



Conference
on the **Future**
of **Europe**

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European Citizens' Panel 3: **“Climate change and
the environment / Health”**

Recommendations

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RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE PANEL (TO BE TAKEN FORWARD TO THE PLENARY)

Stream 1: Better ways of living

Substream 1.1 Healthy lifestyles

- 1. We recommend that the EU provides subsidies for organic farming, including incentives for organic pesticides, to make organic goods more affordable. Furthermore, education for farmers in organic and sustainable farming needs to be supported by the EU and mono-culture farming should be avoided. Small organic farms, non-intensive farms and those with short supply chains should be given support to become more competitive.**

Subsidising organic products would improve their affordability. We should help supermarkets with shorter supply chains and support smaller farmers with opportunities to sell their products. This enables access to fresher produce. Furthermore, the low prices of non-organic products do not reflect their harm.

- 2. We recommend that innovation in vertical farming be supported by investments from the EU.**

Vertical farming allows us to save land space, which could be used for forestry instead. It also does not require pesticides, allowing us to produce more organic food. Furthermore, it is not impacted by bad weather conditions, which is increasingly common as a result of climate change, and allows for shorter supply chains.

- 3. The EU should set minimum standards for food quality, as well as food traceability and the use of seasonal food in school canteens. Healthy ingredients for school canteens should therefore be subsidised to ensure affordable, high-quality food for pupils.**

We form habits at a young age, which shape our attitudes towards health, good habits should be encouraged in schools and pupils can bring these teachings home. This is also a question of social-justice: everyone in the EU should have the right to good food in schools.

- 4. We recommend investing in new bike lanes and in improving existing ones to make cycling safe and attractive. Ensure that training on road traffic rules for all age groups is widely available across Europe, especially for e-bikes and for those without drivers' licenses. The producers of e-bikes should be required to provide information about the use and risks of e-biking. Give legal protection to cyclists in case of accidents with vehicles (see Dutch regulation). We support dedicated car-free zones in cities (without harming commercial areas). Overall, give priority and further rights to cyclists and pedestrians over motorized vehicles while guaranteeing road safety and accordance with traffic rules.**

This is important because cycling has benefits for individual and public health, air quality, noise levels, climate and inner city traffic. Cyclists and pedestrians need to feel safe, taking risks from the increased use of e-bikes into account. Bike lanes are sometimes lacking or in bad quality.

- 5. We recommend making the production of food part of public education. Subsidize and support the creation of gardens in schools, if feasible, and urban gardening projects for public and private spaces. The need for space, water and support infrastructure needs to be part of urban planning frameworks. For example, former parking lots could be used for greening, vertical gardening on buildings, or there could be mandates to include green spaces for receiving building permits. Share innovative and best practices across all member states.**

Gardening projects promote the resilience of cities and inhabitants, bringing together people of different ages and social groups. More green space improves quality of life, air quality, mental and physical health and the environment.

Substream 1.2 Environmental education

- 6. We recommend that the EU adopts a directive requiring urban development programmes to fulfill specific environmental requirements, with the aim to make cities greener. The directive must apply to private and public property and spaces, such as new buildings being developed. The directive must impose minimum standards to ensure buildings and spaces are as green as possible. "Green", here, refers to the use of renewable energy sources, reduced energy consumption, low levels of CO2 emissions and the inclusion of plants in architectural projects.**

Greener cities actively contribute to reducing the impacts of climate change and reducing emissions, such as CO2 and ozone, which negatively affect citizens' health. Investing in greener cities contributes to the sustainable development of communities which has long-term economic and social benefits.

- 7. We recommend that the EU, with the assistance of the member states, develops, adopts and implements a common European charter targeting environmental issues, in their complexity. The charter will provide a framework for member states to develop regular information and training campaigns, disseminated across all available media channels and a new dedicated information portal. These campaigns should be held across the EU and at all levels to foster environmental awareness among all citizens.**

A lack of coordination between member states is hindering the effectiveness of existing campaigns and slowing efforts to fight the global challenge that is climate change. A common charter will foster synergies between member states' action plans ensuring efforts are more impactful. In addition, it would ensure coherent and consistent information is communicated to citizens about the impact of daily actions such as their chosen means of transportation and waste treatment.

