

# CITY FOOD POLICIES



Long term vision for territorialisation and food policies

## Territorial and Institutional Tools.

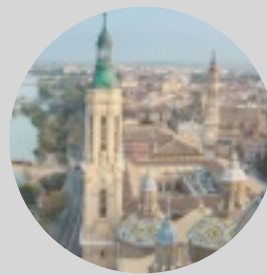
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To integrate food strategy into the Agenda 21.

Agenda 21 is an action plan to enact the ecological transition mainly through greenhouse gas emissions reduction, natural resources' better management and an economic relocation. Sustainable food systems are not specifically taken into account and usually only specific and sporadic activities are promoted far from the potential of a fully comprehensive commitment of such issue.

All cases that are presented in this essay help us now to anticipate how food issues could contribute to orientate a new generation of Agenda 21 in which people wellness, quality of life and social cohesion could be among the priorities alongside climate and biodiversity. Food is related with numerous public competences such as 1- health improvement (in low income communities, schools, hospitals, workplaces, etc.), 2- (green) public procurement, 3-waste management, 4-spatial planning, (including allotments and community food growing in the case of cities) and 5-economic

regeneration, (including jobs and cooking skills improvement), etc.; thus food is a common denominator able to unlock synergies between all these competencies.



Among the greatest assets of the city of Saragossa, there is a deep commitment for environmental concerns, traduced by the will to use the local

**Agenda 21 as a strategic tool to design the future of the city. Saragossa has also developed the capacity to combine past, present and future, being able for instance, to focus on the future by developing for instance an efficient mobility system and in the same time to give value to old traditions. It is also aware about the intertwined destinies of urban and surrounding rural areas. Therefore the city is developing a very rich and interesting vision able to generate fair and balanced innovation within a common-sense approach.**

Therefore, the next generation of Agenda 21 should present a global vision that necessarily integrates a food strategy, embedded in a short, medium and long term action plan. Such trend should not only occur at urban level, but also in districts, regions, etc., since food systems largely overcome the

scale of cities and different levels of local authorities need to coordinate their efforts together. The appointment of "food managers" with well-defined responsibilities, whose role is to integrate the food action plan with the other territorial strategies, could help decision makers and elected officials to arbitrate between the numerous and competing priorities related to food issues. In parallel, international networks should also actively work to raise awareness on the importance of food issues and enable efficient campaigning and training for all decision makers, to increase skill and awareness on food issues.



**In 2001, as a result of this policy work, the Toronto Food Charter was endorsed by City Council, as a support to the national commitment to food security providing a well-rounded roadmap in which Toronto not only acknowledge the importance food plays at personal and community level, but also in many core urban issues such as: health, education, well-being, standard of living, cultural pluralism, business and employment, environment and traffic pollution.**

### **To create territorial Agencies using plural-disciplinary approach based on subsidiarity and participation.**

Until yesterday, we could pretend to ignore food-related impacts on health, local and global economy, environment etc. Today, in front of all evidences raised worldwide in different urban and rural contexts, this cannot be anymore an alibi for immobilism. However the lack of suitable governance tools hinders the efforts of decision makers. That's why the experiment of Food Policy Council (FPC) launched in the USA three decades ago is very interesting.

Since the first FPC has occurred in Tennessee, their applicability and popularity has spread in all North America. They generally operate at the sub-national (local, regional, or province/state) level and may also serve more than one jurisdictional level. They can be either formally embedded in government structures, or operate

outside government, with all possible intermediary situations and often seek to establish a long-term role in advising decision makers on food issues and advocating for food system reform, under different forms and functions. They are a good example of participatory democracy, in which citizens can play a meaningful role in policy deliberation, even when much of the expertise, power, and authority in food systems are all concentrated in higher levels of government and the private sector.

Assuming that the role of future Agenda 21 could be to develop specific food strategies based on an holistic vision of sustainable development, Territorial Agencies for Food Policies, on the model the FPCs, could become governance tools stating on food strategies, in which food governance could shift from an obligation of means to an obligation of results, following a frame of management sufficiently flexible and adaptable to local contexts, that refer back to a tailor-made food metrics system. The same should apply also to the relationships between all different levels of governance concerned (national-federal, regional, urban, etc.), all following common guiding principles. In such a picture, Territorial Agencies for Food Policies would become the conductors able to interpret the score according to orchestra size and instruments.



