

Declassified¹
AS/Soc (2024) PV05add
27 January 2025
Asocpv05add_2024

Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

Minutes

of the hearing on “Ensuring safe, healthy and sustainable food for all”

held in Strasbourg on Tuesday, 25 June 2024

The Committee held a hearing with the Young Ambassadors for Food Resilience, accompanied by Ms Irène Colonna and Ms Alexine Viney from the MakeSense association.

The Chairperson recalled that this exchange was part of a wider project to involve these young people in the preparation of his report on "Ensuring healthy and sustainable food for all". This format was a first for the Assembly and, as Ms Bonetti, General Rapporteur on the participation of children, and our Chairperson recalled, could contribute to strengthening a youth perspective within the work of the Assembly. This initiative was in line with the proposals of the report "Strengthening a perspective for youth within the work of the Assembly", which was currently being adopted. The Committee was thus a pioneer. The young people had already met some parliamentarians in Bagnolet in March (definition of synergies) and in Paris during the meeting of the Network of Contact Parliamentarians for a Healthy Environment earlier this month (familiarisation with working together). They travelled to Strasbourg to share their testimonies, their experiences and their proposals on food. Today, politicians stopped talking to make room for young people. The group prepared around three themes, which reflected the three interventions presented to the Network at the beginning of June: precariousness (problems and obstacles), values (deconstruction and opportunities) and consumption (solutions and participation). The Chairperson gave the floor to Ms Colonna to moderate the interventions.

Ms Colonna recalled that the problems of inflation and malnutrition in France and Europe affected first and foremost the inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and were indicators of weaknesses in food systems. Together with Unis-Cité, a pioneering community service association in France, MakeSense had launched the first "Food Resilience Ambassadors" programme. The aim of the project was to mobilise 1,000 residents of Bagnolet (Seine-St-Denis, France) through the Ambassadors to reduce their vulnerability to climate change and accelerate their participation in the sustainable food movement. The data spoke for themselves: in Seine-St-Denis, the poverty rate was 28%, 29% of the population was under 20, 80% of the population was foreign and food autonomy was estimated at less than 3%.

Ms Allycia Laurent testified to the daily socio-economic reality. "Like the other young people in the group, I live with my family in Bagnolet. When we went shopping, we noticed that the cost of many products had risen considerably. For example, the bottle of olive oil we used to use regularly has become too expensive for our budget. We had to buy a blend with rapeseed oil because it is more affordable. With only one salary, that of my father, who is a baker, inflation forces us to constantly review our food budget. Every purchase is calculated, and we spend more time looking for promotions or cheaper alternatives. Rice and pasta, which are staples for us, are also affected by this price increase. My father has health problems, he is diabetic. Poor nutrition is bound to affect his life expectancy and he is taking risks. He doesn't take care of his health because of a number of factors: we don't have the means to buy healthy food, but also because these products are not always available where we live".

Mr Luka Hu talked about an experience of investing in public space around food with MakeSense. "With the other young people, we built a nomadic kitchen from A to Z. The aim was to set up a kitchen where we could

¹ The minutes were approved and declassified by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development at its meeting on 27 January 2025.

have a good time together around cooking. This was based on an observation in our suburb: there is no common space to meet and bond, either because of security issues or because of overly strict security regulations. We realised that it was essential to reclaim public spaces. This project is based on the collection of unsold goods and the promotion of healthy and sustainable food. We wanted to show that even with limited resources it is possible to create something positive and beneficial for the community. Nomadic cooking is a creative tool to collectively define how it is good to eat together. It allows us to strengthen social ties, share good moments and raise awareness on the importance of good food. I loved the experience of starting from scratch and working with wood to build the kitchen."

Ms Ghroufrane Houzali Dirissa testified to the sociological reality of the suburbs. "In our suburbs, there are practically no shops offering healthy and quality products. There is also a lack of nutritional education, when it is essential to learn to resist the marketing of junk food. I really wonder why marketing and advertising are not invested in promoting good nutrition instead of burgers and meat. I remember the first time I saw an organic food store, I did not even know what it was. I thought it was a hardware store because it was so invisible in our environment. This excessive consumption of meat is not even cultural for my family from the Comoros. Traditional recipes do not contain so much meat, but we have been influenced by American culture and now even traditional dishes are cooked with meat".