Stream 2: Protecting our environment and our health

Substream 2.1 Healthy natural environment

- 8. We recommend a graded unified labelling system showing the entire ecological footprint for every available product purchased within the EU. Products from outside the EU need to respect this labelling system in a transparent manner. The system should be based on clear labelling criteria on the products themselves and use, for example, a QR code that gives more in-depth information about the product.**

This information about the lifecycle of the product is fundamental for all citizens within the EU to empower consumers in their purchasing actions. In consequence, EU citizens will be taking responsible decisions to contribute to the protection of their environment.

- 9. We recommend that more financial investment should be made to explore new eco-friendly sources of energy and until then additional investment into existing optimal solutions of energy production. We also recommend informing and educating the European public about specific sources of energy in full transparency. We strongly recommend considering the entire ecological and social impacts of the energy production process for current and future generations.**

We have very high levels of carbon emissions and other toxic substances from energy production that degrades the climate and air quality. To be in line with the European directives and the recommendations of the IPCC reports and the COP 26 goals, more research and investment are needed to achieve climate-neutral energy production.

Substream 2.2 Protecting our biodiversity

- 10. We recommend a drastic reduction of chemical pesticides and fertilizers in all types of farms, by enforcing the application of higher common standards, by accelerating the research on the natural alternatives and by supporting the adoption of the new solutions, including the training for farmers.**

Although progress has been made in alternative fertilizers and pesticides, most of them are not yet usable by big farms. Therefore a more consistent effort is necessary to generate new solutions. The research should be encouraged by both public expenditures and by higher standards in the use of pesticides and fertilizers. The results of the research need rapid diffusion at EU scale.

- 11. We recommend the extension of the protected areas for the conservation of biodiversity (including mammals, birds, insects and plants), and enhancing the rule of law regarding human intervention in these areas. The protected areas will be seen not only as islands, but as a continuum with greener urban areas, following harmonised EU standards.**

Because of deforestation, biodiversity is being heavily affected. One of the main ways of protecting land biodiversity is by creating protected areas. However, it is difficult to maintain protected areas near polluted cities, or to avoid human interference when the surroundings are not nature friendly. We need to make the living areas greener and integrated with their surrounding nature.

- 12. We recommend redirecting the generic subsidies for agriculture mainly towards projects related to the development of sustainable agriculture, including the respect for nature and the workers. The beneficiaries should comply with clear environmental standards, and be strictly monitored.**

We believe that only sustainable agriculture should be encouraged, which means redirecting the funds now used for generic subsidies. Moreover, the efficiency of the funds used can be increased by focusing on transformational projects and innovative solutions, rather than on annual payments. The ecological impact of agriculture activities and the projects should be better monitored. The human rights of the labor workers also need to be considered as part of sustainability.

13. We recommend that the EU ensures a loyal competition for environment-friendly agricultural products by establishing stricter standards for both EU and the imported products, by ensuring their traceability, labelling and quality control.

The lower productivity of the sustainable agricultural products affects their cost competitiveness. The imported products should comply with the same strict standards regarding the ecological impact of their production. We need authorities capable of ensuring the traceability of the imported agricultural products.

14. We recommend rapid and massive reforestation and afforestation in the EU, by maximizing the use of land. A special focus should be given to the reforestation of exploited or destroyed forests and the afforestation of the areas with degraded soil. New more responsible solutions should be promoted for a better utilization of the wood, e.g. replacing plastics and other chemical materials, ensuring higher energy efficiency from biomass, recycling of wood products.

Reforestation has a clear positive impact on the environment and the biodiversity at large. At the same time, we need to use less wood for fire, but for high added value products, as for instance the replacements for plastics the use of wood is principal.

Substream 2.3 Safe and healthy food

15. We recommend the swift and progressive elimination of non-sustainable forms of food packaging, including plastic packaging and those of other non-biodegradable materials. We propose achieving this through providing financial incentives to companies which change to fully biodegradable forms of packaging, investing in research into alternatives and introducing penalties for companies that do not use biodegradable packaging.

Plastic waste, particularly microplastics, is increasingly abundant and degrades slowly. Its consumption harms the quality and safety of food while endangering the health of humans and animals. Moreover, existing European law aimed at reducing non-biodegradable packaging is insufficient.

