Food & Nutrition in the Mediterranean: trends & perspectives

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OUR COMMITMENT

Building Sustainable & Healthy Food Systems

• Contribute to advancing knowledge on global food, nutrition and sustainability-related challenges through cutting-edge projects;

• Inform citizens on the impacts and the power of their food choices;

• Facilitating dialogue and knowledge exchange among different stakeholders through events, workshops, twitter chats, social media communication, etc.;

• Provide recommendations to all stakeholders.
The Food Sustainability Index (FSI) measures the sustainability of food systems in 34 countries across three pillars outlined in the 2015 BCFN Milan Protocol, and is designed around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Index contains 35 indicators, and more than 50 sub-indicators that address societal, environmental and economic themes.

**Milan Protocol: Three pillars**

- **Food loss and waste**: Almost one billion people suffer from hunger, but a third of food is lost or wasted. Food loss and waste are rapidly moving up the policy agenda.

- **Sustainable agriculture**: The world is running out of cultivable land. More sustainable farming techniques are needed.

- **Nutritional challenges**: Developing countries are facing the double burden of hunger and “premature” obesity.

**What is sustainability?**

Sustainability is defined as the ability of a country’s food system to be maintained without depletion and exhaustion of natural resources or compromises to health and integrity, and without compromising future generations’ access to food.
Conceptual framework

Food sustainability

- Food loss & waste
- Nutrition challenges
- Agriculture
- Water resources
- Land
- Air
- Life quality
- Life expectancy
- Dietary patterns

Methodology available at: http://foodsustainability.eiu.com
The FSI represents over 85% of global GDP and two-thirds of the global population.
The cluster of north-western countries is characterized by relatively higher performances in all the considered food dimensions thanks to

- relatively lower obesity rates and low vitamin A deficiencies (e.g., France, Portugal);
- sustainable practices (e.g. organic agriculture or conservation agriculture) and lower application of synthetic fertilizers (e.g. Italy, Spain);
- the implementation of policies to address food waste (e.g., France, Italy).
The cluster including eastern and southern Mediterranean countries shows overall the lowest performances due to:

- high rates of deficiency of micronutrients, such as vitamin A and iodine (e.g., Morocco);
- soil erosion and pressure on renewable water resources due to agricultural practices;
- high food losses at the pre-market stage (59% UAE; 12% Saud Arabia);
- lower policy responses to address end-user food waste (e.g., in the SEMCs and Greece).
Nutrition patterns: a common challenge (1/2)

#1 Overnourishment

- In countries such as Jordan, Portugal, Lebanon, Spain, Israel, Egypt, Italy, and Greece **more than 30% of children and adolescents** (i.e., aged between 5-19) **are overweight or obese** (WHO, 2016).

- The prevalence of **overweight in adults** is also has already reached alarming numbers, with **all 12 Mediterranean countries falling in the fourth quartile**. In Portugal and Italy around 58% of adults aged +25 are overweight, and 2 out of 3 of adults in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan (more than 66%) (WHO 2016).

#2 Micronutrient deficiency

Countries such as **Greece, Portugal, Turkey, Italy, Spain and Morocco** fall in the **third and fourth quartile for iodine deficiency**. Iodine deficiency is one of the main cause of impaired cognitive development in children and the prevalence constitutes still a relevant public health problem in the abovementioned countries.
#3 Away from the Mediterranean diet

Countries such as Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon and Jordan consume **more than 10% of their calories from sugar**.

**Greece, Italy, France, Portugal, Spain and Israel** are significantly increasing their meat consumption, due to greater availability: **the difference in meat supply quantity from recommended intake is greater than 100g/capita/day** (FAO 2013). However, is salt consumption to be among the highest: 10 out of the 12 Mediterranean countries analyzed fall in the third quartile, with sodium intake ranging between 3.7 and 4.4 g/day (Powles, John, et al, 2010)

#4 Healthy life expectancy

**Life expectancy** in the 12 Mediterranean countries is among **the highest in the world**, ranging from 83 years in France, Italy and Spain and 71 years in Egypt. **Healthy life expectancy** (HALE) is also quite high, but **an average of 10 years lower than life expectancy at birth**, reflecting the consequences of the increased prevalence of non-communicable diseases.
## Country scorecards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOP #1</th>
<th>BOTTOM #12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRANCE</strong></td>
<td><strong>LEBANON</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Low food losses &amp; policy to ban food waste at retailer level;</td>
<td>- 8% food lost &amp; low response to food waste;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Low pressure on renewable water resources (&lt;2%); R&amp;D 6% of GDP; high degree of public support to R&amp;D; climate adaptation policies; 60% fish stocks at risk;</td>
<td>- High monthly blue water scarcity (12 months p.y.); low water recycling; 2% agricultural land lost due to desertification; poor animal welfare regulation; R&amp;D 1% of GDP; 52 years avg age of farmers;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <strong>Iodine deficiency</strong> (23%); 83 years life expectancy; HALE (72.6 years); <strong>30% prevalence of overweight in 5-19 years of age</strong>; 59.5% prevalence of overweight in adults; 45% people reaching recommended level of physical activities</td>
<td>- 17% prevalence of stunting in children below 5 y; <strong>iodine deficiency</strong> (26%); 79 years life expectancy, HALE 65.7 years; <strong>33% prevalence of overweight in 5-19 years of age</strong>; 68% prevalence of overweight in adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Best practices

FRANCE
“Ensemble prévenons l’obésité des enfants”
- promoting healthy lifestyles to fight children obesity -

LEBANON
"Health-E-PALS"
- promoting healthy eating habits and physical activity in schools-

MOROCCO
“The Foundation for Child Nutrition”
- daily distribution of fortified milk in schools in rural areas-

ITALY
“Guadagnare salute: rendere facilie le scelte salutari”
- promoting fruit and vegetables, reduction of salt, sugar and fat -
Thank you

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