

Slow Food's Contribution to the Debate on the Sustainability of the Food System

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1 • SUSTAINABILITY: DEFINITION AND ORIGIN

Sustainability can be defined as the characteristic of something that is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially fair and culturally acceptable. The idea is linked to the idea of time, of lasting. How long can an action, production or a system that relies on certain resources (human, economic or natural) last? It will last for as long as it is designed to and for as long as it is able to replenish the resources it uses. The classic idea of industrial production is based on just two pillars (capital and labour) and considers only economic sustainability in a very strict and reductionist way. It seems to be unaware of, or uninterested in, environmental and social considerations. However the idea of sustainability is a complex one, made up of different pillars. If just one of these pillars is overlooked (environmental, social or economic), sustainability becomes unattainable.

The time has come for everybody – producers, traders, institutions, associations and citizens – to ask themselves whether their lifestyle is sustainable and to take steps to make sustainability measurable. That our lifestyles are no longer sustainable is now an established fact. If we want to judge food sustainability we need to ask ourselves many questions. We need to ask questions about the environmental consequences of our food choices (from field to fork), we need to ask questions about its safety and we need to ask about labour conditions. The responsibility of what is sustainable is shared by all of us: farmer, processors, policy makers and citizens can all influence the food system through the decisions they make.

2 • FROM SUSTAINABILITY TO FOOD SUSTAINABILITY: “GOOD, CLEAN AND FAIR”

The reasoning over the meaning of “quality food” - which Slow Food first expressed over 10 years ago - has led us to a complex definition, which in some ways retraces the steps of the equally complex definition regarding sustainability that we (and others) have constructed over time, i.e. a sustainable system must be pleasing as a whole, but also socially, culturally, environmentally and economically.

In an attempt to pay more attention to detail, the expression “quality food” must start to be considered as redundant: if food lacks quality then it cannot really be considered food. Through our culture we must become more aware of this in the near future. We must also start to understand that a green economy is the only economy which can be called as such, and that those we have known so far are no more sensible; the economy we thought was the only one possible has wasted social, environmental and economic resources.

Food must be **good, clean and fair**. If it is not nutritious in the broad sense of the word - for the individual, for society and for the environment - then it cannot be considered food.

Good: Good is what one likes. What one likes is related to the sensorial sphere, which in turn is strongly influenced by personal, cultural, historical and socio-economic factors. It is an extremely subjective concept. In defining “good” two kinds of subjective factors are crucial: taste – which is personal and linked to the sensorial sphere of each of us, and knowledge – which is cultural and linked to the environment and the history of communities, techniques and places.

Human sensoriality is being attacked by a multiplication of stimuli, a decrease in the amount of time we have to select and perceive them, and by certain methods of industrial production that alter natural flavors, thus somehow deceiving us. To counteract this, re-educating the senses and keeping them in constant training must become fundamental, as well as regaining possession of one’s own cultural roots.

A food’s flavor and aroma is the fruit of the competence of the producer and of the choice of raw and fresh materials and production methods, which should not alter its integrity. The principle of “good” refers to a fresh, healthy and flavorsome seasonal diet that is part of a local culture. Individuals need to bring food culture to light in order to understand if something is good or not.

No one has the right to judge someone else’s food on the basis of their own “cultural” taste. This respect is difficult to put into practice and is the first obstacle and source of error when we try to organize international actions to protect or support products, agriculture or social groups.

From another angle, “good” is pleasure and the enjoyment of food, which is constantly sought with the utmost ingenuity, even where food is scarce: it is physiological, instinctive behavior. This is a fact that is somehow rejected in our society and that has prevented the quest for the good, a perfect accomplice of industrial food production which ended-up merging the concept of “good” with food safety.

Pleasure is a human right because it is inherent to human physiology; we cannot avoid feeling pleasure when we eat. To reject pleasure in the belief that it only accompanies abundance is a serious strategic mistake. Traditional cultures have created a vast heritage of recipes and ways of preparing and processing local or easily accessible food. This is true even in those areas in the world that are today most seriously affected by the problems of malnutrition.

The process of conversion from community-based, local and small-scale food production to large-scale, export-oriented and monocultural production has provoked the decline of traditions, cultures and pleasures associated for centuries with community-based production and markets, affecting the experience and the long-celebrated joys of sharing food grown by local hands.

