trade by keeping markets open and avoiding export

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for Food Production and Resilience of Food Systems in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries", [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/download/cbc63ace-918f-4bc0-a757-3edb725862d2\\_en?filename=sm-2022-c2022-6554-food-security-crisis-economic-shock-acp-countries\\_en.zip](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/download/cbc63ace-918f-4bc0-a757-3edb725862d2_en?filename=sm-2022-c2022-6554-food-security-crisis-economic-shock-acp-countries_en.zip)

<sup>27</sup> European Commission (2021), Team Europe Initiative "Climate Smart Agriculture-Based Resilience Building" Factsheet, [https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/121097/download?token=mtR\\_\\_jwB](https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/121097/download?token=mtR__jwB)

<sup>28</sup> European Commission (2021), Team Europe Initiative « Partenariat pour les hommes, la nature et une économie verte en RDC » Factsheet, <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/121033/download?token=LqOypwVw>

<sup>29</sup> European Commission (2022), Communication on ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers, p. 20, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:c82d9dd0-61b9-11ed-92ed-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:c82d9dd0-61b9-11ed-92ed-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

restrictions, temporarily increasing fertiliser production and increasing fertiliser use and efficiency.<sup>30</sup> In the meanwhile, the EU's strategy ranks "supporting the transition to the sustainable use of fertilisers and the deployment of sustainable alternatives to mineral fertilisers" only as a mid- or long-term goal and lacks a solid plan for a transition period.<sup>31</sup>

Investing in a business model that needs to change<sup>32</sup> is unreasonable. The current food crisis cannot become an excuse for pushing for more synthetic fertilisers production and use as if this was a response to the crisis, when in fact it is not.

*"Chemical fertilisers do not ensure food security. Their pervasive use sometimes increases crop production in the short term, but it creates a longer-term dependency on corporations and trade ... the ultimate goal must be to wean them off this dependency as soon as possible."*

**Michael Fakhri, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food<sup>33</sup>**

We need to move away from the dependency on fossil fuel-based fertilisers with the same urgency and scale as the energy transition. The **EU's initiatives on fertilisers cannot risk focusing on maintaining a smooth functioning of the market, while aspects like development of alternatives, organic fertilisers and green fertilisers are pushed back and receive less investment**

*"Innovation", indigenous knowledge and food sovereignty*

Many of the recently launched **EU initiatives have called for "increased mobilisation of innovative solutions and private sector support" to address food insecurity.**<sup>34</sup> We believe it would be important to clarify, though, **what constitutes "innovation" and which type of private sector actors are to be involved.** The same lack of clarity characterises the EU's Global Gateway strategy, that is, the EU's new way of doing development. It has as a key objective "creating an enabling environment for business", without specifying which businesses are to benefit from it.<sup>35</sup> The EU's engagement with the private sector has serious implications regarding what types of production and development models are supported by EU policy and whether it responds to the needs of foreign investors, multinational companies and the global market or to the needs of local smallholders, Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), social enterprises and cooperatives, and local and regional markets.

<sup>30</sup> European Commission (2022), Communication on ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> European Commission (2022), Communication on ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Synthetic nitrogen fertilisers are produced in an energy-intensive process reliant on fossil fuels, and their expansion has come at a huge cost to the environment, climate and human and animal health. The overuse of chemical fertilisers reduces soil fertility, pollutes air, water and soil, and lessens important nutrients of soil and minerals, thereby affecting crop productivity.

<sup>33</sup> Public statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Mr. Michael Fakhri, in response to joint statement by the leaders of the World Bank Group (WBG), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), 20 May 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/joint-statement-wto-imf-wfp.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Council of the European Union (2022), Council conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity.

<sup>35</sup> European Commission (2021), "Questions and answers on the Global Gateway", 1 December 2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda\\_21\\_6434](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_21_6434)

In this context, taking a food sovereignty approach is key. **Food sovereignty puts emphasis on the people's right to define their agricultural and food policy, focusing on local agricultural production to feed the people** (rather than to prioritise international trade).<sup>36</sup> It also prioritises the appreciation of indigenous knowledge, values and wisdom built up over thousands of years and that provide a **strong basis for people to respond to their own needs for healthy, culturally adapted foods and to shape their own "innovative solutions"**. While the European Parliament's report on addressing food insecurity in developing countries urges the EU to guarantee the coherence of European agricultural and trade policies to support food sovereignty,<sup>37</sup> **a food sovereignty approach is weak or missing in the initiatives announced by the Commission and the Council in 2022.**

