

Enabling everyone to enjoy sufficient *high-quality food*

JEAN-LOUIS JOSEPH AND DOMINIQUE MARMIER

While food should be a basic right, more than 9 million people in France will receive food aid in 2023, three times more than 10 years ago. Food is now a major social issue.

What are the current issues in food?

Food is now an adjustment variable in household budgets. In addition, due to changing lifestyles, consumers, particularly the most disadvantaged, are turning to ready-to-eat products, which are often inexpensive and highly processed, and are a source of growing health problems (diabetes, obesity, etc.). At the same time, food insecurity has risen sharply in France, not only because of the recent period of inflation. Finally, food sovereignty is being undermined by struggling sectors such as fruit and vegetables. These findings have prompted the CESE to sound the alarm.

Food in the face of social and health emergencies

The ESEC advocates operational responses that activate several levers. It calls for universal access to healthy, high-quality food to be made a 'national priority' and for better coordination of food-related policies. It proposes that a 'national conference on combating food insecurity' be organised to identify, evaluate and support the many actions already implemented. The EESC would like to see the widespread use of Nutri-Score, improvements in the composition of ultra-processed foods and stricter advertising regulations, while raising awareness of the impact of food choices. It recommends using collective catering to facilitate the development of high-quality local supply chains, particularly in the context of the Territorial Food Projects (PATs) that it proposes to roll out across the country.

16 %
of the French
population will suffer
from food insecurity in
2023.

Source :
enquête du CREDOC

20 million
people suffer from
diet-related diseases
(cardiovascular
disease, diabetes,
cancer)

Source :
Assurance maladie

57 %
of fruit and vegetables
consumed in France
are imported.

Source :
FranceAgrimer 2023

Making high-quality food in sufficient quantities a public health issue

OPINION

1 ESTABLISH A GENUINE INTERMINISTERIAL POLICY DEDICATED TO ACCESS FOR ALL TO HEALTHY, HIGH-QUALITY FOOD AND MAKE THIS A 'MAJOR NATIONAL CAUSE'

→ **How?** By appointing an interministerial delegate to coordinate the actions of the ministries responsible for sectoral policies, and by rolling out Local Food Projects (PAT) involving all relevant local stakeholders.

2 PROMOTE THE CONSUMPTION OF FOODS OF NUTRITIONAL INTEREST AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THOSE THAT POSE A HEALTH RISK

→ **How?** By encouraging the use of Nutri-Score at national level for all processed and pre-packaged products, by resuming negotiations at European level to make it mandatory as soon as possible, by improving the composition of ultra-processed products, by strictly regulating advertising, particularly that aimed at young people, and by supporting the fruit, vegetable and legume sectors.

3 SUPPORT AND DEVELOP MEASURES TO COMBAT FOOD INSECURITY

→ **How?** By organising a 'National Conference on Combating Food Insecurity' to identify, evaluate and disseminate the many often experimental initiatives of all kinds (solidarity grocery stores, community solidarity funds, etc.), by securing long-term public funding for food aid and by reimbursing associations for the VAT on their purchases of fresh produce, including fruit and vegetables.

4 MOBILISING COLLECTIVE CATERING TO SUPPORT AND DEVELOP HIGH-QUALITY LOCAL SUPPLY CHAINS

→ **How?** By facilitating access to local public procurement for producers, artisans and local retailers, by raising the thresholds for exemption from public procurement rules (in absolute terms, from €40,000 excluding VAT to €100,000 excluding VAT), by strengthening training for private and public buyers, by promoting the consideration of product quality and local origin beyond the sole criterion of price.

THE RAPPORTEURS

Jean-Louis Joseph

jean-louis.joseph@lecese.fr • (33) 1 44 43 60 21

An organic farmer in Provence and former mayor of a rural commune, he was president of the Luberon Regional Nature Park and the Federation of Regional Nature Parks of France. He sits with the Non-attached Members and is vice-chair of the CESE's Territories, Agriculture and Food Commission.

Dominique Marmier

dominique.marmier@lecese.fr • (33) 1 44 43 60 21

A farmer and milk producer in Franche-Comté, Dominique Marmier was National President of Familles rurales, which he represents at the CESE, Vice-President of the Caisse centrale de la mutualité sociale agricole and a member of the High Council for the Family. He sits on the CESE's Territories, Agriculture and Food Commission as a member of the Familles group.