



Declassified¹

AS/Soc (2026) PV01add

13 March 2026

Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

Minutes

of the hearing on “Ensuring sustainable food security in times of crisis: strengthening resilience and access to food”, held in Strasbourg on Thursday, 29 January 2026

Ms Saskia Kluit, Chairperson of the Committee, opened the hearing organised in the framework of the follow-up to the report “Ensuring sustainable food security in times of crisis: strengthening resilience and access to food” (Ms Larysa Bilozir, rapporteur) and welcomed experts: Mr Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food, United Nations (online), and of Mr Jean-Martin Bauer, Director, Food Security and Nutrition Analysis, World Food Programme.

The Committee **heard** Mr Fakhri, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food (online).

Mr Fakhri welcomed the work of the Assembly, in particular the adoption of [Resolution 2577 \(2024\) “Guaranteeing the human right to food”](#), which he described as a major political reference. In his view, the report provided a comprehensive and coherent framework for advancing the right to food in Europe and beyond, offering a holistic vision of agri-food systems that integrated agricultural, social, environmental, health and economic dimensions.

He underlined that the essential contribution of the Assembly’s report lay in its human rights-based approach, which he considered the only credible and sustainable response to hunger. This cross-cutting approach broke with charitable logic and affirmed that everything was a matter of access to adequate food. The shift from assistance-based logic to a rights-based logic should, in his view, lead to greater structural solidarity and, ultimately, to a reduction in emergency food aid, which too often perpetuated situations of dependency when not accompanied by systemic reforms.

Mr Fakhri also referred to PACE recommendation on the right to food, which called on the Council of Europe to fully assume its role as a normative political authority in combating hunger and famine. He stressed that, with this report, the Assembly had a public policy guide detailing the measures necessary to transform food systems: support for small-scale producers, promotion of peasant agriculture, articulation between agricultural, social, environmental and public health policies, and strengthening of the resilience of local systems.

Mr Fakhri recalled a central principle of his mandate: famine was always political in origin. The problem was not the quantity of food produced globally, but access to food, which was determined by political, economic and military choices. Consequently, the solutions to hunger were also necessarily political.

He called on the Assembly to go further in terms of responsibility and accountability. In his view, the Assembly should have required the establishment of mechanisms to hold States and actors accountable when they used hunger as a weapon of war, and to condemn them clearly. He insisted on the need for political consistency: the steps taken to denounce the use of hunger as a weapon of war by Russia should also have applied to other comparable situations.

In this regard, **Mr Fakhri** stated that Israel had been using food as a weapon of war against the Palestinian population, not only since 7 October, but structurally for several decades. He considered that, now that all the hostages had been returned, all available political and diplomatic levers should have been used to compel Israel

¹ The minutes were approved and declassified by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development at its meeting on 13 March 2026.

to put an end to practices that were starving the population of Gaza. He also referred to the situation in Sudan, which he described as more complex, as both parties to the conflict were using famine as a weapon against civilian populations.

Finally, **Mr Fakhri** drew attention to the indirect responsibility of certain Council of Europe member States, which he described as complicit when they continued to supply weapons to parties involved in conflicts where hunger was used as a weapon of war. He recalled that such complicity had been denounced by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Michael O'Flaherty, who had called, in a statement of 12 August 2025, for greater coherence between human rights commitments and arms export policies.

The Committee then **heard** Mr Bauer, Director of Food Security and Nutrition Analysis at the United Nations World Food Programme.

Mr Bauer recalled a fundamental observation: food crises were never natural; they were the product of human decisions.

To analyse and anticipate these crises, the international community relied on a common reference framework, the IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification), which distinguished five levels of food insecurity, ranging from Phase 1 (minimal) to Phase 5, corresponding to famine. Phases 3 and 4 already marked situations of acute malnutrition and humanitarian emergency.