To conclude, the good as an objective has a political connotation: recovering our sensoriality as the founding act of a new way of thinking and acting, and the respect for other cultures by learning to understand other peoples' categories. These steps can help us to communicate and to work together in favor of the world's food producing communities. "Good" is respect for others and for ourselves, striving to ensure that it becomes a right for everyone is part of our civil mission.

Clean: The second pre-requisite of a quality product is that it should be "clean". Clean is a far less relative concept than "good", though equally complex. Environmental sustainability is the most important requirement for a product to be clean. To assess all the consequences of its production and processing it is necessary to access a vast amount of information and knowledge. We need to know whether the varieties used are among those that negatively influence biodiversity, whether the farming techniques impoverish soil (with pesticides and synthetic chemical fertilizers), whether they pollute or waste water resources, whether they are based on costly and non-renewable resources, whether the processing has been carried out using pollutants and whether the transport implied a high degree of pollutant emissions. Every stage in the agro-industrial production chain, consumption included, should protect ecosystems and biodiversity, safeguarding the health of the consumer and the producer, and at the same time the health and welfare of every living being.

Clean and sustainable production also creates the conditions for good. The concepts of "good" and "clean" are interdependent: respect for the criterion of naturalness is the basis for both these principles and there is a reciprocal relationship between them. A soil that is neither stressed nor polluted will yield better and more nutritious crops. The same is true for animals reared respecting their welfare and processing that respects raw materials. Finally a product that travels less will be fresher, more flavorful and contain a higher level of nutrients.

However the equation that "clean" is "good" is not valid, nor it is the opposite. Clean is attained by respecting the criterion of integrity, being aware of the limits of humans, animals and vegetables. To manage limits is the first sustainability exercise, not only the environmental one. Limits that we need to manage, and beyond which there is no growth but rather regression: economic loss, environmental loss and cultural impoverishment. Environmental sustainability can be measured. It is based on precise knowledge and information that is not always provided to consumers. To strive to ensure that this information (the agricultural methods used, the areas of production, the quantities produced, the forms of transport and the respect for biodiversity and ecosystems) becomes available to consumers will be one of our tasks.

Fair: The third and last pre-requisite of a quality product is that it is "fair". In food production the word "fair" defines social justice, respect for workers and their know-how, for rural life, for adequate wages and for recognition of the value of small farmers whose position in society has always been neglected. It is not acceptable that those who produce our food, those people who work to grow crops, raise livestock and turn nature into food should struggle to make ends meet amid all kind of difficulties. In all parts of the world, farmers are facing a vast range of problems. A global sustainable food system should find out what is fair for everyone, in accordance with the characteristics and needs of the various geographical areas of the planet. Millions of farmers in the world do not even own the land on which they work. We must build a new system that will give these people due recognition for the vital role they play: we cannot do without farmers, we cannot do without producers.

The social aspects cannot be looked at separately from the economic aspects of sustainability. If the price of food is too low, it can only mean that the farmer is not being paid a fair price, or that the production costs are higher than the final price and compensated through subsidies, or that along the production and distribution chain some type of unfairness has occurred. One of the present drawbacks of the food system, both at the global and at the local level, is that of the distribution system. The last fifty years have seen not only the industrialization of agriculture and a mass exodus from rural areas, but also enormous improvements in conservation techniques. Today a particular food can easily travel from one side of the globe to the other, even when it is not necessary. The volume of food being transported around the world has soared, although the distance travelled is almost never reflected in its final price. The global distribution system is dominated by just a few big operators who draw strength from their financial structure has filled the production chain with innumerable intermediaries, thus causing the increase in the distance (physical and cultural) between consumer and producer. The issue of reorganizing food distribution is therefore of crucial importance; it is an essential task if we are to attain a sustainable food system. Prices should be fair, both for producers and consumers. High prices without good reasons do not help producers and do not contribute to the attainment of a sustainable system. Prices should be transparent and well explained: short supply chains can help in this respect. To help producers to ask for a fair price, to explain it and to find the right markets for their products (not all products meet the same consumption patterns, some are for daily use, some are consumed occasionally, etc.) is a vital objective for the future, a difficult but decisive challenge.

Therefore, the food system we want is:

- ▶ **Environmentally sustainable:** it maintains the quality and renewability of natural resources over time, preserves biodiversity and guarantees the integrity of ecosystems.
- ▶ **Economically sustainable:** it generates long term income and workplaces, reaches eco-efficiency, and provides a competitive environment, where quality prevails over quantity and prices reflect the true value of food.
- ▶ **Socio-culturally sustainable:** it guarantees fair access to fundamental rights (safety, health, education, etc.) and conditions of well being (education, social relations, etc.) within a community, provides opportunities to create and develop internal and external relations involving the community, and recognizes the cultural value of a product.

