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EUROPEAN UNION EU

Event Summary

GLOBE EU panel discussion on Sustainable Food Production & Consumption

VoxBox of the European Parliament – Brussels, May 31, 2016

Moderator:

- Sirpa Pietikäinen, MEP

Panelists:

- Vytenis Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety
- Margrete Auken, MEP
- Dr. Christiaan Prins, Director European External Affairs at Unilever
- Luc Bas, Director of the IUCN European Regional Office in Brussels
- Dr. Hans Herren, President and CEO of the Millennium Institute

Summary of the discussion:

- Panelists agreed that organic (agro-ecological) farming should be promoted. This would stimulate local production, bring more diversity (more plant-based), and increase crop resilience. Panelists called for a joint EU/FAO Symposium to explore the opportunities for agro-ecological farming;

- True food pricing: including externalities in the cost of producing food was deemed to promote sustainable production. This will result in better food quality, which would justify higher prices (and thus reduce consumption). Although low-income families should be able to afford good quality food, not all food has to be cheap;
- There was general agreement on the importance of regulation and the need for harmonized standards for sustainable food. Panelists agreed that a momentum for action is building following last year's Paris Agreement and unanimous adoption of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Also recognized were the opportunities for change under Juncker's Better Regulation Agenda (better doesn't always mean less; better regulation can drive consumption of healthy and sustainably produced food);
- Food waste – the Commission will hold a multi-stakeholder consultation on food waste later this year; not only has industry an important role to play in avoiding waste in the value chain but also in educating consumers;
- Do we need to increase food production? With obesity a growing public health issue in many parts of the world and famine still a major concern in others, uneven food distribution was considered the greater issue although more food should become available to the population in developing countries.

To watch the full debate:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQ13ixCgZHK>