Since 2019, the number of people experiencing food insecurity in countries where WFP operated had increased significantly. According to consolidated WFP data, this rise had been mainly linked to the multiplication of armed conflicts, with a particularly marked peak during the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the overall figure of approximately 340 million people facing severe food insecurity appeared to be stabilising, this apparent stability concealed a far more alarming development: the increase in the number of people in Phase 5, that is, on the brink of or experiencing famine. They numbered around 900,000 in 2019, compared to nearly 2 million in 2025.

In 2025, two famine situations had been officially identified, in Gaza and in Sudan, the latter experiencing famine conditions for the third consecutive year. These crises were not isolated. As FAO had highlighted, areas at risk of famine shared common characteristics: structural fragility, prolonged conflicts and weakened institutions. Of the 16 countries identified as most exposed to famine, 12 appeared repeatedly on alert lists, demonstrating the chronic and predictable nature of these crises.

Conflicts had played a central role in this deterioration. They had destroyed livelihoods, disrupted markets, triggered massive population displacements and, above all, prevented humanitarian organisations from accessing those in need. This obstruction of humanitarian access has directly worsened the nutritional and food situation of civilian populations.

At the same time, the resources available to respond to these needs had collapsed. Global food aid had been halved from 2022 onwards, even though needs would have required it to double. Due to insufficient funding, humanitarian organisations have been forced to make difficult trade-offs: reducing distributed rations or excluding some beneficiaries. These choices have had a direct and massive global impact. In 2025, the number of people in Phase 4 (emergency) had increased by approximately one third, reaching 44 million people. WFP forecast that the number of people in Phase 4 would increase from 44 to 58 million people as a result of funding cuts.

Mr Bauer also warned of a less visible but equally critical issue: the weakening of data and information collection systems. Yet there could be no effective response to food crises without such systems. Acting without reliable data amounted, in his words, to "driving without a GPS". Without field information, it became impossible to properly identify populations in need, some crises fell below the radar, and advocacy and resource mobilisation capacities were reduced.

Finally, the analysis could not ignore economic factors. The global inflation shock, particularly marked in 2022 following the war in Ukraine, had severely affected local economies. Twelve countries have experienced extremely high inflation rates, directly affecting access to food. In this context, international budgetary choices have appeared decisive.

Mr Bauer further emphasised the economic and strategic dimension of international aid allocation, referring to OECD data. In 2022, 24.2 billion US dollars had been devoted to humanitarian aid, supporting approximately 198 million people, or around 120 dollars per person per year. By comparison, 27.8 billion US dollars were mobilised the same year to respond to the arrival of 3 million refugees in donor countries, representing an average cost of around 9,200 dollars per person per year. In other words, hosting a refugee in a donor country had cost on average 74 times more per person per year than providing upstream humanitarian assistance in crisis-affected countries.

Ms Bilozir recalled that, since the beginning of the war of aggression against Ukraine, the Russian Federation had intentionally used food as a weapon of war by targeting agricultural infrastructure, ports and trade routes. She stressed that Ukraine, previously one of the main grain exporters to Africa, had seen its position weakened, while Russia had sought to replace it in certain markets. She underlined the decisive role of the European Union, which had enabled Ukraine to maintain its exports and remain a key player in global markets, particularly towards Africa.

Ms Baldursdóttir acknowledged that famine primarily required political responses but expressed a sense of powerlessness among Council of Europe member States. She asked the speakers whether concrete avenues, good practices or operational examples existed, noting that political condemnations, however firm, were not sufficient to change the situation.

Mr Fakhri considered that the tools existed but required clear political will. He referred to regulatory and accountability levers: recourse to international judicial mechanisms, including the issuance and enforcement of arrest warrants against decision-makers responsible for using famine as a weapon of war; the cessation of arms transfers to the parties involved, which he described as a “minimum minimorum”; and the need to reconsider Israel’s observer status with the Council of Europe, recalling that Russia had been expelled. He stressed that the International Court of Justice had recognised that famine constituted an element of genocide in Gaza, underlining that this was neither an abstract concept nor an ideological debate. He further considered that boycott measures formed part of the legitimate arsenal to be envisaged, including against Israel.