All these aspects of sustainability cannot be considered separately. They are strongly interrelated and need to be analyzed using an integrated, holistic approach.

It entails recognizing the close interdependence of different aspects of food production and consumption, generally perceived as distinct features: economic aspects, environmental aspects and socio-cultural aspects. Objectives such as protecting biodiversity, fighting climate change, developing local economies and small-scale production and safeguarding local knowledge, traditions and culture should not be interpreted separately. Instead, each goal must be set and pursued as part of an overall strategy that takes all the other elements into account simultaneously. We need a holistic approach because food is a living system that means that we have to deal with it considering complexity as its main constitutional characteristics.

3• HOW TO ATTAIN A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM?

In order to fully understand the implications of a good, clean and fair (in other words sustainable) food system, we need to look more closely at the positive consequences of our approach and at the same time examine the tools we already have in place to reach this goal.

Conserving and promoting biodiversity and ecosystems

In this changing global scenario, the conservation of biodiversity and the restoration and protection of ecosystems must become shared priorities at policy level. Such efforts, which should be seen as an investment in terms of natural capital, require radical changes in the models and practices of economic development worldwide. The wealth and variety of biodiversity allows nature to survive by adapting to environmental changes (climate above all) and to new diseases. Without diversity, living systems have a reduced possibility to adapt, which means to survive. The world's biodiversity is currently in a critical condition, seriously threatened by intensive farming and other unsustainable methods of food production. According to FAO estimates, 75% of agricultural crop varieties have disappeared and three quarters of the world's food comes from just 12 plant and five animal species. In the US, for instance, 7,000 apple varieties and 2,500 pear varieties were once grown, but today just two pear varieties account for 96% of the entire market. One third of native cattle, sheep and pig breeds are now extinct or on the verge of extinction. From environmental, economic, social and cultural perspectives, this represents a significant loss.

The conservation of biodiversity calls for the development of different modes of governance at the global, national and local level. Biodiversity conservation can only be effective if public awareness and concern are substantially heightened and if policy makers have access to reliable information upon which to base their choices.

Slow Food promotes the protection of domestic biodiversity, first and foremost through knowledge (for instance the mapping of traditional products, native breeds and local edible plant varieties and ecotypes through the catalog known as the Ark of Taste), and then by supporting and promoting specific supply chains (cultivation, breeding, processing). One such successful model for protecting biodiversity is the Slow Food Presidia project (in-situ practice), which aims to safeguard native breeds and local plant varieties, helping producers to work together (under lean association schemes) and collaborate to promote sustainable practices, as well as to protect traditional techniques and knowledge, to valorize their products and find suitable markets.

Adopting sustainable production methods

A very rough distinction among the different production models distinguishes between industrial production and small-scale production. There is a tendency to associate the former with the generation of profits and development, while the latter is often perceived as an activity aimed at mere subsistence. However, such a narrow vision does not take into account the fact that small-scale agriculture can more easily make optimum use of resources and, if correctly managed, produces more food than industrialized agriculture - if we consider the food system in its entirety (meaning in its complexity). In the long term, the industrialized system imposes unsustainable costs on natural resources: It causes soil erosion, water pollution and loss of habitat for wild species. The protection and development of small- and medium- scale food production and local economies thus becomes vital. A local food production system has the advantage of supplementing healthy, nutritious food with social responsibility, prioritizing ecological systems, eliminating or reducing chemical products, and safeguarding traditional techniques and knowledge. Local food is fresher, protects local varieties and species (not to mention traditional production methods), travels fewer miles and requires less packaging. It also allows producers and consumers

to have more information and greater control over production and distribution systems. Protecting sustainable methods of food production and small-scale food production means protecting the environment. Natural resources are managed sustainably ensuring climate-friendly food production as well as ensuring adequate food and water for future generations. The shift away from an industrial agri-food system and the adoption of sustainable agriculture practices can play a very important role in fighting and preventing negative consequences on natural resources. Sustainable agriculture involves less dependence on fossil fuels, uses techniques that maintain humidity and carbon dioxide in the soil, protects soil from erosion, slows down and fights desertification, and uses water more resourcefully. Practices involving the close confinement of livestock, the use of genetically modified animals or their offspring, long travel distances and the excessive use of antibiotics must be rejected. Animal feed must not include the use of urea, corn silage, foods or products made even partly with genetically modified organisms, additives and industrial waste. Fish must be caught using techniques adapted to their marine habitat, techniques which do not cause permanent damage to the seabed and avoid by-catch and discards as much as possible. Artisanal systems do not generally cause imbalances between species and are more respectful of local resources and biodiversity. Promoting and revitalizing artisanal fishing knowledge, including that of indigenous peoples, should be a priority in fishing policy.

