

The 4th Villarceaux Declaration 2016: Together to Share a new Vision of Public Food Services in the European Cities

We are young professionals from 20 different European countries with different backgrounds and realities. We spent seven days discussing, sharing and confronting arguments and experiences about food. Together, we acknowledge that our current food system is in deep crisis. There is an immediate need for a paradigm shift.

In line with the Eating City platform, the Eating City Summer Campus 2016 acknowledges that the City is at the centre of the problem – and the solution. The Public Food Service presents a transformative opportunity to affect positive change. This is why our united message is addressed to the cities, in particular to the municipal decision-makers. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the fact that each layer of governance has its duties and responsibilities, from the EU to the local level.

The crisis we face today is a complex one. Currently, humans control Nature for their own benefit disregarding its agroecological resilience. We as the human race have forgotten that we are part of a bigger picture and that we are interdependent. This extractive model is no longer viable to ensure the future of the planet and human kind. The dominant claim to keep producing more food to feed the world is only making the problem grow bigger.

Hunger, obesity, non-communicable diseases, waste, processed food, ignorance, exclusion, inequality. This is on the menu. Right to food, food sovereignty, social inclusion, pleasure, flavour, cultural recognition, linking the urban and the rural. This is what we want.

In order to make our food cycle sustainable, we have identified two different and interconnected sets of actions. On the one hand, a new facilitating governance framework for food is necessary. On the other, we have to transform each step of the cycle from production through consumption to waste – and back to the land again.

This is our recipe:

FOSTERING Governance

Problem: There is a lack of political willingness and/or capacity to deal with sustainability issues and with food issues in particular. Consequently, cities' actions are often fragmented and rely on personal motivation of individual City officials.

Solution: Fostering interdepartmental and cross-sectoral coordination will enable an integrated vision and positive synergies in cities sustainable food policies.



Actions:

- Create an integrated City Food Strategy with all relevant stakeholders within the food and other institutional levels, including citizens.
- Establish a Sustainable Food Department/Office that coordinates city departments' actions on sustainability. Such an office enables all actors to collaborate.
- Employ well-resourced and accountable sustainable Food Advisors at all institutional levels (when issues related to food are at stake)- no need for this last part-

IMPROVING Public Food Service

Problem: Millions of meals are served daily by our cities. Unsustainable Public Food Service has a huge negative impact on public health and environment.

Solution: Resilient and sustainable Public Food Service offers an immense opportunity to shift consumption patterns and ensure social inclusion.

Actions:

- Advocate toward EU institutions to change procurement regulations to allow for the option to ask for local.
- Mandate all Public Food Service to prioritize seasonal, organic, sustainable and local food at a fair and reasonable price.
- Plan public food procurement demand in advance so as to harmonize and optimize it with farming and production supply.
- Integrate specifications in the tender documents on the use of recyclable or biodegradable packaging and effective route-planning in order to minimize the carbon footprint.
- Design menus with a multi-disciplinary working group so as to produce creative, healthy, balanced and delicious meals in the Public Food Service. This would reduce the use of meat and keep processed foods to a minimum.
- Mandate an open access and transparent database that streamlines the monitoring and reporting process for Public Food Services.

JOINING Education and Engagement

Problem: Cities do not facilitate community engagement with sustainable food issues or the integration of these challenges into public education.

Solution: Investing in food knowledge and education will stimulate public awareness and encourage participatory food governance.



Action:

- Raise public awareness through inclusive conferences, events and workshops on sustainable food culture and appreciation of food.
- Support community and neighborhood food movements.
- Facilitate long-term engagement through the creation of Food Councils.
- Include Edible Education programs in all schools focusing on sustainable food, small and medium sized food production, food preparation, nutrition and waste.

CONNECTING Food Production to Food Spaces

Problem: Inhabitants are disconnected from their food physically and conceptually. On the other hand, small to medium scale food producers lack the capacity to access markets.

Solution: Activating and linking the physical, social and professional space for food will facilitate the shortening of food chains between consumers and producers, and encourage new relationships to form based on the common goal of achieving sustainable food practices.

Actions:

- Carry out a land-audit to allow information, access and transparency over municipal land.
- Allow zoning to provide space for food-related activities, such as food hubs, collective production kitchens, storage facilities and farmers markets.
- Incentivize and enable farming opportunities through city-hosted farm spaces for educational or professional purposes.
- Diversify public green spaces to incorporate edible landscapes.
- Offer affordable transport to local farmers to transport their food to markets.

RETHINKING Food Waste

Problem: Food waste is regarded as an inevitable byproduct of an "efficient" food system tilted towards consumer responsibility. So far, the response has been reactive rather than preventive and city action has been fragmented. Responsibilities are not being distributed throughout the chain.

Solution: Waste management should be considered from pre-production through post-consumption. Cities should assess services and infrastructure in order to promote integrated actions.



Actions:

- Centralize collection and processing of food waste, including developing a food recovery process for food outlets.
- Develop composting programs at public canteens.
- Train kitchen staff on sustainable food preparation and waste diversion.
- Develop incentives/a reward program to encourage waste reduction with penalties for poor waste management practices.

Bon Appétit!

Eating City Summer Campus

La Bergerie de Villarceaux
18th August 2016