Mr Bauer recalled that, in contexts such as Gaza, famine could result from very concrete logistical and security decisions, such as the closure of roads and access points. **Mr Fakhri** added that it was urgent to establish effective humanitarian corridors, mentioning the possibility of a humanitarian corridor between Cyprus and Gaza, and recalling that unhindered humanitarian access constituted an obligation under international humanitarian law.

Ms Kluit returned to the notion of “systemic failure” mentioned by Mr Bauer, questioning the real impact of humanitarian advocacy on the populations concerned. She drew a parallel with the 2015 Syrian crisis, which had highlighted the limits of fragmented and short-term European assistance. She recalled that insufficient and irregular humanitarian funding had contributed to destabilising local markets and worsening food insecurity, stressing the need to combine emergency aid with structural support enabling populations to feed themselves.

Mr Reader warned against the risk of focusing on highly publicised crises such as Gaza and Sudan to the detriment of other less visible famine or pre-famine situations. Mr Bauer confirmed this concern, citing Nigeria, where a risk of Phase 5 had recently been identified. He warned that at-risk populations were currently falling “below the radar” due to reduced funding allocated to data collection systems, thereby weakening early warning and prevention capacities.

In conclusion of the debate, **Ms Bilozir** reaffirmed that, while humanitarian aid remained indispensable, it had to be accompanied by measures to protect food supply chains. She once again denounced attacks by the Russian Federation targeting vessels transporting food aid, including those flying foreign flags, and called for those responsible for such acts to be prosecuted in order to guarantee respect for international law and food security for civilian populations worldwide.

List of presence / Liste de présence

(The names of members who took part in the meeting are in bold /
Les noms des membres ayant pris part à la réunion sont en caractères gras)

Chairperson / *Président·e*:

Ms Saskia Kluit	Netherlands / <i>Pays-Bas</i>
------------------------	-------------------------------

Vice-Chairpersons / *Vice-Président·e·s* :

Ms Carmen Leyte	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>
Ms Yuliia Ovchynnykova	Ukraine
Mme Sophia Chikirou	France

