

EDITORIAL

Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda – snapshots from New York

by Peter Schmidt, NAT Section President



We have just come back from the UN High-Level Political Forum in New York, which was dedicated this year to **Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises**. In particular, the HLPF focused on the state implementation of **SDG 2 on food security** and **SDG 13 on climate action**, and on preparations for September's Summit of the Future.

I and the other members of the EESC delegation (Antje Gerstein and Lidija Pavić-Rogošić, as well as the EESC president) had the opportunity to meet a number of stakeholders on the ground, including representatives of the Major Groups, business, trade unions, youth organisations, UN agencies and Member States. As usual our NAT secretariat did a great job in preparing for and accompanying us during the mission.

Our objective was to **learn from the experiences and concerns of civil society organisations**, including those from the Global South, and to channel their demands to policy-makers in the final stages of negotiations for the Summit of the Future. More than in the past, we heard that **the European Union is considered as a global leader and the most important partner for the UN on the Agenda 2030**. Despite our internal divisions, we are perceived at international level as a united block **speaking with one strong voice for a more sustainable future**.

We also advocated for the **structured engagement of civil society** in implementing the SDGs at both EU and global level. And, last but not least, we promoted the **key messages of the EESC's recent and ongoing opinions on sustainable food systems and climate finance**, thus contributing to the SDGs on which the forum was focusing.

In particular, we were **involved in the discussions on the state of implementation of SDG 2**. The preliminary conclusions of the upcoming [UN report on The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World \(SOFI\)](#) are alarming. Given the reversal in progress and the significant rise in hunger and food insecurity in recent years, **the world is a long way off track when it comes to meeting SDG 2**. Rising hunger and food insecurity have wiped out past progress, and we are on a dangerous trajectory given the vulnerability of our agri-food systems to the major drivers behind these trends, especially climate change.

During the [high-level event that we attended at the HLPF on the SOFI report](#), we learned that one of the major gaps relates to providing the right resources for implementation, by means of **finance for food security and nutrition**. Current levels of finance development are insufficient to end global hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition, and in many instances are not utilised in the most cost-effective manner. This is due among other things to fragmentation and the lack of a coherent approach to aligning needs with resources. A new architecture is needed for financing food security and nutrition.

But why is no one addressing the systemic issue of prevailing interests in the food supply chain?

In my speech during the event, I highlighted that **we cannot solve the financing gap until we tackle unfair distribution in the supply chain and food speculation**. We must stop playing with food at the expense of the poor and the hungry!

In our [opinion on the food price crisis](#), we made it clear that **the current commodities market is not delivering for sustainable development, climate ambition and just transition**. On the contrary, it is undermining efforts to solve hunger and foster fair revenues and prices. For example, just four companies control an estimated 70-90% of global grain trade.

As the EESC, we have therefore recommended:

- **regulating the futures market for food derivatives**, as was the case for several decades until the end of the last century, which preserves the function of futures for hedging;
- **addressing the financialisation of the food sector** as a massive money-making venture off the backs of ordinary people, e.g. by **introducing a global windfall tax** on excess profits before dividends by trade and financing corporations and a **food speculation tax** to curb high frequency trading, as well as breaking oligopolies at all levels of the international food trade chain and financial interests;
- **enhancing market transparency**.

We will be back after the holidays with more 'food for thought' on these topics. In the autumn we will be adopting several highly relevant opinions on a just transition in agriculture, climate finance, and fostering sustainable and resilient food systems at times of growing crises. With the upcoming Summit of the Future and the Commission's new term, we have the **opportunity, the duty and the aspiration to have an impact as organised civil society by setting out our ambitious vision for a more sustainable future**.

I wish you all a nice summer break.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Schmidt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Schmidt
The president of the NAT Section of the EESC