

# POLICY BRIEF IN SHORT STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY VIA FOOD PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENTS IN AND AROUND CITIES



These key recommendations for local and regional governments to utilise urban/peri-urban agriculture and school gardens for food security are further elaborated, defined and contextualised in the full brief '[Strengthening Food Security via Food Production Environments in and around Cities.](#)'

Ensuring a high quality of life for European residents requires having a secure and affordable supply of healthy and sustainable local and regional food. Our food systems are increasingly under pressure - from the impact of climate change to unfair global competition and higher energy costs to changing demographics. Building resilient food systems that can withstand and recover from crises is essential. Local and regional governments are increasingly required to respond to disruptions in the food system such as fluctuations in harvest due to increasing severe weather events, supply chain disruptions (like those experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic) and rising food prices due to geo-political tensions and conflicts (like the war in Ukraine).

## 1. CREATE FOOD ENVIRONMENTS THAT ARE HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE, AND ATTRACTIVE

- **Integrate gardening and urban agriculture into urban planning** by creating permissive zoning and legislation in urban areas.
- **Encourage food markets as an economic development tool.**
- **Prioritise urban renovation over expansion.** Limit the expansion of urban areas into peri-urban and rural zones by prioritising the renovation and repurposing of existing urban infrastructure.



## 2. STIMULATE SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

- **Support sustainable gardening and agriculture.** Offer access to land, resources, and technical support, and incorporate food production into planning and zoning policies, giving priority to practices that work with nature and promote biodiversity.
  - **Prioritise short food supply chains, sustainable public food procurement and civic food networks** in order to actively support city-regional small-scale, organic or agro-ecological farmers and collaborative agri-food systems.
  - **Promote sustainable and healthy eating habits** by implementing comprehensive food education targeting all demographics and based on the planetary health diet, diverting to more plant-based diets.
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- **Develop and enforce comprehensive policies that target the reduction of food loss and waste at the earliest stages of the supply chain**—such as production, post-harvest handling, and processing. For example, creating platforms for knowledge exchange and/or providing financial incentives, such as grants or tax breaks.

### 3. WORK WITH FOOD POLICY COUNCILS (FPCS) TO ESTABLISH MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE AND COLLABORATION

- **Encourage and support multi-stakeholder Food Policy Councils (FPCs)** that include diverse stakeholders such as local and regional governments, food growers, NGOs, chefs, local businesses, trade associations, universities, and civil society.
- **Emphasise inclusive, place-based policies while connecting to broader policy sectors** like climate, health, security and trade. FPCs can champion the needs of food-deprived and vulnerable groups as well as small-scale farmers, fishers, and food workers, ensuring they earn a living wage and are integral to building diverse and sustainable food systems.
- **Align policies** of local, state, and federal entities to support the work of FPCs. This could involve reviewing and amending zoning laws, agricultural policies, education and public health regulations.
- **Provide institutional support** by mandating the inclusion of FPC representatives in key governmental planning processes related to food systems, such as urban planning, public health, education and environmental sustainability.
- **Offer long-term funding** by creating federal and state-level grant programmes specifically designed to support the formation, operation, and expansion of FPCs.



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