16. We recommend that intensive animal farming is phased out gradually, including the elimination of disrespectful living conditions of animals. We propose introducing common norms for animal farming (e.g. maximum number of animals, appropriate outside space) and stronger investment into non-intensive methods (extensive and sustainable farming) by providing financial incentives and training to farms to support this change.

Phasing out intensive farming will reduce levels of environmental pollution and enhance natural preservation. Furthermore, phasing out intensive animal farming will reduce the amount of medicine necessary to tackle animal diseases and increase the quality of our food. Intensive animal farming also fails to respect the well-being of animals but more sustainable forms of farming exist, such as extensive farming. and subsidies are necessary to help farmers pursue these forms.

17. We recommend tightening controls on the prohibition of the unnecessary use of antibiotics and other animal drugs in feed additives for animals: make it a reality! We propose that the use of antibiotics is only authorised in farming when absolutely necessary to protect the health and well-being of animals, instead of in a preventive way. In addition, it is necessary to invest further into research for more efficient antibiotics, developing alternatives while building upon existing research into antibiotics.

Human resistance to antibiotics is decreased as a result of eating food from animals that have been given antibiotics. Furthermore, time is needed to create suitable alternatives to existing antibiotics and to ensure that farmers are aware and ready to use them. We recognise that European Directives exist on antibiotics but these have not been implemented in the same way across member states. Lastly, animal drugs are misused for doping purposes and so stronger legislation on the topic will increase animal well-being and boost their quality of life.

18. We recommend that European legislation requires declarations on the use of hormonal substances and endocrine disruptors in the production of food: the type, quantity and exposure of the final product used. All food products including these substances must have detailed labels on their packaging displaying this information and the reasons for their use. Additionally, we have to accelerate research into the effects of hormonal substances and endocrine disruptors on human health.

Food products currently lack traceability, particularly with respect to hormonal substances and endocrine disruptors. We think that transparency is necessary in food production to ensure accountability. Also, consumers should know the full contents of their food and be able to choose freely what they eat. In addition to that, there is insufficient research into the impact on humans (and the potential risks) of the consumption of food products with hormonal substances and endocrine disruptors.

19. We recommend discouraging the consumption of processed foods by taxing unhealthy food and investing the funds raised into healthy food. We propose introducing a European-wide scoring system for healthy food based upon best practices in member states to label food and inform consumers of the health properties of food.

In this way, the funds raised can be used as a resource to develop awareness-raising measures and promotional campaigns, prioritise healthy food in education and make unhealthy food less visible in supermarkets. Also, investing in healthy food increases the general health of the population, therefore reducing levels of public spending needed to tackle health issues resulting from unhealthy eating. Moreover, we think taxation and subsidies will incentivise the production of healthier food products from companies.

Stream 3: Redirecting our economy and consumption

Substream 3.1 Regulating overproduction and overconsumption

20. We recommend that the EU takes more actions that enable and incentivise consumers to use products longer. The EU should combat planned obsolescence by lengthening products' warranty and setting a maximum price for spare parts after the warranty period. All member states should introduce a tax break on repair services as is the case in Sweden. Manufacturers should be required to declare the expected lifespan of their products. The EU should provide information on how to re-use and repair products on an internet platform and through education.

Our throw-away and single-use based society is not sustainable because it generates too much waste. By implementing the proposed measures we will move towards a society that reuses, repairs and reduces the products it consumes, thereby reducing overconsumption

21. We recommend that the EU enforces stricter environmental manufacturing standards and ensures fair working conditions throughout the entire production chain. The EU's production standards should be more sustainable, harmonised across member states, and applied to imported goods. These should also include social standards, like a living wage for workers producing the goods and good working standards in factories. Products that do not comply with these standards should face consequences.

It is important to establish homogenous environmental and social manufacturing standards in Europe to ensure that all products offered are produced in a sustainable way. These measures are crucial to redirect our economy and change the production patterns of companies.

22. We recommend that the EU and member states introduce measures to limit advertising for products that damage the environment. Products with a low sustainability score should have a mandatory disclaimer in all forms of advertising that shows that they are harmful for the environment. For products that are not sustainable at all the EU should ban advertising.

Advertisements promote consumption, products that harm the environment should not be promoted. In that way people will be less inclined to buy environmentally harmful products.

