**Sustainable Development Goals: the European Approach,** Dr. Grigoris Risvas, Vice President, European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD)

In 2015, the Member States of the United Nations adopted a new series of goals designed to drive development in all countries: **the SDGs**. This ambitious and aspirational set of 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets were designed to advance the three pillars of sustainability – economic, environmental and social (including health) – in an integrated and indivisible manner. While these goals are broader than food, they have important relevance for food systems. Improving diet-related ill-health is not explicitly mentioned in the SDGs, but it is implicit in both Goal 2 on food security and nutrition (summarized as ‘Zero hunger’), which includes a Target (2.2) to “end malnutrition in all its forms”; and Goal 3 on improving health, which includes a Target (3.4) on reducing the burden of mortality from NCDs. The *2017 Global Nutrition Report* showed clearly that achieving the SDG targets on nutrition and health would require putting this integrated approach into practice, by leveraging connections in the systems underpinning these multiple goals.

In a recently published *Reflection Paper entitled “Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030”* the European Commission states that compared worldwide, EU-27 Member States are in **TOP 50** (out of 156) in Global SDG Index ranking. More specifically:

* The EU-27 Member States have the **highest score on average** for **SDG 1** (End Poverty in all its form everywhere).
* The EU-27 Member States have the **second highest score on average** for **SDG 3** (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages).
* **Nevertheless,** the EU-27 Member States **score on average the lowest** on **SDG 12** (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns), and on **SDG 14** (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development).

A fundamental change of direction is therefore required in order to put food systems onto a sustainable course. The various policies affecting food systems must be urgently reformed in order to address climate change, halt biodiversity loss, curb obesity, and make farming viable for the next generation. A new governance architecture is imperative for building sustainable food systems in Europe, according to the latest *IPES FOOD report entitled “Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union”.* This challenge is broken down into five key objectives for a Common Food Policy, representing five paradigm shifts that must occur in parallel in order to build sustainable food systems in Europe:

1. **ENSURING ACCESS TO LAND, WATER AND HEALTHY SOILS**
   1. Extractive to regenerative land & resource use
   2. Soil degradation to living soils
   3. Unsustainable land development to farming first
2. **REBUILDING CLIMATE-RESILIENT, HEALTHY AGRO-ECOSYSTEMS**
   1. Top-down techno-fixes to bottom-up, farmer-led innovation
   2. Agribusiness dependency to farmer autonomy
   3. Chemical-intensive monocultures to diversified agroecological systems
3. **PROMOTING SUFFICIENT, HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE DIETS FOR ALL**
   1. Obesogenic environments to healthy food environments
   2. Low-cost to true-cost food systems
   3. Making the healthy option the easiest
4. **BUILDING FAIRER, SHORTER AND CLEANER SUPPLY CHAINS**
5. Designing low-waste, low-plastic food systems
6. Volume to value
7. Exploitative conditions to sustainable livelihoods
8. **PUTTING TRADE IN THE SERVICE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**
9. Free trade agreements to sustainable trade agreements
10. Investor protections to citizen protections & corporate accountability
11. Export orientation & commodity specialization to diversified, territorial markets.