**In 2011, the city of Bristol has made a step forward, bringing such governance tool in Europe. When interviewed, Bristol City Councillors and staff clearly expressed that “*Who Feeds Bristol*” report has helped raise the profile of how important the local food system is for the local economy and for health and wellbeing. (...) ‘*Bristol Good Food*’ message has helped to engage key influencers, and has helped to unite those working on nutrition, with those working on sustainability and on local economic regeneration.” Therefore the benefit of such experiment lays today in the capacity to summarize numerous food-related challenges in few simple priorities.**



**According to the declarations reported above, Bristol FPC has been able to remove barriers (either psychological or material) on the will of politicians and decision makers to convince them that sustainable food systems can be a winning key showcase window for the shift to a greener economy and lifestyle. It is now very interesting to follow such experiment, in order to understand how it will frame efficiently with the numerous existing urban and regional planning instruments.**

AFPs' members should be distinguished in three different boards: 1- elected officials and 2- staff, both working at all levels and in different services of local authorities and consular chambers, 3- civil society, including the different sectors according to food life cycle approach: farmers, food companies caterers and distributors representatives, local experts, academics and ONGs. They would start by doing an initial state of the art, based on the analysis of food statistics, health, economical parameters and Agenda 21 metrics, in order to give insights on local food production potential, urban sprawling pressure, patterns of healthy food consumption and environmental impacts.

### **To connect the different territorial levels of the Agencies for Food Policies (AFP).**

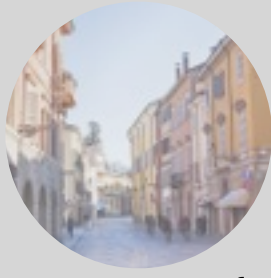
Large urban communities certainly deserve their own Agencies for Food Policies, but it is at regional level, that it is possible to better integrate food production and consumption in a coherent system made of urban and rural areas. Regional Agencies for Food Policies could be first introduced to coordinate and anticipate agricultural offer and food demand in order to reconcile urban and rural areas in a complementary and not rival relationship; to structure sustainable food supply chain that create employment; to support greener, eco-

efficient food production and services and finally to give food a regional/local identity as a quality marker consumers can value.



**Rennes Metropole's experience shows how the implementation of consultation mechanisms and dialogue tools allows the different stakeholders to defend their positions and to resolve conflicts about the spatial repartition between urban and rural areas. The implementation of the Archipelago city forces urban extension into planning guidelines that reverse the order of priorities, thus promoting farming corridors and spaces, also in function of urban population food needs. However, dialogue and consultation are not sufficient and specific measures are needed to contrast the actual trend (loss of agricultural land, reduction of the number of farmers, agriculture intensification and monoculture), in order to support local producers to create and/or take over farms, by solving land access problems, giving appropriate economic support, reducing bureaucratic obstacles etc. and enabling small scale producers to meet food safety standards etc. .**

At local level, these AFPs should work in relation with specific food logistics agencies established to be representative of suitable level of people concentration. The objective of such agencies would be to manage both information and goods flows, in order to match food offer and demand at local level while insuring that public buyers can have daily access to fresh local food at a fair price. The advantage of such system would be to optimize economic and environmental performances of transport by pooling orders made by all public bodies, thus creating suitable conditions for local food hubs' economical rentability and in the same time giving small producers access to public procurement.



**Ecocity project launched in Parma, Italy is working in two directions:**

**- to improve local supply and distribution network, by creating a food hub in the existing wholesale produce market, already equipped to handle perishable food.**

**- to increase transport's eco-efficiency by using methane-fuelled modern vans, together with a computerized system to combine transport flows and optimize routes.**

**“Ecocity includes a renewed logistics platform dedicated to food products implemented at CAAL [the wholesale produce market], and a fleet of twelve natural gas powered vehicles. As well at institutional level, the local authority promoted a new act to regulate freight transport in the limited traffic area. Moreover, the freight mobility plan adopts an ICT platform for the optimization of routes which provides dynamic routing and scheduling to reduce distance travelled” (37)**

Finally, a European AFP is necessary to coordinate a transnational network, welcoming member states and also citizens to contribute to the definition of food policies based on the following pillars: healthy food, (taking into account all nutritional contents and not only calories), social and cultural cohesion, dynamism

of local economies (with a focus on employment) and environmental impacts.

The European APF could be implemented in the Committee of the Regions (COR), the European Union's assembly of regional and local representatives. As COR aims to secure sustainable development across all European territories and encourage cooperation between local and regional authorities it could host an observatory, able to produce and disseminate food-related data and information useful for the network of local AFPs and also for the main European bodies, Commission, Council and Parliament in order to allow them to make change in overall strategies and directives that match better with the objective of sustainable food systems. European FPC would also be able to work in partnership with international structures such as FAO (Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations), OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), WHO (World Health organization), etc. to promote a unified governance model based on the four pillars described above, translated at local level in a myriad of gastronomic diverse realities based on specific contexts.

### **Bibliography:**

(37) Eleonora Morganti, (2011), Urban food planning and transport sustainability: A case study in Parma, Italy, “European Association of Agricultural Economists - EAAE” PhD Workshop, Apr. 2011, Nitra, Slovakia, p.15.