### **Caritas Zambia**

#### **Enhancing food security**

*Caritas Zambia and its partners have been facilitating seed fairs from local to national level to showcase the diversity of local seeds available in the communities and demonstrate that keeping seeds in farmers' hands and maintaining a high diversity of seeds is critical for building resilient food systems in the face of climate change. The national Caritas is supporting small-scale farmers, community groups and home gardeners to help protect and restore seed diversity. This builds on the already indigenous knowledge available in the communities. To control pests and diseases, farmers are producing and using quality organic inputs like Tephrosia and Lantana Camara tree leaves as natural pest repellents. This considerably reduces their costs of production and dependence on external inputs. Combined with better crop production practices, the target farmers have been able to realise improved yield and foster household food and nutrition security.*

### **2.3. Democratic decision-making and the role of smallholder farmers**

Food sovereignty and agroecology pose a threat to the interests of agribusiness corporations profiting from the current global food system. Shifting from an industrial, exploitative and extractive model of food production towards local, sustainable food systems will thus require a **strategy to reduce the concentration and abuse of power of large-scale agribusiness and to place local communities and smallholder farmers at the centre of democratic processes for a sustainable future. Such a strategy is however missing in the EU's response to global food insecurity.**

While several of the recent EU initiatives foresee to enhance access to finance for smallholder farmers and to provide them with further support,<sup>38</sup> these remain of insufficient scale, considering that small farmers (with less than two hectares) produce over a third of the world's food<sup>39</sup> and that industrial agriculture keeps receiving most

<sup>36</sup> For a definition of food sovereignty, see Via Campesina, <https://viacampesina.org/en/food-sovereignty/>

<sup>37</sup> European Parliament (2022), European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2022 on addressing food security in developing countries, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0287\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0287_EN.html)

<sup>38</sup> Support to smallholder farmers is foreseen in the use of funds to the most vulnerable African, Caribbean and Pacific countries hit by food crisis and mentioned in the Council conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity.

<sup>39</sup> FAO (2021), "Small family farmers produce a third of the world's food", 23 April 2021, <https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1395127/icode/>



of the funding (e.g. through subsidies).<sup>40</sup> These initiatives also remain of limited scope – they **do not touch upon other major barriers facing smallholder farmers (such as access to land and seeds),<sup>41</sup> or the role of smallholder farmers in decision-making and policy design**, even though they supply most of the food consumed while being significantly affected by hunger, and even though their right to determine their own food and agriculture systems is cherished in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, ratified by all 27 EU Member States.

Similarly, the EU has indicated that it would “contribute to the involvement of all relevant actors, including the private sector and civil society” in its response to global food insecurity,<sup>42</sup> but this **vague and single reference to civil society indicates low political ambition**, especially when compared with the repetitive references to the private sector as a key partner. As an illustration, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, which was acknowledged by the European Parliament as the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental policy platform on food security and nutrition,<sup>43</sup> is not mentioned in any of the EU high-level announcements regarding its global response to food insecurity.

The limited transparency, scrutiny and space for consultation with civil society characterising recent EU initiatives to respond to the food crisis is cause for concern not because of a lack of confidence in EU officials’ support of democratic values, but because of a regrettable historical pattern of concentration of power in a limited number of huge agri-food transnational corporations.<sup>44</sup> For example, the UN Food Systems Summit of 2021 fell short of ensuring inclusive participation and governance mechanisms.<sup>45</sup> Since then, leaders have reaffirmed the commitments made at the Summit, and new structures have been created with the EU’s support (such as the Global Alliance for Global Food Security and UN Global Crisis Responses Group). However, these are **new bodies formed rapidly in response to crises, with limited participation and accountability**.