The Chairperson thanked the speakers. He reiterated the importance of reclaiming public space and stressed that the issues raised by the young people covered many dimensions, including health, culture and advertising.

Lord Don Touhig shared his experience of tackling food poverty in the UK. He presented the role of publicly funded food banks as a commendable initiative. He wondered whether similar support systems existed elsewhere.

Mr Fridez recalled the time in Switzerland when every child was given an apple at break time. He stressed the importance of such simple but effective initiatives to promote healthy eating from an early age.

In response to Ms Kluit, **Ms Colonna** argued that, from her experience of supervising field projects in Seine Saint Denis, the solution was to find a balance between increasing salaries, and therefore the means of residents, and reducing prices. Both dimensions were important. She also mentioned that the best equipped secondary school in Seine Saint Denis was less equipped than the least equipped school in the Paris intra-muros. There was great resistance on the part of the public authorities to changing the situation in schools. She recalled the failure of the experiment of the Front des Mères association, which, as parents living in working-class neighbourhoods, demanded that a vegetarian alternative be offered to children in all school canteens in France, on the grounds that it was a matter of public health and social justice.

Ms Leyte stressed the importance of reducing prices for producers as well, pointing out that the real problem lied in the margins of intermediaries.

Mr Essl said that it was imperative that farmers could make a decent living from their work. He stressed that ensuring adequate remuneration for producers was essential to maintain sustainable and independent agriculture. Given the difficulties faced by many farmers, he wondered if there was a third way: one in which states provided targeted social support for those who earned less.

Mr Amraoui stressed that the environmental dimension should not be neglected, citing the experience of Morocco, where climate change was having a devastating effect on olive groves.

The Chairperson drew attention to the issue of producer remuneration. He stressed that the solution was to reduce the margins of the intermediaries. A concrete proposal was to distribute a cheque for 150 euros to encourage local purchases. He also made a link with the food bank, which was supplied with unsold goods from overproduction, but highlighted a paradox: the products offered by food aid were not always relevant or suitable. He stressed that food was not only a physical necessity, but also an emotional and cultural experience. The lack of money was felt at both ends of the chain, in terms of both production and consumption. Nomadic cuisine was a small-scale initiative that deserved to be disseminated in France. It was essential to make as many people as possible aware of this issue.

Ms Valérie Piller Carrard stressed that this debate was about social, health and environmental aspects and that this was the right committee to deal with these issues. She recalled that food was a public health issue and highlighted the paradox that considerable resources were invested in advertising junk food. According to her, the agri-food industry had a particularly harmful impact on disadvantaged populations. However, every citizen could become an agent of change if they were well informed. She suggested following the example of

Switzerland, where educational initiatives, such as learning to cook at school, were being set up to promote healthy eating from an early age.

The Chairperson thanked the participants and concluded by reminding the young people that the Assembly was their institution and that it represented them. He encouraged them to get involved in politics to continue to defend their ideas and proposals. He warmly congratulated the MakeSense Association for the work they had done in this area. He informed the participants that the young people would remain in the room for a debriefing session on their experience and to prepare a media box with the Assembly's Communications Department.

List of presence / *Liste de présence*

(The names of members who took part in the meetings are in bold / *Les noms des membres ayant pris part aux réunions sont en caractères gras*)

Chairperson / *Président*:

Mr Simon Moutquin	Belgium / <i>Belgique</i>
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Vice-Chairpersons / *Vice-Président·e·s* :

Ms Danuta Jazłowiecka	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>
Mr Armen Gevorgyan	Armenia / <i>Arménie</i>
Mr Pedro Cegonho	Portugal