According to Slow Food:

- Synthetic chemicals, pesticides and synthetic fertilizers are not sustainable and should be avoided as much as possible
- Intensive methods of production must be rejected
- Preference must be given to local plant/crop varieties
- Agro-ecological practices must be embraced
- Animal welfare practices must be supported.

Promoting an energy efficient system

Biofuels have negative repercussions on the agricultural sector, where they enter into direct competition with products for human consumption. If farmers stop producing food and only grow corn intensively to fuel biogas plants, the "renewable energy" business ends up becoming a threat to the environment. The current model of energy production – made up primarily of oil, nuclear, solar and wind energies, hydroelectric, biofuels, and hydrogen – raises a multitude of problems and concerns in the context of a global economy based on the unconditional use of resources. What is needed is an interrelated and holistic methodology (systemic design) that links economic, social, cultural and environmental demands to structure the relationship between human beings and nature, energy production and the environment. When the linkages between materials, energy, people and their knowledge are mapped out clearly, efficient pathways towards sustainable ways to use and re-use resources will become apparent. The systemic approach questions the present industrial model which negatively influences consumer choices, and proposes a new paradigm for the productive process that focuses on man in a natural context, in which real biological needs and ethical, cultural and social values emerge.

Against the backdrop of such a paradigm shift, in order to ensure the supply of energy and food security to an ever-growing population, decision makers need to adopt a set of priorities. One priority is the promotion of a local, inclusive approach that would encourage participation of all sectors of society and create new energy and material opportunities tailored to local contexts and the real needs of a given geographical area. Another priority involves the combination of different resources for the overall energy supply, which could lead to a dynamic equilibrium. There is also a need to reduce the use of material resources, or increase efficiency. This would enable certain resources to perform multiple functions, thus reducing the need for further inputs and losses due to transportation. Another priority is to decentralize information relating to energy and the production of goods and services, and establish a dialogue between experts and local populations.

Slow Food agrees that the energy inputs required for agri-food production must be supplied largely by renewable resources, but also believes this should be done by delocalizing centers of electricity production, setting up short energy supply chains and small-scale plants.

Creating short food supply chains

Short distribution channels enable producers to cut out the intermediaries between producer and consumer. Shorter distribution chains allow producers to sell their products directly to consumers (direct sell). A short food supply chain is created when producers and final consumers realize they share the same goals, which can be achieved by creating new opportunities that strengthen local food networks. It is an alternative strategy enabling producers to regain an active role in the food system, focusing on local production - decentralized regional food systems that minimize the number of steps involved and the distance travelled by food (food miles), as well as all costs and potential losses (i.e. food losses) involved. This enables small-scale enterprises to establish food supply chains that are 'independent' of the wider system. By cutting out some, or all, of the intermediary stages between producers and consumers - such as wholesale and distribution - the richness of local areas can be rediscovered along with essential parts of its identity, and new relationship can be forged between the agricultural and urban worlds. A short supply chain also makes it easier to achieve a fair price, as consumers can better understand the 'real' costs of agriculture and food production. In addition, the often-high costs charged by distributors can now be split fairly between producers and consumers, allowing producers to receive a dignified income for their work, and for consumers to pay less, knowing exactly what they are paying for.

Slow Food believes that producer markets are an important feature of short supply chains, along with CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) schemes and direct farm/producer sales. A short supply chain is a vital element in building healthy local economies. In today's world, the globalized market economy is showing its many limits in terms of wastefulness and damage to the environment. The micro-economies of local communities have the potential to work in a way that is financially rewarding and respectful to surrounding ecosystems, human health and cultures. They also foster conviviality and solidarity. A new idea of "local economies" based on food, agriculture, tradition and culture underlies the Slow Food Earth Market philosophy. It is still necessary to invest more to start collective sales systems where small producers come together to sell their products either directly or with less degrees of intermediation.