To take the example of the **Global Alliance for Food Security launched at the G7 meeting** of May 2022, which is a key component of the multilateralism strand of the Team Europe response to global food insecurity,<sup>46</sup> it might risk depriving people of their land rights, practices and knowledge if it goes in the same direction as its predecessor, the G7’s New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. Created in 2012, the latter required African

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<sup>40</sup> Oxfam (2017), Briefing paper “Missing Out on Small is Beautiful: The EU’s failure to deliver on policy commitments to support smallholder agriculture in developing countries”, 30 June 2017, <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/missing-out-on-small-is-beautiful-the-eus-failure-to-deliver-on-policy-commitme-620288/>

<sup>41</sup> Cordaid (2021), “‘We cut out the middlemen.’ Breaking down the barriers of African smallholder farmers”, 3 August 2021, <https://www.cordaid.org/en/story/we-cut-out-the-middlemen-breaking-down-the-barriers-of-african-smallholder-farmers/>

<sup>42</sup> Council of the European Union (2022), Council conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity.

<sup>43</sup> European Parliament (2022), European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2022 on addressing food security in developing countries, ¶188.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, FAO (2022), The future of food and agriculture – Drivers and triggers for transformation, <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc0959en/>

<sup>45</sup> Hundreds of civil society groups refused to engage in the UNFSS in light of its failure to ensure inclusive participation and governance mechanisms. See, for example, [https://www.foodsovereignty.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/EN\\_Edited\\_draft-letter-UN-food-systems-summit\\_070220-4.pdf](https://www.foodsovereignty.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/EN_Edited_draft-letter-UN-food-systems-summit_070220-4.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> Council of the European Union (2022), Council conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity.

countries to make changes in their land, seeds and trade rules, leading to small-scale farmers losing access to water, seeds and land,<sup>47</sup> while failing to fulfil its promise to raise people out of poverty.<sup>48</sup>

The absence of a strategy to ensure democratic oversight and policy coherence of the EU's response to global food insecurity is even more concerning considering the EU Global Gateway's strong reliance on the private sector and its current governance structure, which includes a Business Advisory Group whose membership, diversity and representativeness remain to be seen. While the Global Gateway does not place agriculture or food security as one of its five investment priorities, many of its climate and energy activities, as well as many Team Europe Initiatives (i.e. the means to deliver on the Global Gateway objectives), envisage enhancing access to credit and other aspects impacting food production. It is thus concerning that, so far, we could not obtain **clarity on whether the Global Gateway will provide channels for the identification and settlement of potential conflicts of interest or for ensuring independence from commercial interests.**

*"The food system conversation has remained up there among the multinational corporations and big companies. We have not heard anyone talking about it, not even on the radio in our communities. We thank Caritas and the Uganda Farmers' Common Voice Platform and other CSOs who invited us, and we believe there are so many farmers who would have wanted to participate but do not have smartphones, and the NGOs that would have helped them are locked down in their homes due to the COVID-19 pandemic." –*

**A Ugandan food producer at the Farmers' National Dialogue on the United Nations Food Systems Summit, organised by Caritas Uganda and the Uganda Farmers' Common Voice Platform in July 2021**

#### 2.4. Policy Coherence for Development

In addition to humanitarian and agricultural development initiatives launched specifically to address global food insecurity, **it is essential that the EU is proactive in implementing the principle of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD),<sup>49</sup>** meaning that it takes concrete steps in all policy areas to ensure that none of them undermine food security in partner countries. This also includes framing the current food crisis fairly and placing the impact of the war in Ukraine as an additional layer to the long-standing food systems fragility, instead of saying it is "solely responsible for the global food security crisis".<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Global Justice Now (2015), Growing evidence against the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, [https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/resources/growing\\_evidence\\_against\\_the\\_new\\_alliance.pdf?\\_\\_cf\\_chl=tk=lnXQdHg2u94.5SOuaBfmtwYq2wP09fv\\_Y63x8jibtYg-l664541215-0-gaNycGzNCFE](https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/resources/growing_evidence_against_the_new_alliance.pdf?__cf_chl=tk=lnXQdHg2u94.5SOuaBfmtwYq2wP09fv_Y63x8jibtYg-l664541215-0-gaNycGzNCFE)

<sup>48</sup> Dagmar Milerová Prášková & Josef Novotný (2021), "The rise and fall of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition: a tale of two discourses", Third World Quarterly, 42:8, 1751-1769, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2021.1917355, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01436597.2021.1917355?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

<sup>49</sup> Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) stipulates that the EU 'shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries'. European Union, Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union, OJ C 202, Official Journal of the European Union, 7 June 2016, p. 141.

