



15 July 2021

(21-5603)

Page: 1/1

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English

THE GLOBAL TRANSITION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

COMMUNICATION FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

The following document, received on 14 July 2021, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of the European Union.

-
1. The upcoming 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Food Systems Summit, the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties and the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit will bring together the global community to develop tangible, positive changes in the way we produce and consume food. This 2021 agenda should be a turning point for the urgently needed transition to sustainable food systems that safeguard food security and ensure access to healthy diets sourced from a healthy planet. Sustainable food systems are key to responding to the global concerns of climate change, biodiversity crisis and ecosystem degradation, and to delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals.
 2. In this context, the WTO should play a major role in supporting sustainability objectives in relation to trade in agricultural and fishery products. The need to safeguard the right for Members to take measures necessary for the protection of human, animal or plant life or health or for the protection of the environment remains every bit as relevant as in 1995 when the WTO Agreements were adopted.
 3. The SPS Committee should be prepared to respond to the current global challenges and to support Members in fulfilling their international commitments. The SPS Committee, as well as other relevant Committees, should serve as a forum to discuss issues related to the transition to sustainable food systems with a view to support the process, while – at the same time – preventing any disguised restrictions on international trade and contributing to an even economic development, especially in Least Developed Countries.
 4. The Pre-Summit of the UN Food Systems Summit will take place on 26-28 July 2021 and the Summit is scheduled in September 2021. Based on the outcome of these events, the European Union encourages this Committee to reflect on setting up, possibly with other relevant Committees, a work programme to address issues related to the transition to sustainable food systems in relation with international trade. A starting point for discussion could be to identify a list of policy objectives that can be legitimately pursued, considering the need to mainstream sustainability aspects in all relevant fora. The Committee(s) could report on key findings and actions undertaken as a result of this work to the thirteenth Ministerial Conference with recommendations, as appropriate.
-