Members / Membres	Country / Pays	Alternates / Remplaçant(e)s
Ms Jorida Tabaku	Albania / <i>Albanie</i>	Zz...
Ms Bernadeta Coma	Andorra / <i>Andorre</i>	Ms Susanna Vela
Mr Armen Gevorgyan	Armenia / <i>Arménie</i>	Ms Hripsime Grigoryan
Mr Franz Leonhard Essl	Austria / <i>Autriche</i>	Ms Agnes Sirkka Prammer
Mr Stefan Schennach	Austria / <i>Autriche</i>	Ms Doris Bures
Mr Bob De Brabandere	Belgium / <i>Belgique</i>	Ms Els Van Hoof
Mr Simon Moutquin	Belgium / <i>Belgique</i>	Ms Latifa Gahouchi
Ms Darijana Filipović	Bosnia and Herzegovina / <i>Bosnie-Herzégovine</i>	Mr Šemsudin Dedić
Mr Ivan Ivanov	Bulgaria / <i>Bulgarie</i>	Zz...
Ms Denitsa Sacheva	Bulgaria / <i>Bulgarie</i>	Mr Vasil Pandov
Ms Zdravka Bušić	Croatia / <i>Croatie</i>	Ms Rada Borić
Ms Christiana Erotokritou	Cyprus / <i>Chypre</i>	Mr Constantinos Efstathiou
Ms Ivana Mádllová	Czechia / <i>Tchéquie</i>	Mr Aleš Juchelka
Ms Michaela Šebelová	Czechia / <i>Tchéquie</i>	Mr Ondřej Šimetka
Ms Camilla Fabricius	Denmark / <i>Danemark</i>	Ms Karin Liltorp
Ms Reili Rand	Estonia / <i>Estonie</i>	Zz...
Ms Minna Reijonen	Finland / <i>Finlande</i>	Ms Mira Nieminen
Ms Aude Luquet	France	Ms Nathalie Serre

Mr Alain Milon	France	Mr Alain Cadec
Ms Isabelle Santiago	France	Ms Mireille Clapot
Ms Anne Stambach-Terrenoir	France	Ms Liliana Tanguy
Ms Eka Sepashvili	Georgia / <i>Géorgie</i>	Ms Ketevan Turazashvili
Ms Heike Engelhardt	Germany / <i>Allemagne</i>	Ms Franziska Kersten
Mr Andrej Hunko	Germany / <i>Allemagne</i>	Ms Catarina Dos Santos-Wintz
Mr Christian Petry	Germany / <i>Allemagne</i>	Ms Martina Stamm-Fibich
Mr Harald Weyel	Germany / <i>Allemagne</i>	Ms Katrin Staffler
Mr Ioannis Oikonomou	Greece / <i>Grèce</i>	Ms Maria Syrengela
Mr Georgios Stamatis	Greece / <i>Grèce</i>	Mr Alexis Tsipras
Ms Mónika Bartos	Hungary / <i>Hongrie</i>	Ms Katalin Csöbör
Ms Mónika Dunai	Hungary / <i>Hongrie</i>	Ms Zita Gurmai
Mr Bjarni Jónsson	Iceland / <i>Islande</i>	Ms Jódís Skúladóttir
Mr Joseph O'Reilly	Ireland / <i>Irlande</i>	Ms Reada Cronin
Ms Elena Bonetti	Italy / <i>Italie</i>	Mr Roberto Rosso
Ms Aurora Floridia	Italy / <i>Italie</i>	Mr Giuseppe De Cristofaro
Mr Alessandro Giglio Vigna	Italy / <i>Italie</i>	Mr Graziano Pizzimenti
Mr Stefano Maullu	Italy / <i>Italie</i>	Mr Francesco Zaffini
Mr Andris Bērziņš	Latvia / <i>Lettonie</i>	Mr Edmunds Cepurītis
Mr Peter Frick	Liechtenstein	Ms Franziska Hoop
Mr Kęstutis Masiulis	Lithuania / <i>Lituanie</i>	Ms Rasa Budbergytė
Ms Stéphanie Weydert	Luxembourg	Mr Paul Galles
Ms Romilda Zarb	Malta / <i>Malte</i>	Mr Joseph Beppe Fenech Adami
Mr Ion Groza	Republic of Moldova / <i>République de Moldova</i>	Ms Diana Caraman
Ms Christine Pasquier-Ciulla	Monaco	Ms Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo
Mr Miloš Konatar	Montenegro / <i>Monténégro</i>	Mr Boris Mugoša
Ms Saskia Kluit	Netherlands / <i>Pays-Bas</i>	Zz.....