Keeping food waste and losses to a minimum at all stages of the food supply chain

Forecasts all seem to agree that in 2050 there will be 9 billion people sharing the planet. Considering that today (with a world population of 7 billion) there are already one billion people who do not eat adequately, the outlook isn't good. The most disparate voices are increasingly stressing the fact that, in order to feed everyone, it will be necessary to increase productivity by 70%, with cultivated arable land decreasing in the meantime. This explains the rush to genetically manipulate seeds to create hyper-productive plant species. This explains the idea of giving animals hormones to make them grow in half the normal time and the current abuse of antibiotics in intensive farming to prevent and cure diseases in an environment in which they spread more easily and more rapidly. This explains the inevitable destruction of forests to obtain more arable land (which nonetheless loses its fertility in the space of a few seasons). However, in all these arguments, there is an essential piece of information that is being ignored, namely that today the Earth already produces enough food for 12 billion people, but 40% of all food produced is wasted, never getting close to the table. As a recent FAO study highlights: "In medium- and high-income countries food is to a significant extent wasted at the consumption stage and early in the food supply chains. In low-income countries food is lost mostly during the early and middle stages of the food supply chain; much less food is wasted at the consumer level. The causes of food losses and waste in low-income countries are mainly connected to financial, managerial and technical limitations in harvesting techniques, storage and cooling facilities in difficult climatic conditions, infrastructure, packaging and marketing systems. Given that many smallholder farmers in developing countries live on the margins of food insecurity, a reduction in food losses could have an immediate and significant impact on their livelihoods."

Slow Food strongly believes that food waste and loss must be fought, and that to do that it is necessary to restore value to food and sacrality to the moment of its consumption. In a world where many people do not have enough to eat and resources are limited, we believe that the prevention and reduction of food loss and waste must urgently be given a key place on the political agenda. The system in which we find ourselves as consumers, producers or intermediaries is founded on a mechanism of waste and overproduction, and on the rapid selling-off of stock to put new products on the market. In other words, waste is no accident; it is organic to the system.

To counteract food waste, over the last years Slow Food has organized many small and large-scale awareness-raising events (e.g. the Disco soup), implemented and coordinated projects, and launched collaborations with other groups working on the issue (e.g. with Feeding the 5000, Last Minute Market Ltd, EU FUSIONS project). All these activities involve producers, retailers and consumers.

Promoting a new consumption model where people are not consumers, but co-producers

The so called "consumer" is the real key to change, whether in consolidating the industrial system or bringing radical change to habits, behavior and priorities, ushering in a new agriculture based on sustainability. Consumer choices have a significant impact on the entire agricultural and food system. Consumers hold a lot of power: with increased awareness of the value of their choices, they are in a position to redirect the market and production.

Slow Food coined the term "co-producer" to highlight the power and political role of the consumer. If, as Wendell Berry says "eating is an agricultural act," and as Carlo Petrini added, "farming is a gastronomic act," then we should also remember that food shopping is a political act. When we put our money somewhere, we are supporting a given production system. A co-producer is a responsible consumer who chooses to enjoy quality food, produced in harmony with the environment and local cultures. When we choose our food, we can go beyond a passive role and take an active interest in those who produce our food, how they produce it and the problems they face in doing so. In this way, we become part of the production process. Slow Food is actively seeking to reconstruct the severed link between producers and consumers, while promoting a more informed and responsible attitude on both sides. Co-producers can support local farmers, fishers, breeders, cheesemakers etc., not only by purchasing their products but also by tapping into the wealth of information and advice that they can offer us. In this way co-producers can learn more about quality and increase understanding of what a healthier, tastier and more responsible diet means in different regions. The paradigm shift in consumption promoted by Slow Food is of crucial importance in environmental terms: consumers' buying power provides an opportunity to strongly influence supply and production methods and, in our specific context, influence the spread of environmentally friendly methods. Slow Food does not only focus on individual consumption behavior. Aligning the public provision of food with criteria for sustainable diets would bring benefits for health, biodiversity and climate.