23. We recommend that the EU puts in place and expands the infrastructure of deposit-return schemes for all primary packaging made of glass, plastic, aluminium, et cetera in a homogenous way across the EU. Whenever possible, manufacturers should re-use the returned containers by sterilizing them, rather than just recycling the material. In addition to food and drink containers, the scheme should also include other kinds of bottles and containers, like shampoo bottles.

At the moment consumers throw away too much packaging that pollutes and destroys our eco-systems. Deposit-return schemes help to reduce waste by motivating citizens to bring packages back instead of throwing them away. By expanding the scheme we use less resources and reduce the amount of waste we produce.

Substream 3.2 Reducing waste

24. We recommend that an enhanced implementation of circular economy policies is promoted at the European level, targeting both corporations and citizens, in the form of financial incentives for those that comply with it.

Because in case production companies reduce their personnel or even default/close down, lots of people will end up unemployed. By retraining the unemployed, we will be promoting environmentally safe practices whilst also curbing unemployment and promoting the modernisation of a diversified economy.

25. We recommend that the EU regulates the use of environmentally-safe packaging (i.e., packaging made out of biodegradable or recyclable products, or more durable products, where possible) and/or the use of packaging that takes up less space, which will also contain in the form of a QR-code the information pertinent to the packages' recycling and/or disposal process once it has been used.

Because this recommendation will lead to less packaging, less production of waste and hence less pollution, therefore cleaner environment and ultimately a reduced carbon footprint. Additionally, the tax burden on producers will be reduced.

Substream 3.3 Fair products, equal access, and just consumption

26. We recommend the European Union to establish a legal framework to ensure affordable, and better access to local and quality food products for all European consumers.

Because currently there is no shared understanding, at the EU level, of what is local and quality food. This gap needs to be filled.

Importation of low quality products has a direct negative impact on the environment. In order to tackle climate change, we need to fight all of its causes, including importation of low quality products: there is a need to reduce transportation distance, and favour seasonal products.

This recommendation is promising because it could also apply to non-alimentary products.

27. We recommend the European Union to encourage research and development, with funding schemes, in order to introduce more sustainable and affordable products within the European market. Also, the European Union must organise consultations with citizens, at all decision-making levels including the local level, in order to identify their needs regarding sustainable products.

We consider there is a lack of research for sustainable products, and there is an urgent need to have more funds allocated to research, to allow Europeans to have access to sustainable and more affordable sustainable products.

Citizens must participate in the decision-making process. The agenda of

research and innovation actions must be defined together with citizens. Citizens need to be informed on the follow-up and receive feedbacks.

28. We recommend the European Union to find a regulation mechanism for fashion products entering the common market. This mechanism would aim at encouraging better consumption thanks to an indicator guaranteeing that the product meets sustainable criteria.

The fashion sector, which is overproducing low quality products outside the European borders, does not follow ethical norms, and is not sustainable.

We need to find a fair mechanism which will allow better consumption for consumers. Yet, it is important not to increase taxes, which will have negative impacts on European consumers, reducing their purchasing power.

The consumer should know in the conditions in which the products they purchase are made, and if they meet sustainable quality norms.

Stream 4: Towards a sustainable society

Substream 4.1 Renewable energy now

29. We recommend that the EU takes measures to make CO2 filters mandatory, especially for the coal plants, in a transition period, as long as we still depend on conventional energy. In addition, we recommend that the EU provides financial aid to member states that do not have financial resources to implement CO2 filters. The support is conditional on compliance to EU climate policies connected to the Paris Agreement, the Green Deal and any new climate law.

This is a concrete step to take alongside continued investment in research of the safe energy production and to support EU Member States to progressively achieve already adopted common reduction goals.

We know that the use of combustible fuels creates greenhouse gasses, and the EU Member States must reduce this type of energy to comply with the Paris Agreement. Since we cannot stop CO2 emissions right away, and since we still depend on coal, we have to take both short-term and long-term measures.

Because CO2 reduction is a common interest that affects all citizens, both in the Member States and beyond the EU, the EU as an institution has its own

responsibilities, and the institution makes recommendations and enables solutions as Member States cannot achieve the goals alone.