Members / Membres	Country / Pays	Alternates / Remplaçant·e·s
Ms Ogerta Manastirliu	Albania / <i>Albanie</i>	Mr Ardit Bido
Mr Cerni Escalé	Andorra / <i>Andorre</i>	Mme Bernadeta Coma
Mr Armen Gevorgyan	Armenia / <i>Arménie</i>	Ms Hripsime Grigoryan
Ms Claudia Arpa	Austria / <i>Autriche</i>	Ms Doris Bures
Mr Andreas Minnich	Austria / <i>Autriche</i>	Ms Agnes Sirkka Prammer
Mme Anne Lambelin	Belgium / <i>Belgique</i>	Mr Andries Gryffroy
M. Benoît Lutgen	Belgium / <i>Belgique</i>	Mme Véronique Durenne
Ms Darijana Filipović	Bosnia and Herzegovina / <i>Bosnie-Herzégovine</i>	Mr Šemsudin Dedić
Ms Atidzhe Alieva-Veli	Bulgaria / <i>Bulgarie</i>	Mr Kostadin Angelov
Ms Maya Dimitrova	Bulgaria / <i>Bulgarie</i>	Mr Ilian Iontchev
Mr Marko Pavić	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 Ondřej Šimetka
ZZ...	Czechia / <i>Tchéquie</i>	ZZ...
Ms Camilla Fabricius	Denmark / <i>Danemark</i>	Ms Charlotte Bagge Hansen
Ms Hanah Lahe	Estonia / <i>Estonie</i>	Ms Kadri Tali
Ms Minna Reijonen	Finland / <i>Finlande</i>	Mr Pekka Aittakumpu
Mme Sophia Chikirou	France	Mme Sabrina Sebaihi
M. Alexandre Dufosset	France	Mme Liliana Tanguy
M. Alain Milon	France	M. Alain Cadec
Mme Maud Petit	France	M. Jean Laussucq
Ms Birgit Bessin	Germany / <i>Allemagne</i>	Ms Martina Kempf
Mr Vinzenz Glaser	Germany / <i>Allemagne</i>	Ms Christin Willnat
Ms Inge Gräßle	Germany / <i>Allemagne</i>	Mr Julian Joswig
Mr Serdar Yüksel	Germany / <i>Allemagne</i>	Ms Franziska Kersten
Mr Georgios Stamatis	Greece / <i>Grèce</i>	Mr Dionysios-Charalampos Kalamatianos
Ms Maria Syrengela	Greece / <i>Grèce</i>	Ms Maria-Nefeli Chatziioannidou
Ms Mónika Bartos	Hungary / <i>Hongrie</i>	Mr Zoltán Bóna
Ms Mónika Dunai	Hungary / <i>Hongrie</i>	Mr István Hollik
Ms Kolbrún Áslaugar Baldursdóttir	Iceland / <i>Islande</i>	Mr Ragnar Þór Ingólfsson
Mr Joseph O'Reilly	Ireland / <i>Irlande</i>	Mr Rónán Mullen
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>	Ms Domenica Spinelli
M. Andris Bērziņš	Latvia / <i>Lettonie</i>	Mr Edmunds Cepurītis
Mr Marc Risch	Liechtenstein	Mr Joachim Vogt
Ms Orinta Leiputė	Lithuania / <i>Lituanie</i>	Mr Zigmantas Balčytis
Mme Stéphanie Weydert	Luxembourg	M. Paul Galles
Mr Michael Farrugia	Malta / <i>Malte</i>	Mr Joseph Beppe Fenech Adami
Mr Ion Groza	Republic of Moldova / <i>République de Moldova</i>	Ms Ana Calinici
M. Régis Bergonzi	Monaco	Mme Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo
Mr Miloš Konatar	Montenegro / <i>Monténégro</i>	Ms Edina Dešić
Ms Saskia Kluit	Netherlands / <i>Pays-Bas</i>	Mr Theo Bovens
Ms Carla Moonen	Netherlands / <i>Pays-Bas</i>	Mr Felix Klos
Mr Bekim Kjeku	North Macedonia / <i>Macédoine du Nord</i>	Mr Sadula Duraki
Mr Per Vidar Kjølmoen	Norway / <i>Norvège</i>	Ms Seher Aydar
Mr Szymon Holownia	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	Ms Magdalena BIEJAT
Ms Danuta Jazłowiecka	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	Mr Mirosław Adam Orliński
Mr Jan Filip Libicki	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	ZZ...
Mr Nuno Fazenda	Portugal	Zz...
Mr Carlos Silva Santiago	Portugal	Zz...
Ms Georgeta-Carmen Holban	Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	Ms Mirela Elena Adomnicăi
Ms Dumitrina Mitrea	Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	Mr Iulian Bulai
Mr Robert-Ionatan Sighiartău	Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	Ms Maria-Gabriela Horga
Mr Gerardo Giovagnoli	San Marino / <i>Saint-Marin</i>	Ms Alice Mina
Mr Vladimir Đorđević	Serbia / <i>Serbie</i>	Mr Predrag Marsenić
Ms Tatjana Pašić	Serbia / <i>Serbie</i>	Ms Jelena Milošević
Ms Veronika Remišová	Slovak Republic / <i>République Slovaque</i>	M. Pavol Goga
Mr Dean Premik	Slovenia / <i>Slovénie</i>	Ms Iva Dimic
Ms María Fernández	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	Ms Luz Martinez Seijo
Mr José Latorre	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	Ms Nerea Ahedo
Ms Carmen Leyte	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	Mr José Antonio Bermúdez De Castro
Ms Sofia Amloh	Sweden / <i>Suède</i>	Ms Annika Strandhäll
Ms Victoria Tiblom	Sweden / <i>Suède</i>	Ms Boriana Åberg
Ms Sibel Arslan	Switzerland / <i>Suisse</i>	Mme Céline Amaudruz
Mme Valérie Piller Carrard	Switzerland / <i>Suisse</i>	Mr Niklaus-Samuel Gugger
Mr Murat Cahid Cingi	Türkiye	Mr Mustafa Canbey
Ms Gökçe Gökçen	Türkiye	Mr Namık Tan
Mr Berdan Öztürk	Türkiye	Ms Sevilay Çelenk
Mr Sevan Sivacioğlu	Türkiye	Ms Sena Nur Çelik Kanat
Ms Olena Khomenko	Ukraine	Ms Larysa Bilozir
Ms Yuliia Ovchynnykova	Ukraine	Mr Andrii Lopushanskyi
Ms Lesia Ziburanna	Ukraine	Mr Rostyslav Tistyk
Baroness Thérèse Coffey	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Mr Dan Aldridge
Mr Mike Reader	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Ms Leigh Ingham
Ms Elaine Stewart	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Ms Kate Osamor
Lord Don Touhig	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Ms Michelle Welsh