<sup>50</sup> European Council (2022), European Council meeting (23 and 24 June 2022) – Conclusions, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/57442/2022-06-2324-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>

## Climate

In its response to global food insecurity, the EU makes a clear analysis of the link between climate and food security.<sup>51</sup> Such an intersectional approach is welcome and needs to be translated into action. To effectively contribute to global food security, **the EU must walk the talk when it comes to its climate commitments and refrain from causing further harm** through excessive greenhouse gas emissions and new gas deals signed to solve the energy crisis.

At COP27, the EU announced that it would increase its commitment to **emissions reduction** from 55% to 57%, but this is not enough. As greater CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in the atmosphere affect staple crops around the world, climate experts indicate that the EU should reduce its emissions by at least 65%.<sup>52</sup>

Alongside other developed countries, the EU has committed to making an **annual climate finance contribution of US\$100 billion**,<sup>53</sup> but it has neither delivered on it nor developed a concrete action plan or roadmap on climate finance. Fulfilling such commitments is however a fundamental component of the response to global food insecurity. Partner countries need hundreds of billions of dollars annually to prevent climate-related disasters, adapt to the warming that is already inevitable, or repair the damage already caused, countering conditions that make it difficult for farmers to grow food and for the hungry to get it.

The agreement at COP27 to establish a fund to address **loss and damage** is of huge significance for vulnerable communities at the frontlines of climate change. However, there is a lack of urgency to operationalise it in a transparent manner and responding to the needs of those most affected by disasters – it remains to be seen whether the fund will be established, monetised and governed in a timely and effective manner.

In other areas, such as biodiversity protection, there is a **risk that the EU backs down from ambitious climate commitments under the pretence that more sustainable food production would worsen the current food crisis**. But the climate and biodiversity crises threaten food security.

*Using the war in Ukraine to water-down proposals and scare Europeans into believing sustainability means less food, is frankly quite irresponsible.*

**Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission**<sup>54</sup>

## Trade

The Team Europe response to global food insecurity includes the objectives of strengthening sustainable local production capacities, fostering integrated local and regional markets and supporting smallholder farmers,<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Council of the European Union (2022), Council conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity.

<sup>52</sup> CAN Europe (2022), "COP27 rescued in overtime with an agreement to set up a fund to address climate loss and damage", 20 November 2022, <https://caneurope.org/cop27-rescued-in-overtime-with-an-agreement-to-set-up-a-fund-to-address-climate-loss-and-damage/>

<sup>53</sup> UNFCCC (2021), "COP26 Outcomes: Finance for Climate Adaptation", <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-glasgow-climate-pact/cop26-outcomes-finance-for-climate-adaptation#Developed-countries-have-pledged-USD-100-billion-a>

<sup>54</sup> Hans van Scharen, Helmut Burtscher-Schaden (2022), "The not-so-soft killing of the EU's Farm to Fork strategy", 16 December 2022, <https://euobserver.com/opinion/156552>

<sup>55</sup> Council of the European Union (2022), Council conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity.

which are key pillars of just and sustainable food systems. But punctual interventions in these areas will have meagre results without parallel **efforts to address unjust international trade rules and practices**.

Trade relations remain unequal, with low- and middle-income countries still seen as export markets and resources of raw commodities. Free trade agreements favour monopoly control by agribusinesses and corporate control over value chains, inputs and technologies, at the expense of small-scale producers. FAO observes that trade liberalisation risks undermining the needs of smallholder farmers, because lowering subsidies on local agricultural produce reduces output and increases prices in global markets.<sup>56</sup> As acknowledged by the European Parliament,<sup>57</sup> these imbalances continue to be promoted by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture – which has contributed to the specialisation of agricultural regions, to export-driven agriculture in the global south, and to overdependency on imported foods in many countries. As an illustration, while 65% of the world's arable land is in Africa, only a third of cereals consumed in Africa is produced on the continent.<sup>58</sup> If the EU is to maintain partnerships of equals with African countries, investments should be channelled towards reducing the continent's external dependency.<sup>59</sup>

Although this overdependency on imported foods is not resilient to crises and is one of the major factors contributing to global food instability, it is **not properly acknowledged in the EU's response as one of the reasons behind our struggle with the food crisis**.<sup>60</sup> Without meaningful changes in international trade rules and commitments to enhance sovereignty, low-income countries will not have space to invest in domestic food production and compete against northern countries in global trade.

