

PRESS RELEASE

I pledge: putting Agrifood back at the center of the European political agenda

Strategic policy guide for 2024-2029 from Competere.eu

Brussels, May 9, 2024 - A pledge for Europe: this is the aim of the Strategic policy guide for 2024-2029 for European agrifood by Competere.eu – Policies for Sustainable Development.

“**The Agrifood sector** deserves a prominent position on the **European political agenda**. The past five years have seen a systematic marginalization of farmers, entrepreneurs, workers, and researchers in the agricultural/food sector, **unfairly blamed for climate and health crises**”. This is the opening of the proposal document ([full version attached](#)), which Competere.eu has transmitted to future Members of the European Parliament, inviting them to support it ahead of the elections.

“We want to deliver **this document** to all candidates and future representatives of the citizens in the European Parliament, so they can support the strategic role of the agri-food chain in the ecological transition of our continent, which cannot ignore key variables such as socio-economic factors, productivity, competitiveness, and technological leadership”, said **Pietro Paganini**, President of Competere.eu, explaining the goals of the pledge.

“The climate crisis requires a **central role for agrifood** rather than penalizing it. **Current policies** are predominantly ideological and detached from the reality, lacking scientific arguments. There is a lack of balance between legitimate environmental demands and economic and social issues. This emotional approach to saving the planet has harmed Europe, strengthening **competitors**. The change in political direction is positive, but it could be influenced more by electoral considerations than **understanding the problems**. The consequences are visible with the desertification of rural areas and the closure of farms. **Green-Tech** is not a miraculous solution and should be part of a gradual and competitive strategy for sustainability.”

The **document** is divided into **three sections**, respectively dedicated to agriculture, business, and health.

The **first section reiterates that agrifood must return to the center of the European political agenda** to ensure global leadership. “It is crucial to enhance the production, resilience, and efficiency of European agrifood chains, supporting both the production of quality raw materials and the creation of exclusive food specialties.” **Competere.eu emphasizes** that promoting policies for food **security** and **self-sufficiency** must be accompanied by incentives for productivity and competitiveness, eliminating food waste and redistributing food at risk of waste. It is also essential to **invest in infrastructure and digitalization** to strengthen the supply chain and counter food counterfeiting.



The revision of animal welfare legislation must **balance animal welfare** with sustainability and competitiveness. Investments in production techniques and innovative technologies are essential to improve productivity and mitigate the impact of climate change. Moreover, Europe must support regenerative agriculture and **new business models** to ensure the financial sustainability of agri-food SMEs, without precluding imports but ensuring that they are sustainable and meet the same standards as domestic productions.

The **section dedicated to businesses** focuses on the transition to more advanced production and food systems. “We need to find a new balance between economic, social, and environmental sustainability,” explains **Paganini**, “integrating the needs of the population and the entrepreneurial fabric. It is essential to **eliminate any form of bias towards any food grown**, produced, or imported into Europe.” The agri-food sector must be consolidated and streamlined to block potential speculation. It is important to value both traditional **local products** and quality and sustainable. Investments along the food chain must be encouraged to make the European production model more efficient and sustainable, reducing bureaucracy for businesses. It is crucial to promote a **regulatory framework** that favors the efficient reuse of waste heat, increasing energy sustainability and reducing waste.

Finally, in the section on **personal health**, we can read: “It is essential to enhance citizens’ food education, promoting information on a balanced diet and the **Mediterranean Diet**, recognized for its preventive capacity against **chronic diseases**.” Obesity, considered an invisible pandemic, has high costs on healthcare systems and productivity. Current policies against obesity have been ineffective and limiting **individual and economic freedoms**. Taxes on food and beverages, aimed at discouraging consumption, generate inflationary effects, and particularly affect poorer families, reducing their **access to quality food**.

“We must **invest in education and scientific information** to make informed choices that allow us to live better and longer,” concludes Paganini.

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