30. We recommend reducing the intensive industrial breeding of animals to reduce the production of methane as well as water pollution. For that purpose, the EU reviews its common Agricultural Policy to direct its subsidies towards sustainable and locally based agriculture, among others supported by a labeling scheme for consumers to recognize sustainable meat products. In addition, we encourage the EU to invest in methods to re-use waste material from animal production and other industries.

Population is increasing, which means more demand on meat in the future. Therefore, we need to reduce meat consumption.

We believe that since methane makes greenhouse gasses, animal farming is the most obvious place to start reducing.

We all know that it is necessary to consume less meat, and therefore a consequence is that we reduce the number of cattle.

31. We recommend that although it is a cost-intensive process to generate green hydrogen, as 75% energy should be produced in order to get 25% hydrogen, there are multiple positive sides to this type of energy. The best solution can be to produce energy without CO2 while we develop green hydrogen. Wind energy should be used for the production of green hydrogen and the EU should make more investments and increase the production of wind energy, as well as storing the energy for future purposes.

Green hydrogen is flexible and we can store it, and when there is a demand we can use that energy. Because there is no CO2 pollution.

Substream 4.2 Supporting change

32. We recommend that the EU sets up a coercion and reward system to tackle pollution like water, soil, air, and radiation. Issuing fines for polluters, in combination with the mandatory support of an expert organisation, specifically designed to help entities to eliminate pollution and restore the ecosystem. This expert organisation should have a leading role in preventing and controlling the level of pollution.

Because it is important to emphasize the responsibilities of the polluters and stimulate entities to reduce pollution with a strive for zero pollution. It is crucial to have a healthy planet since it is directly linked to our well-being and our future existence.

33. We recommend the EU to set up a special website/platform verified by multiple experts -with regularly updated and diverse scientific environmental information- that is easily accessible and transparent to all citizens. This website/platform is linked to a forum where citizens and experts can interact. We also strongly advise to initiate a media campaign to promote this website/platform (for instance through social media such as YouTube, TikTok, LinkedIn).

All citizens must have independent scientific-based sources of information to understand climate change issues (its consequences and needed steps to reverse it), as well as to cope with fake news. The media campaign will make them aware that this platform/website exists. It is also important that the information provided by the website/platform is understandable for all citizens, with access to the source material for those who want to dig into the topic.

34. We recommend that the EU reduces the amount of imported goods that don't meet EU standards in terms of ecological footprint.

Because, in doing so, we make sure that goods imported in the EU have a greener footprint. The aim is to decrease global pollution. It is also important to show countries what standards should be met if they want to export goods to the EU.

35. We recommend that the EU encourages, promotes and facilitates dialogue on climate change between all levels of decision-making, from the very local level (citizens) to the global level (national, international and intercontinental), to satisfy concerns of all involved parties.

Because dialogue and consensus are the optimal way to cope with the climate change challenges: if the parties understand each other, there is more willingness to find a common ground.

Substream 4.3 Environmentally friendly transport

36. We recommend that the EU financially supports European member states in order to improve the connectivity of rural areas. It should be done by developing a European public transportation network based on affordable prices (prioritising railways) and with incentives for public transportation usage. To this end, internet connectivity within a short and realistic time frame should also be developed in rural areas.

We recommend that because there is no access equality to public transportation and internet connectivity between rural and urban areas. A common European project would be strengthened as all citizens would feel they have the same rights. Enhanced public transportation network and internet connectivity would trigger population to settle in rural areas. This process would reduce pollution as less people would live in crowded cities.

37. We recommend the improvement of existing transportation infrastructures that may be in disuse or those that can still be improved from an ecological point of view (to implement electric trains). Such process should be done with the intention of not damaging environmentally protected areas.

Improving existing infrastructure would avoid spending too many resources and cause damage to protected areas important for biodiversity conservation. Having more railway infrastructure would trigger a reduction in CO2 emissions and an increase in population mobility from urban to rural areas.

38. We recommend that the EU promotes the purchase of electric vehicles complying with good standards regarding battery life. It could be done by EU incentives applying to all EU member states and by improving electric infrastructures. At the same time, it should invest in the development of other non-polluting technologies, such as biofuels and hydrogen for those vehicles whose electrification is difficult to achieve, such as boats and lorries.