### *Corporate due diligence*

Human rights and environmental protection are key for food security. Inadequate legal and monitoring frameworks to ensure full protection of natural resources and the security of land ownership rights by local communities have led to projects and investments that contribute to illegal land occupation and deforestation. This compromises food security as it affects small local farmers and indigenous peoples, depriving them of housing, work and livelihoods.<sup>61</sup>

While strong mechanisms to effectively apply international standards and rules in agri-food systems are essential for global food security and while the improvement of land governance is included in the Team Europe response to global food insecurity,<sup>62</sup> the **Council's position on the Commission's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence proposal** (adopted in December 2022) **has significant weaknesses**. For example, it does not cover effectively important sectors like financial institutions, which finance large agricultural investments. Furthermore, the Council's position limits the value chain to not include the end use of products in downstream chains. This means that some harmful practices of large agri-business will not be covered by the Directive, such as the sale of

<sup>56</sup> FAO (2003), Trade reforms and food security, <https://www.fao.org/3/y4671e/y4671e00.htm>

<sup>57</sup> European Parliament (2022), European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2022 on addressing food security in developing countries.

<sup>58</sup> UNEP, Our work in Africa, <https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/our-work-africa>; FAO (2022), Food Outlook – Biannual report on global food markets, <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9427en/cb9427en.pdf>

<sup>59</sup> See African Union Statement (2002), Africa must industrialise, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20221201/africa-must-industrialize>

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, Politico (2022), “Don't fall for Russian lies on food crisis, EU warns Africa”, 31 May 2022 <https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-warns-africa-against-russias-food-crisis-propaganda/> which reports that European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told reporters that “the only reason why we are struggling now with a food crisis is because of this brutal, unjustified war against Ukraine”.

<sup>61</sup> FEC – Fundação Fé e Cooperação and IMVF – Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr (2021), Development and Food and Nutritional Security: Perspectives and (in)coherence, <https://www.imvf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/new-policy-paper-development-and-food-and-nutrition-security-perspectives-and-incoherence-imvf.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> Council of the European Union (2022), Council conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity.

harmful pesticides, dairy products, etc. A strong legal framework and enforcement mechanisms for responsible business conduct will however be even more important in light of the prominent role foreseen for the private sector in the EU's Global Gateway strategy.

### *Fiscal space*

As part of its food security response, the EU decided to allocate €100 million as a financial contribution to the International Monetary Fund Poverty Reduction and Growth's General Subsidy Account to provide subsidies for loans to eligible ACP countries that have balance-of-payments problems. The idea is that access to concessional loans will increase liquidity and available budgetary resources in the ACP countries, which can then be used to "address economic and social needs created by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine".<sup>63</sup> **Loans will however force global south countries to limit government spending, including in food imports**, and use their money instead to repay loans to western banks. While concessional finance might have a role to play, it needs to come alongside debt cancellation.

### *Migration*

Human mobility is one of the strategies for adapting to climate and food challenges in certain parts of the world (such as the Sahel or east Africa). Food crises and disasters push individuals and households to migrate in search of alternative sources of income. At the same time, safe and regular migration can also directly support food security through remittances (which often dwarf development aid amounts) and other types of transfers (technology, knowledge).<sup>64</sup> This is particularly the case during lean or drought periods, when circular migration to neighbouring countries can contribute to a more flexible management of food and income deficits within the household.

However, **human mobility as a coping mechanism**, notably in the west, north, and Horn of Africa, **continues to be undermined by EU policies related to the prevention of migration** and the fight against its "root causes".<sup>65</sup> The prioritisation of security and migration control was clear, for example, in the allocation of funds through the EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF),<sup>66</sup> and continues to be prominent in the EU's priorities, as outlined most recently in the Swedish Council Presidency programme.<sup>67</sup> This often comes at the expense of a more holistic and balanced migration governance and undermines free movement and mobility that is strongly linked to livelihoods and food security.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> European Commission (2022), "Food security: EU allocates funds to the most vulnerable African, Caribbean and Pacific countries hit by food crisis" 24 September 2022. For the list of indicative activities per country, see "Annex 2 - Action Document for an EU contribution in favour of the most vulnerable and exposed ACP countries via the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust Fund (PRGT)".