Ms Carla Moonen	Netherlands / <i>Pays-Bas</i>	Mr Theo Bovens
Ms Artina Qazimi	North Macedonia / <i>Macédoine du Nord</i>	Mr Vlado Misajlovski
Ms Lisa Marie Ness Klungland	Norway / <i>Norvège</i>	Ms Linda Hofstad Helleland
Ms Danuta Jazłowiecka	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	Mr Mirosław Adam Orliński
Mr Jan Filip Libicki	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	Ms Magdalena Biejat
Mr Ryszard Petru	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	Mr Daniel Milewski
Mr Nuno Carvalho	Portugal	Ms Mónica Quintela
Mr Pedro Cegonho	Portugal	Ms Jamila Madeira
Mr Andi-Lucian Cristea	Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	Mr Ion Prioteasa
Ms Alina-Ştefania Gorghiu	Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	Mr Cristian-Augustin Niculescu-Țăgârlaş
Ms Diana Stoica	Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	Ms Daniela Oteşanu
Ms Marica Montemaggi	San Marino / <i>Saint-Marin</i>	Mr Roberto Ciavatta
Ms Tatjana Pašić	Serbia / <i>Serbie</i>	Ms Jelena Milošević
Mr Vladimir Đorđević	Serbia / <i>Serbie</i>	Mr Predrag Marsenić
Ms Anna Záborská	Slovak Republic / <i>République Slovaque</i>	Mr Ľuboš Blaha
Mr Dean Premik	Slovenia / <i>Slovénie</i>	Ms Iva Dimic
Ms María Fernández	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	Mr Alfonso Rodríguez
Mr José Latorre	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	Ms Marta González Vázquez
Ms Carmen Leyte	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	Ms Luz Martinez Seijo
Mr Mattias Jonsson	Sweden / <i>Suède</i>	Ms Yasmine Bladelius
Ms Beatrice Timgren	Sweden / <i>Suède</i>	Ms Boriana Åberg
Ms Céline Amaudruz	Switzerland / <i>Suisse</i>	Ms Valérie Piller Carrard
Ms Sibel Arslan	Switzerland / <i>Suisse</i>	M. Pierre-Alain Fridez
Mr Berdan Öztürk	Türkiye	Ms Ayşegül Doğan
Mr Sevan Sivacioğlu	Türkiye	Ms Sena Nur Çelik Kanat
Ms Gökçe Gökçen	Türkiye	Mr Namık Tan
Mr Cemalettin Kani Torun	Türkiye	Mr Ali Fazıl Kasap

Ms Olena Khomenko	Ukraine	Ms Larysa Bilozir
Ms Yuliia Ovchynnykova	Ukraine	Mr Andrii Lopushanskyi
Ms Lesia Zaburanna	Ukraine	Mr Rostyslav Tistyk
Ms Kate Osamor	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Zz...
Ms Sally-Ann Hart	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Mr Richard Bacon
Lord Don Touhig	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Ms Ruth Jones
Ms Sheryll Murray	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Zz...

Other parliamentarians present / Autres parlementaires présents

Ms / Mme Edite Estrela, Portugal

Partners for Democracy / Partenaires pour la Démocratie

Mr / M. Allal Amraoui, Morocco / *Maroc*

Mr / M. Hassan Arif, Morocco / *Maroc*

Other persons present / Autres personnes présentes

Mr / M. Pier Würigler, Suisse

Secretariat of Delegation or of Political Group / Secrétariat de Délégation ou de Groupe politique

Ms / Mme Emmi Kupiainen, Finland / *Finlande*

Ms / Mme Josefina Gomes, Portugal

Mr / M. Cenk Batın Kaya, Türkiye

Ms / Mme Tirza Drent, ALDE

Council of Europe staff / Secrétariat du Conseil de l'Europe

Grazia-Alessandra Siino, PACE/APCE, Parliamentary and Electoral Cooperation / *Division de la coopération parlementaire et électorale*

Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly / Secrétariat de l'Assemblée parlementaire

Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development /
Commission des questions sociales, de la santé et du développement durable

Ms / Mme Catherine Du-Bernard Rochy Head of the Secretariat / *Cheffe du Secrétariat*
 Ms / Mme Aiste Ramanauskaitė Secretary to the Committee / *Secrétaire de la commission*
 Ms / Mme Jannick Devaux Secretary to the Committee / *Secrétaire de la commission*
 Ms / Mme Claire Dubois-Hamdi Secretary to the Committee / *Secrétaire de la commission*
 Ms / Mme Ozgü Tan Assistant/ Assistante
 Ms / Mme Françoise Schir Assistant/ Assistante