We recommend it because electricity is the fastest way to reduce emissions of vehicles, accompanied by other energy sources such as hydrogen and biofuels. Indeed, the fastest, economic and feasible solution is electricity, followed by biofuels. In the longer-term green hydrogen should play a complementary role to cover transport modes that can not be electrified.

Stream 5: Caring for all

Substream 5.1 Reinforce the healthcare system

39. We recommend that the European Union safeguards common health standards, but also pushes for decent minimum wages, a maximum number of working hours and same training standards, for the same certifications, for healthcare professionals across the European Union.

If we do not have common healthcare standards, common wages and common training for healthcare workers, differences between the Member States could lead to unbalanced situations across the European Union. Standardization of healthcare could help in having a stronger, more efficient and more resilient system (i.e. Covid crisis example about stability of our systems). It would also facilitate knowledge and information sharing in the healthcare professional sector.

40. We recommend that the European Union ensures that treatments across the EU are of equal quality and of fair local cost. This could be ensured, for instance thanks to an extension of the competences of the European Medicines Agency (EMA), or the creation of a new specialized European procurement agency, which would be competent to negotiate and obtain more suitable prices for medicines for all the Members States. The risk of pharmaceutical industry monopolies must be minimized.

Equal medical provisions and treatments guarantee equal rights of all European citizens in the EU in health matters. Enlarged purchase capacities ensure better procurement deals. Nevertheless, this must not lead to monopoly structures and pharmaceutical lobbying. A covid crisis management has been a good example of collaborative health management by the European Union as a whole.

41. We recommend the creation of a European healthcare database, in which medical records would be made available in cases of emergencies or illnesses. Participation should be optional, and personal data protection must be ensured.

Access to data and data use permit prompt response to life threatening situations. Hacking or misuse are major threats of such a European healthcare database system, hence the data needs to be secured, while participation remains optional, and security-related threats obviously need to be prevented.

42. We recommend that the European Union further develops and synchronizes already existing health research and innovation programs, as it is done in the framework of the existing Horizon Europe program. Academic outcomes and results should be made freely available in all member states.

The EU-level scientific cooperation could enrich scientific capacities and knowledge of individual researchers. Knowledge sharing could, for example, lead to early diagnosis and better treatments reducing severe and fatal illnesses across Europe. It would also foster European self-sufficiency in terms of medication and equipment.

43. We recommend that the European Union increases its budget dedicated for joint research and innovation projects in the area of health (without budget cuts in other EU health-related programs). This would also strengthen European scientific and research institutions overall.

Health-related research and investments will in the long-run strengthen preventive medicine and decrease health-related costs. More funding could prevent the European brain drain to other developed countries with higher R&D

health-specific budgets. This funding should not be coming from already existing healthcare financial resources.

Substream 5.2 A broader understanding of health

44. We recommend that a health week be established as a European Union initiative across all Member States, on the same week, on all health issues with a special focus on mental health. During this week, all main topics on mental health will be collectively covered and promoted, together with other already existing initiatives, such as those from the Mental Health Europe organization.

We recommend this because all European citizens should feel accepted and included, especially if they suffer from mental health issues. Moreover, there is need to normalize and improve awareness of mental health conditions, and also to prevent related-social issues such as discrimination. Furthermore, as mental health issues have increased with the pandemic and are likely to continue, this initiative becomes even more important.

45. We recommend that female sanitary products stop being considered as luxury products when it comes to taxation, as they are essential products. We also recommend that hormonal contraception products used for medical reasons, such as in the cases of fibromyalgia and endometriosis, get taxed as a regular medical treatment. We also recommend that the European Union encourages the harmonisation of medically assisted reproductive treatments for all women (single or married) across all Member States.

In certain European countries sanitary female products are taxed as luxury products, and that is unfair. Certain hormonal contraceptives are used for medical purposes and therefore should be taxed accordingly. Because women's reproduction treatments, such as In Vitro Fertilization and egg freezing methods, have different eligibility conditions in different Member States, and the European Union must make an effort to harmonise it.

46. We recommend that the European Union takes a strong stance in influencing all Member States to include in their school curricula, as appropriate, issues on mental health and sexual education. To help Member States adopt such issues in school curricula, the European Union should develop and make available a standard program on mental health and sexual issues.