<sup>64</sup> See Caritas Europa (2019), Common Home - Migration and Development in Europe and Beyond, <https://www.caritas.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/European-Common-Home-full-publication-one-page.pdf>

<sup>65</sup> Caritas Europa and FES (2020), The impact of EU external migration policies on sustainable development: A review of the evidence from West, North and the Horn of Africa, [https://www.caritas.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/201012-Final-CE\\_FES-Policy-brief-The-impact-of-EU-external-migration-policies-on-sustainable-development.pdf](https://www.caritas.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/201012-Final-CE_FES-Policy-brief-The-impact-of-EU-external-migration-policies-on-sustainable-development.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> EUTF funding for labour migration and migration for development is limited compared to other thematic areas, representing only 2% of the total EUTF funding. See Altai Consulting (2021), Learning Lessons from the EUTF - Phase 2 - Paving the way for future programming on migration, mobility and forced displacement, p. 80, [https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/learning\\_lessons\\_from\\_the\\_eutf\\_final\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/learning_lessons_from_the_eutf_final_0.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> For the Swedish Council Presidency, EU cooperation with third countries on migration is important in counteracting irregular migration and increasing returns. See Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (2022), <https://swedish-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/programme/programme-of-the-presidency/>

<sup>68</sup> Davide Gnes (2019), "Circular migration and food security - Stories from a Caritas project in Niger", 11 January 2019, <https://www.caritas.eu/circular-migration-and-food-security/>



### *Conflict sensitivity and prevention*

As acknowledged in the EU's different communications, conflict and insecurity continue to be important drivers of hunger around the world. This reality should push the EU and its Member States to systematically integrate conflict sensitivity in their responses to global food security, both in terms of wider policy coherence and in specific actions. The requirement to carry out conflict analysis for programming in the new EU's external action funding instrument ("Global Europe") is an encouraging example, although questions remain around concrete implementation and responsibilities to ensure conflict-sensitive actions.

More broadly, the EU's increasing attention to the adoption of a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach to funding, programming and policies is especially relevant with regards to food security. The next step must be to move towards more adapted support to civil society responses and expertise through longer-term and more flexible funding modalities. The EU also plays a key role in conflict prevention around the world: it will be crucial to further invest in diplomatic and programmatic efforts to prevent conflicts, especially by adopting a gender-sensitive approach, when tackling conflict-generated food crises.

### **3. Conclusion**

The very framing of the food crisis in the EU's discourse shows that its response to global food insecurity has focused on quick fixes, lacking political will to promote systemic change. EU leaders have repeatedly referred to the impact of the war in Ukraine on the availability and prices of food worldwide, as well as to the need to increase food production, with limited reflection on structural issues undermining global food security, such as unjust international trade rules, dependency on food imports and lack of political voice and access to resources for small-scale farmers – in all of which the EU has a key role to play.

While the fact that Europe is in the midst of a major crisis renders systemic shifts more challenging and while a longer-term analysis covering the EU's performance in the next few years is warranted, the EU's overfocus on the provision of a band-aid to the symptoms of our fragile food systems remains improper, because it undermines sustainability – in every sense of the word – and comes to the detriment of sufficient political attention and resources to real solutions, like enhancing agroecological principles and food sovereignty. Fostering sustainable food security and nutrition that leaves no one behind cannot be done alone through incremental improvements to the current global food system and as the frequency, scale and duration of humanitarian crises increasingly surpass the capacity of the humanitarian system.

*"It is not enough to balance, in the medium term, the protection of nature with financial gain, or the preservation of the environment with progress. Halfway measures simply delay the inevitable disaster. Put simply, it is a matter of redefining our notion of progress. A technological and economic development which does not leave in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life cannot be considered progress".*

**Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, p. 194**

Transforming our food systems will require time and changing the industrial agriculture model. It will go against agribusiness' interests and politicians' short-term interests. It will require political will to capture the best of scientific as well as traditional knowledge and to respond to what small-scale food producers, environmentalists, scientists, pastoralists, peasants, indigenous peoples and hundreds of faith-based and civil society organisations have been calling for, for a long time.

## 4. Recommendations

Our recommendations are directed primarily to the European Council and the European Commission.

