



fighting heart disease  
and stroke  
european heart network

## **EHN contribution to the EU Roadmap for the evaluation of the EU agricultural promotion policy**

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The current EU Agriculture promotion policy finances demand-oriented information and promotion campaigns, with the ultimate aim to increase the market share and consumption of certain European food products.

This policy is implemented in a context in which non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer, are responsible for 86% of all deaths and 77% of all diseases in Europe, amounting to healthcare costs of around €700 billion per year. In the EU, cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death accounting for more than 1.8 million deaths every year. In the EU dietary risks are responsible for 49% of the CVD burden, at an estimated annual cost of €102 billion. A cardiovascular health-promoting diet means a shift from an animal based diet to a more plant-based diet. It includes vegetables, fruit and berries in abundance. Whole grain products, nuts and seeds, fish, pulses, low-fat dairy products are also important, as are non-tropical vegetable oils in modest amounts. More information on food/nutrition is available in the EHN publication *Transforming European food and drink policies for cardiovascular health*.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, and in light of Article 168(1) of the TFEU, which mandates that the EU pursues a high level of human health protection in the development and implementation of all its policies, it is important to envision an agricultural promotion policy that integrates healthy nutrition at its core. This will contribute to attaining several of the Global Sustainable Development Goals, including Goals 3 (good health and well-being; reduction of NCDs) and 12 (sustainable consumption and production patterns)

EHN believes that the EU agricultural promotion policy is an opportunity to encourage more diverse, sustainable and healthy diets. Financial allocations should favour a food group's contribution to a healthy diet, and a methodology to this end should be elaborated with input from qualified experts. Such policy orientation will also support the agricultural and food sector's competitiveness by helping it adapt to citizen's concerns about healthy nutrition, as highlighted in the Commission Communication *The Future of Food and Farming*.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ehnheart.org/publications-and-papers/publications/1093:transforming-european-food-and-drinks-policies-for-cardiovascular-health.html>