

Towards a Territorial Approach for European Food Security

24 September 2015, Brussels



Context

The implementation of the FOODMETRES project coincided with societal debates about the way current food chains affect life and living on our planet. Advances in production, logistics, processing and retail mean that more people have more access to consistent quality, safe and affordable food than ever before in history. At the same time, the environmental impacts of modern food chains, the marginalization of small-scale farmers, as well as climate change and military conflicts prompting large-scale refugee and migration movements, are putting food security in many regions and cities of the world severely at risk. Highly intensive agro-business approaches as well as bottom-up, citizen-driven urban agricultural movements claim to offer long-term sustainable solutions.

Project results

Within this context, the FOODMETRES project proposes 'Food Planning and Innovation for Sustainable Metropolitan Regions' as the central strategic approach involving people, policy and the agro-food sector in evidence-based decision making processes that are guided by knowledge brokerage mechanisms within a multi-actor environment. Addressing principles such as resource-efficiency, food cluster development and system innovation, we consider metropolitan regions around cities as places where socio-economic transitions, cluster-development and new agro-food value propositions are driven by urban demand and dynamics. Applying a string of metropolitan footprint

assessment tools to London, Rotterdam, Berlin, Milano, Ljubljana and Nairobi, FOODMETRES has demonstrated that these cities are able to be self-sufficient within regard to their region-specific food consumption patterns and food supply capacities. However, the assessments also shows that food planning and innovation will be essential for making food chains more sustainable and for optimizing metropolitan food supply in terms of volume and diversity.

Policy message

In response to market failures linked to economic and environmental sustainability and the need for an effective and efficient delivery of policy outcomes, the Common Agricultural Policy has subscribed to policy measures such as fostering innovation, better share of value added along the supply chain, as well as targeting rural development policy to support diversification of economic activities. Already today, cities across the world are developing own food policies and programmes targeting at combining sustainable development objectives with food security and social innovation. Leading on from the project results, it becomes apparent that the current approaches towards local and international food policies would benefit from (1) a food-chain-oriented catalogue of measures (food planning & governance), (2) evidence-based mechanisms supporting short-food supply chains on the basis of sustainability criteria; and (3) a spatial reference scheme providing direct support to food security and innovation at the level of metropolitan regions.

FoodMetres Results Briefing

Date: Thursday 24 September 10.00-13.00

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