### Sufficient and locally-led humanitarian action

- Ensure greater **transparency on the destinations of food exports** to accompany the renewed engagements and investments in the **EU Solidarity Lanes** (as is done in the case of the Black Sea Grain Initiative) and provide incentives so that a much larger proportion of shipments **reach "hunger hotspots"** in the short- and long-term. The EU should also prevent excessive profiteering and taxes on such food exports, to allow for partner countries to have enough resources to address humanitarian needs and the root causes of food insecurity.
- Turn the solidarity for Ukraine and the EU's quick humanitarian response into a precedent for addressing all severe humanitarian crises.
- Urgently increase the EU's **support and political attention to other regions of the world**, especially Africa. It has not been proportional to the needs in African countries, supported the EU's intention of fostering solid international partnerships, nor corresponded to the EU's role as the world's largest aid donor. EU Member States must increase development funding to 0.7% of their Gross National Income, and the EU must increase its humanitarian funding aligned to frequency, scale and duration of crises and humanitarian principles.
- Prioritise channelling humanitarian aid through **direct funding to local actors (including overhead costs)**, in line with the EU's Communication on humanitarian action of 2021<sup>69</sup> and with the OECD Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance.<sup>70</sup> The new EU Guidelines on Localisation – currently under development – shall reflect these commitments and support their operationalisation.
- Take a **long-term perspective** and place emergency humanitarian assistance and other immediate measures under the framework of a broader, mid- and long-term approach aimed at reforming our food systems. The EU should provide flexible predictable multiyear humanitarian funding that supports a nexus approach.

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<sup>69</sup> European Commission (2021), European Commission Communication on the EU's humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles, <https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/hacommunication2021.pdf>

<sup>70</sup> OECD DAC (2021), DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/Instrument%20s/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-5021>

### Real focus on the key pillars of global food system transformation

- Inform policymaking through valorisation of **indigenous/local knowledge** alongside scientific knowledge.
- Scale up investment in the **agroecological transition** with urgency:
  - Adopt a comprehensive vision of agroecology, alike in many of the European Commission's regional and national-level partnership frameworks.
  - Progressively re-orient existing investments while rapidly enabling investment for practices based on agroecological principles – for example, repurpose existing agricultural finance flows over time, provide additional agricultural finance dedicated specifically to agroecology and promote policy reform in other relevant sectors such as trade, creating the necessary enabling environment for such transition.
  - Continue to be a progressive voice on agroecology in the work on agriculture and land under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, including through the “Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action and Agriculture”.
  - Through climate financing, allocate funds to programmes that promote agroecology and support small-scale farmers.
  - Measure success in support for food systems transformation in a way that advances agroecological transitions, in line with FAO's Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation.
- Seize the current political context as an opportunity to break dependency on fossil-fuel based fertilisers, prioritise sustainability over commercial interests and move from generic, aspirational level to a **solid plan for a transition period to the deployment of sustainable alternatives to synthetic fertilisers**. Work to meet the EU's Farm-to-Fork targets on chemical fertilisers use and extend such an approach beyond the EU.

### Democratic principles and smallholder farmers as pillars of the agriculture transformation agenda

- As a global leader promoting democratic values and human rights supporting several food security multilateral initiatives, increase efforts to see such values and rights translated in the response to the food crisis. This is key to **legitimising decisions and reaching fair solutions** respectful of human rights and of different cultures, knowledge and practices, which make sense to the people directly affected at every stage of the food systems.
- Treat **food as a public common good** (not as a commodity) and take a human rights approach focused on the **right to adequate food**. Translate these principles into decision-making processes: policymaking on food systems is a matter for governments and the citizens to whom they are accountable; private sector engagement in multistakeholder platforms should not be about policy choices but about implementation of the policies that people and their governments have decided; multistakeholder platforms (such as the Global Gateway governance structure) should set in place **robust safeguards against conflicts of interest on the part of the most powerful**.
- Set **engagement with civil society, through the CFS and beyond**, as a key pillar of the EU's response. Take concrete steps to ensure that such engagement is continuous and reaches a **broad spectrum of actors**,

including local and faith communities, farmers' organisations, women farmers, indigenous peoples, cooperatives, trade unions, persons with disabilities and environmentalists.