There is a need to decrease discrimination and taboos regarding mental health issues. There is also a need to avoid misinformation and unscientific approaches. Furthermore, sexual education is fundamental for a healthy life and community, and prevents problems such as teenager pregnancies.

47. We recommend that the European Union develops a better communication system of all its initiatives on mental health, namely the Public Health Portal on good practices, within Member States and for all citizens. Members of the European Parliament could present these good practices to each other, in order to make them better known across Member States.

Citizens are not well informed about the European Union's initiatives, and because with the sharing of good practices we can learn from each other.

Substream 5.3 Equal access to health for all

48. We recommend that the EU sets and promotes minimum standards for quality dental care, including prophylaxis, for all EU Member States. Free of charge dental care should be available for children, low-income groups and other vulnerable groups. In 15-20 years time, the EU should guarantee that affordable dental care is available to everyone.

We recommend this because currently dental care is not affordable to many people living in the EU. Lack of dental care and dental prophylaxis harms their health and life prospects. The EU should start by setting a minimum standard for dental care and by requiring free of charge dental care to children and low-income groups. Eventually, everyone should be entitled to quality dental health care.

49. We recommend to include Health and Healthcare among the shared competencies between the EU and the EU Member States. In order to include this new shared competence, there is a need to amend Article 4 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

We recommend this because currently the European Union does not have enough competencies to legislate on healthcare. Covid-19 pandemic has proven the necessity of a stronger EU presence in health policies. This Treaty change will allow the EU to do more to guarantee healthcare for all EU citizens and to issue binding regulations and decisions.

50. We recommend that the EU makes courses on providing first aid available to all EU citizens free of charge. The EU could consider making such courses obligatory for students and for workplaces (both in public and in the private sector). These courses also need to be practical, recurrent and adapted to students' age. There should also be a minimum number of defibrillators available in public places in all EU Member States.

We recommend this because many people in the European Union are not prepared to act when a person needs help and they do not know first aid techniques. That is why many lives are lost. In some public places defibrillators are not available.

51. We recommend that the European Union ensures that private health care providers do not unfairly benefit from public funds and do not drain resources from public health systems. The European Union should issue strong recommendations to Member States to increase funding to public healthcare.

We recommend this because the European Union and the European Union Member States have an obligation to guarantee access to healthcare to all their citizens. Besides, a stronger public healthcare system also means being better prepared for future pandemics.

Annex: OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WERE CONSIDERED BY THE PANEL AND NOT ADOPTED

Stream 1: Better ways of living

Substream 1.1 Healthy lifestyles

We recommend that the EU issues a recommendation to all member states about best practices on banning or restricting alcohol and tobacco advertising in all forms of media for all age groups, but with an emphasis on young audiences. The EU should ensure enforcement of laws that restrict sale of these products to minors. All member states should implement laws, with penalties, relating to smoking in public areas, especially educational facilities, and create designated smoking areas.

Unhealthy lifestyles cannot appear in advertising and should be less visible in public life. Furthermore, alcohol and tobacco are some of the most used harmful substances and this recommendation will prevent abusive consumption of these substances.

We recommend that the EU supports member states in including lessons on cooking in a sustainable, healthy and tasty manner in national curriculums. The EU can support this through healthy cooking guides both online and in print. This should be advertised proactively on traditional and social media in order to reach a young audience. We should also educate parents so that they learn what the best way is to use food in order to adopt a healthy lifestyle. There should be stimulating and enriching research in this field.

Cooking and nutrition courses in school would improve the health of youth and discourage fast-food consumption. Education of children allows them to bring what they have learned back to their parents. Furthermore, educating parents on healthy lifestyles would set a good precedent for children.

We recommend intensifying the European Commission's public campaign "HealthyLifestyle4All" about healthy lifestyles, and the benefits of social activity with concrete examples and using a holistic approach. Information campaigns should be defined on well structured target groups, and appropriate means of communication should be chosen for each of the targeted groups. It is important to furthermore provide rewards and incentive systems to promote positive behaviour. The campaigns should include influencers, celebrities or authorities. They shall highlight the double benefits on both health, and the environment and climate. Furthermore, subsidies for free public sport should be available in all member states.

Healthier lifestyles have a positive effect on the healthcare system by reducing health problems. Physical health has an impact on mental health and happiness. Current campaigns are not known enough. The inclusion of role models and influencers make it more effective and more motivating.

