

# Cooperation fosters food chain resilience

Our food systems have been shocked in recent times by unexpected pandemic difficulties. Whilst these problems have posed considerable new challenges for food security, they have forced our food industry to adapt and learn valuable lessons. Key resilience lessons related to the benefits of cooperation between food chain actors can receive various forms of support from the EU.



1

Adopting a **value chain approach** encourages cooperation between all actors in food supply chains to secure mutual benefits. The **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** and **Farm to Fork (F2F) strategy** promote value chain approaches to cooperation. Both the CAP and F2F continue to develop new practical policy actions aimed at encouraging more value chain cooperation as well as making it more accessible.



2

Notable new F2F value chain support tools are included in the CAP Regulation on **Common Organisation of the Markets (CMO)** in Agricultural Production, which supports food chain cooperation within **Producer Organisations (POs)**. **CAP support for PO cooperation** has been expanded to cover a much wider range of food and to make funding available for POs to implement Operational Programs, which enable collective actions in line with the CMO.



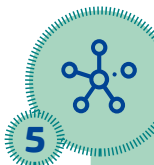
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In addition, Collective initiatives leading to agreements between actors in the agri-food supply chain have the potential to contribute to a sustainable food system significantly. For this reason, the new CAP contains an antitrust derogation to the prohibition of anti-competitive agreements. The derogation allows, under certain conditions, sustainability agreements concluded between primary producers and other actors in the food value chain aimed at achieving higher sustainability standards than those required by law. A new **ENRD Thematic Group** was established to look into the existing sustainability agreements and identify some of the challenges and barriers faced by collective actions around sustainability.



4

Further F2F assistance in this vein is already flowing through the **EU Code of Conduct** on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices. It encourages collaboration along food value chains, which will be assisted by the new Sustainability staff in the Member States' **Enterprise Europe Networks**. F2F's focus on tackling **unfair trading practices** can also help to provide a more level playing field to incentivise more food chain stakeholders to participate in cooperation practices.



5

Different CAP Strategic Plan (CSP) interventions provide further possibilities for actors to strengthen their individual and collective contributions to value chain cooperation. Investments, quality schemes, advisory services, innovation support, farm partnerships, buyers' clubs, machinery rings, community-supported agriculture, short supply chains, networks and clusters are all cooperation opportunities provided through the **CSP legal framework**.



6

In addition to the CAP, other EU funding promotes better cooperation and resilience within food supply chains. EU research funding through **Food 2030**, for example, is designed to help to transform food systems through partnerships. Cohesion policy is another valuable source of aid for food chain cooperation, as demonstrated by cross-border projects such as **FoodChains 4 Europe**.