Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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Recommendation 2286 (2024)[1]

Guaranteeing the human right to food

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution 2577 (2024) "Guaranteeing the human right to food". It notes that the Council of Europe was active in the past in promoting a human rights approach to healthy food in co-operation with other international organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Union (then the European Economic Community).

2. Despite past activities such as the Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field and work on consumer health and food quality, the Council of Europe is today less present in this area, in which the European Union now takes the lead in the development of food law, with the focus on food safety and consumer protection.

3. The Assembly considers that in addition to legislation on food safety and consumer protection, there is scope for adopting a more comprehensive approach that reflects the full complexity of the issues associated with access to food as a fundamental right.

4. The Assembly is convinced that only a holistic human rights-based approach, centred on the right to food, can ensure the transition to sustainable and inclusive food systems.

5. The Assembly highlights in this respect that the right to food is recognised in international law as an autonomous human right, interdependent and indivisible with other human rights (in particular the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to a healthy environment, the right to water, the right to health, the rights of farmers and the rights of workers in food systems).

6. The human rights framework, which has thus developed in international law, places the requirements of food availability, accessibility, sustainability and adequacy at the heart of the approach. It is based on the principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, the rule of law and solidarity. It also pays particular attention to inequalities at all stages of the food chain and makes it possible to define the shared rights, duties and responsibilities of States, the food industry and, potentially, individuals.

7. The Assembly believes that this approach, fully in line with the core values of the Council of Europe, is an essential lever which the Council of Europe, together with other international organisations, should (re)activate as a basis to work for the right to food for all.

8. In this context, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

8.1. reclaim the subject of the right to food as an autonomous right that is interdependent with the right to a healthy environment, for example by including it in the building blocks of the new Council of Europe strategy for the environment, which was announced in 2024 on the basis of Appendix V of the Final Declaration of the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Reykjavik, 16-17 May 2023);

8.2. re-establish institutional synergies with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization in order to identify areas of complementarity;

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1. *Assembly debate* on 3 October 2024 (31st sitting) (see Doc. 16041, report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Mr Simon Moutquin). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 3 October 2024 (31st sitting).

8.3. invite the Steering Committee for Human Rights to consider the possibility of supplementing the Organisation's normative framework to guarantee the right to food.