

Keeping Bread on the Table

VISION PAPER

A healthy, balanced diet is the foundation of good health, and bread can play an important part in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating habits. **For our sector to continue being able to put our bread on the table**, and ensure the social and environmental benefits coming from our activities, **the following key requests should guide policy making during the next European Parliament term (2024-2029):**



The **Bread Initiative** is a platform founded by the core sector Associations of the **bread value chain** ([AIBI](#), [CEBP](#), [COFALEC](#), [European Flour Millers](#) and [Fedima](#)), which have joint forces to highlight the **importance of bread production in and for Europe**.

FOOD SECURITY: ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF LOCAL BREAD-MAKING WHEAT

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis and related food shortages, we call for decision-makers to put in place measures safeguarding bread security, such as investing in domestic high-quality wheat production, prioritising the EU agricultural raw material supply for the food sector and developing an EU long-term vision of food security that includes bread. Bread production should be flagged as a strategic priority sector.

RED TAPES: STREAMLINE EU LEGISLATION, WHILE REDUCING DISPROPORTIONATE REGULATORY BURDENS

We advocate for upholding "Better Regulation" as a cornerstone of the EU regulatory process, rooted in its core principles and committed to minimizing bureaucratic complexities. This remains critical for all enterprises, particularly small bakeries. Efforts should focus on simplifying regulations, streamlining documentation and reporting, prioritizing straightforward and consistent rules, and establishing a business-friendly environment for the bakery industry.

All regulatory decisions must be grounded in scientific evidence. Addressing the cumulative impact of regulatory processes and fostering coordination among different DGs (Directorates-General) to prevent excessive regulation is essential. Impact assessments must be comprehensive, evaluating proportionality, feasibility, and cumulative industry burdens fairly. Implementing transition periods can aid supply chain adaptation to these changes.

SUSTAINABILITY: SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO MORE SUSTAINABILITY IN THE BREAD SUPPLY CHAIN

The Bread Initiative is committed to advancing a sustainable food system and actively participating in the transition process. We acknowledge our interdependence with the agricultural sector in this journey. Regarding new regulatory requirements, we urge policymakers to engage with the bakery sector to understand and mitigate any risks or unintended consequences of proposed policies. Consultation with the sector, systematic impact assessment, prioritization, and phased implementation are crucial for effective decision-making.

We encourage future legislators to promote green initiatives by prioritizing soft-law instruments and a "best-practice" approach. Longer transition periods should be allowed for the bread sector to achieve sustainability goals, considering the significant capital expenditure (Capex) involved in certain aspects of the transition. Additionally, we advocate for financial incentives such as reduced taxation and support schemes to facilitate the shift towards greener practices in businesses.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH: RECOGNISE THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF BREAD IN EUROPEAN CITIZENS' DIETS

Bread is a fundamental and nutritious staple that has long been a cornerstone of human diets worldwide, offering affordability and cultural significance. In contributing to a Sustainable Food System, it is crucial to recognize the role of bread as a key plant-based food in Europe's transition to more plant-based diets. We notably call for the nutritional benefits of bread in citizens' diets to be adequately reflected when drafting legislation on food information for consumers. Additionally, bread should continue to be supported under the EU agri-food promotion program and other relevant educational initiatives.

ENERGY: SECURE THE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE ENERGY WITHIN THE BREAD SUPPLY CHAIN

Geopolitical tensions could continue to disrupt raw materials supply chains and drive-up energy prices in the EU and/or its volatility. This highlights the urgent need to focus on stabilising the energy market in the upcoming EU legislative term. Securing access to renewable energy, reducing market volatility, and coordinating crisis management policies will be crucial. Bread production chain should be identified as a priority strategic sector for access to energy.

WORKFORCE: HELP PROMOTE SKILLS & EDUCATION FOR YOUNG BAKERS AND MILLERS IN EUROPE

Food businesses face significant challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. The Bread Initiative urges the next legislators to implement measures revising education and training content, promoting labour mobility, and enhancing programs like Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs.