- Include local producers and consumers – especially women small-scale farmers who have less access to financing, land, production inputs and agricultural extension services – in **local policymaking processes**.
- **Strengthen producers' associations, cooperative models, solidarity economy and community organisations** that aim at enhancing the rights of small-scale producers and farmers and can protect natural resources.
- Support and strengthen **farmer managed seed systems**, in line with the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food's recommendations.<sup>71</sup>

### Respect for the principle of Policy Coherence for Development

- Climate: contribute to fulfilling the global commitment to **provide US\$600 billion in climate finance 2020–2025** and take a leading role in the **establishment of a Loss and Damage Finance Facility**.
- Trade: in line with its objective of fostering resilience and strengthening local and regional markets, refrain from encouraging an export-oriented production model; instead, champion stronger **regulation of agricultural commodity markets**, push for new rules to prevent excessive financial speculation from fuelling food price volatility, improve transparency and data on food stock levels, and take the necessary steps to update the WTO rulebook on agriculture.
- Corporate due diligence: adopt the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive with a **mandatory approach applicable to most businesses and to the financial sector**, with a fair distribution of the burden of proof regarding **civil liability and access to justice**. The European Parliament, in particular, should have an important role in strengthening the draft Directive during the triilogue in spring 2023.
- Fiscal space: prioritise **grants rather than loans**. Support the restructuring **and cancellation of private and public debts** in low- and middle-income countries to facilitate financial liquidity to address social sector and food security spending. In particular, fund debt cancellation for the national governments that are struggling with food import bills and COVID-19 related spending to prevent further economic distress.
- Migration: **promote safe and legal pathways** for human mobility to value and enhance the contributions of migration to food security.
- Conflict sensitivity and prevention: implement the **humanitarian-development-peace nexus** approach by supporting civil society responses in a flexible manner and ensuring that EU responses support conflict prevention without further feeding conflict dynamics (Do No Harm) through programmes and policies. The EU and its Member States should also follow the European Parliament's call to "invest more in conflict prevention with a specific focus on women and girls while thoroughly applying the UN Security Council Resolution 1325" as a way to respond to the root causes of food insecurity.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>71</sup> UN Human Rights Council (2021), "Seeds, right to life and farmers' rights – Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food", Michael Fakhri, 30 December 2021, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/397/86/PDF/G2139786.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>72</sup> European Parliament (2022), European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2022 on addressing food security in developing countries, ¶183.

### **Annex 1 – EU initiatives launched in 2022 to address global food insecurity**

- [European Commission communication](#) on safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems (March 2022)
- Support to the [Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission \(FARM\)](#) (March 2022)
- Support to the G7-initiated [Global Alliance for Food Security](#) (May 2022)
- [Contribution](#) to the Horn of Africa Initiative (June 2022)
- [EU council conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity](#) (June 2022)
- [Use of reserves](#) amounting to €600 million to address the food security in African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries (September 2022)
  - Annex 1 – Action Document for Food Production and Resilience of Food Systems in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries
  - Contribution by €100 million to IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust to support vulnerable African, Caribbean and Pacific countries in accessing finance to address the food crisis / Annex 2 – Action Document for EU contribution in favour of the most vulnerable and exposed ACP countries via the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust Fund
- [Remarks](#) by President Charles Michel at the Global Food Security Summit in NY (20 September 2022)
- [Declaration](#) of leaders' summit on global food security (21 September 2022)
- [Speech](#) by EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen, at the Food Security Summit during UNGA 77 (21 September 2022)
- European Commission's [new humanitarian aid package of €210 million](#) (November 2022)
- [European Commission communication on fertilisers](#) (November 2022)



**Annex 2 – Overview of EU initiatives launched in 2022 to address global food insecurity and their alignment with the transition toward just and sustainable food systems**

Main EU initiatives launched in 2022 to address global food insecurity	Reference to key pillars of just and sustainable food systems				“Solutions” incoherent with the transition toward just and sustainable food systems	
	Agroecology	Smallholder farmers	Local production, supply chains, and markets	Food sovereignty	Fertilisers efficiency, synthetic fertilisers	Climate-smart agriculture
<a href="#">European Commission communication</a> on safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems (March 2022)	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
<a href="#">EU council conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity</a> (June 2022)	Yes	Yes, but only on access to finance	Yes	No	Yes	No
<a href="#">Use of reserves</a> amounting to €600 million to address the food security in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (September 2022)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<a href="#">Annex 1 – Action Document for Food Production and Resilience of Food Systems in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries</a>						
<a href="#">Declaration</a> of leaders’ summit on global food security (21-Sept-22)	No	Yes	Yes, but only “domestic production”	No	Yes	Yes
<a href="#">Speech</a> by EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen, at the Food Security Summit during UNGA 77 (21-Sept-22)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
<a href="#">European Commission communication on fertilisers</a> (9 November 2022)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes

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