Protecting traditional knowledge

Traditional knowledge is in the process of re-emerging as a priority at the global level, and is increasingly being recognized as constituting the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity. However, the significance of traditional knowledge needs to be critically

reassessed against the backdrop of a complex modern world shaped by the onset of globalization and the profound societal changes it entails. Local and global communities are experiencing a loss of traditional knowledge and values, which goes hand in hand with a decline in cultural diversity and the dilution of a sense of community. This process of impoverishment of traditions is reflected in the present global food system which, hinging on the idea that local agriculture must serve the global market, transforms food into a mere commodity and compels people to conform to a single way of producing and consuming food. In this scenario, cultural, social and environmental costs are extremely high. In order to counter such phenomena, it is essential to undertake projects aimed at gathering, reinforcing, preserving and promoting traditional material and immaterial heritage, which must be perceived as the founding element of any community. It is also vital to recognize the importance of combining the concept of biodiversity with ethno-diversity - the precious local heritage which distinguishes every human group and which can only be enriched through exchanges among traditions and cultures. Local food production must be appreciated as a form of both cultural and physical nourishment for any community, and for this reason must be supported and promoted. Although women make an indispensable contribution to local food production, in many settings they are still the weakest link due to their lack of access to economic resources, education and healthcare. In this regard, policies grounded on the recognition of women as the founding elements of every community and co-players in community social, political and economic life must be developed.

Slow Food defends traditional knowledge, as a source of wisdom and know-how that lies at the core of technical and scientific learning. If properly protected, it can become a vital element in local economic systems and help spread environmentally friendly methods of food production and consumption. The participation of farmers is an essential element in ensuring the spread of sustainable practices and, for this reason, the horizontal sharing of knowledge among farmers is of crucial importance. Traditional food knowledge, which, as we have seen, deals with many fields and disciplines will be protected by the involvement of different genders, generations and origins. This is what we mean by the term "gastronomy": an interdisciplinary issue which needs the constant contribution of the many actors who contribute to food production. In our view, traditions should be preserved, but in a dynamic exchange: a vertical exchange between generations and a horizontal exchange among communities of different countries or of different worlds (science and traditional knowledge). We believe that preserving traditional knowledge should go together with innovation and research and that dialogue between realms is more than necessary.

Educating for a better food future

In a world in which the economy and production are at the service of people and nature, and not vice versa, education is a key issue for a better food future. It is necessary to re-think development processes through the holistic lens of human needs. This approach demands a profound cultural change and the adoption of different ways of behaving and understanding. These are goals that can be achieved through education, which presupposes a hefty political investment in the sector. To facilitate the adoption of sustainable food policies, it is fundamental to develop a new model of education based on new approaches and policies that promote sustainability. Education can take place in many different contexts and format: in schools, but also in restaurants, through better labeling, or via public events such as Terra Madre Day.

Slow Food's call for a shift towards a EU Common Sustainable Food Policy

At the European level, there is a need to analyze and regulate the food system with a comprehensive approach. Currently, issues relating to the food system are largely regulated by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), while other measures that strongly influence the food system are regulated separately, with contradicting results.

Slow Food hopes for a change in the structure and direction of the CAP: it cannot solely be geared towards productive aspects and interests. Today the CAP already goes beyond its own boundaries, concerning itself with questions related to the environment, land and the world of food in general. It is still necessary, however, for European policies to formalize and structure their sphere of action, expressing a more holistic vision and completing the transition from a solely agricultural policy to an agricultural and food policy based on sustainability.

In order to more effectively and efficiently address cross-cutting problems such as energy, environmental and natural resource protection, climate change, employment, public health, the development of local economies, the development of infrastructure, cooperation for development and so on; it will be necessary to better integrate different community policies.

It would be unrealistic to expect to successfully address all the issues linked to those listed here, since, by their very nature, cross-cutting problems are outside the ambit of agricultural and food policies.

For cross-cutting problems it is necessary to use cross-cutting tools.

This shift is of fundamental importance to solve many of the problems described in the preceding paragraphs. The current error is the idea that elements of the same process can be isolated and dealt with separately, without giving sufficient attention to the connections and overlap between similar issues, and the actors involved.

We need to shift from a Common Agriculture Policy to a "Common Sustainable Food Policy" which not only addresses food production, farming and trade, but also food and environmental quality, health, resource and land management, ecology, social and cultural values, and the shape of the entire agricultural and food market chain.

Slow Food believes that a new European food policy should be founded on the values of biodiversity protection, sustainability, natural resource conservation and inclusive development.

Slow Food wants to see Europe embrace an agri-food system that is more sensitive to local products and the cultures of its territories and community needs; and for this approach to be actively promoted in the current debates on the future of Europe's food system.

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