Partners for Democracy / Partenaires pour la Démocratie

Mr / M. Allal Amraoui, Morocco / Maroc

Mr / M. Hassan Arif, Morocco / Maroc

Embassies / Permanent Representations and Delegations
Ambassades / Représentations permanentes et Délégations

Mr / M. Robin Caballero, Deputy to the Permanent Representative Political Advisor / *adjoint au Représentant permanent et conseiller politique*, France

Ms / Mme Sibylle Molio, Trainee / *Stagiaire*, France

Ms / Mme Selin Erdeviren Kütük, Türkiye

Mr / M. Sencer Kağan Şenol, Türkiye

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

Mr / M. Bojan Goxheri, Albania / Albanie

Ms / Mme Sonja Langenhaeck, Belgium / Belgique

Ms / Mme Venja Henningsen, Finland / Finlande

Ms / Mme Audur Örylgisdóttir, Iceland / Islande

Ms / Mme Gisèle Lévy, Israel / Israël

Ms / Mme Marina Giovannini, Italy / Italie

Mr / M. Awni Al-Zubi, Jordan / Jordanie

Ms / Mme Vera Damjanović, Montenegro / Monténégro

Ms / Mme Femmy Bakker, Netherlands / Pays-Bas

Ms / Mme Monique Christiaanse, Netherlands / Pays-Bas

Mr / M. Eric Christensen, Norway / Norvège

Mr / M. Sabih Gazi Öztürk, Türkiye

Experts / Expert-es

Mr / M. Jean Martin Bauer, Director, World Food Programme

Mr / M. Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food, United Nations / *Rapporteur spécial sur le droit à l'alimentation, Nations Unies*

Other parliamentarians present / Autres parlementaires présents

Ms / Mme Giulia Muratori, San Marino, SOC / *Saint-Marin, SOC*

Ms / Mme Elisabetta Gardini, Italy, ECPA / *Italie, CEPA*

Ms / Mme Ester Mieli, Italy, ECPA / *Italie, CEPA*

Ms / Mme Patrícia Faro, Portugal, SOC

Other persons present / Autres personnes présentes

Mr / M. Tahsin Alawneh, Palestine

Mr / M. Bernard Sabella, Palestine

Ms / Mme Alisa Mazurenko, Ukraine

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

Ms / Mme Louise Barton, Director, Inclusive and Sustainable Societies and Co-operation Directorate / *Directrice, Direction des sociétés inclusives et durables et de la coopération*

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

Ms / Mme Catherine Du BernardHead of the Secretariat / *Cheffe du Secrétariat*

Ms / Mme Aiste RamanauskaiteSecretary to the Committee / *Secrétaire de la commission*

Ms / Mme Jannick DevauxSecretary to the Committee / *Secrétaire de la commission*

Ms / Mme Claire Dubois-HamdiSecretary to the Committee / *Secrétaire de la commission*

Ms / Mme Xenia Birioukova.....Assistant/ *Assistante*

Ms / Mme Özgü Tan.....Assistant/ *Assistante*