We recommend an information campaign about healthy food and nutrition. The EU should promote higher taxes for meat and sugar to be adopted in member states. It should explore options to differentiate healthy from unhealthy food and put it in different VAT brackets. We recommend putting very clear warning signs on very unhealthy foods (such as tobacco products). In addition, we recommend a European-wide nutrition score, with relevant information and a QR code for consumers to make better-informed decisions. Explore options to make healthy food cheaper than junk food and to make it more attractive for farmers to produce healthy products.

Healthy food is the basis for healthy living. Both production and consumer sides need to be addressed. Production of healthy products also has positive effects on the environment and can help support local farmers. If there is more production of healthy food, prices will decrease, demand increase.

Substream 1.2 Environmental Education

We recommend that the EU establishes a funding scheme to incentivise the inclusion of a long-term environmental education programme in national education systems for children in elementary and secondary school. This funding scheme should include funds earmarked for parents in need of financial assistance.

Current educational systems do not contain enough practical elements promoting direct and profound interactions between children and the environment. Existing programmes, elaborated from a short-term perspective, are heterogeneous and fail to promote the needed change in attitudes. Parents should be aided to ensure all children can equally benefit from the programme and none are excluded for financial reasons.

Stream 2: Protecting our environment and our health

Substream 2.1 Healthy natural environment

We recommend instantly implementing the highest possible standard of water quality in the whole of the EU. To save water, we suggest a reward system that will be based on pricing water in a way that encourages and gives incentives to less consumption, e.g.: (1) by creating a dynamic system encouraging consumers to stay under the average amount of water consumption (i.e. an increase in water consumption by 10% will increase the price by 11%), (2) by creating an allowances' market system for water polluted by manufacturing companies, which is a similar system to the carbon permits market already in place.

This recommendation is justified by the fact that increasing prices are an incentive for all users to make more conscious decisions regarding their consumption. Considering the different realities of EU countries and aiming to have a socially fair system, we can support poorer populations in water management by co-investing in water infrastructure and research.

Stream 3: Redirecting our economy and consumption

Substream 3.1 Regulating overproduction and overconsumption

We recommend that the EU imposes fines on companies that dispose of unsold products generated by overproduction.

In some cases companies find it more profitable to throw away unsold products rather than recycling or reusing them. It is therefore important to discourage overproduction through fines so that this practice is no longer profitable for producers.

Substream 3.2 Reducing waste

We recommend that the EU develops and implements a waste-management policy for households/citizens, focusing on the actual amount of waste they generate, complemented by measures necessary for raising citizens' awareness about the benefits of reducing generation of waste and separate waste-collection. Measures targeting socially disadvantaged families (e.g. young families with children, elderly people, etc.) are to be implemented as well, in agreement with the 'no one is left behind' principle.

It aims at developing a unified approach to waste management in households, it also facilitates the protection of the environment through waste-reduction, it further stimulates circular economy and increases waste-collection efficiency. Last but not least, it raises people's awareness and their sense of environmental responsibility.

We recommend that the EU promotes free-market competition and stimulates the private sector to become more actively involved in the treatment of waste, including waste-waters, and the upcycling and recycling activities.

The EU is the right level to implement this recommendation because it complements the Waste Framework Directive and the Circular Economy Action Plan. Moreover, the implementation of the recommendation will increase

innovative solutions in waste management and enhance the quality of waste management as well as the volume of treated waste because more companies will participate in these activities.

Substream 3.3 Fair products, equal access, and just consumption

We recommend relocating industries inside the European Union in order to provide high-quality fair products and tackle climate issues.

The European Union has a know-how that has to be promoted on its own market.

Because of delocalisation of industries outside the EU, notably in Asia, some professional competences are also delocalised. This recommendation entails the professional training of European workers.

We insist on the need to avoid delocalisation between different Member States, in order to avoid unfair competition.

We observed that massive delocalisation of industries over the world affects European industries. Thus, local production will lead to healthier citizens and environment.

Stream 4: Towards a sustainable society

Substream 4.3 Environmentally friendly transport

We recommend that big cities receive sanctions or subsidies depending on their performance on their public transportation with regards to the environment and pollution (electric vehicles, green public transport, pedestrianization, encouraging bike use, etc.). Penalties or subsidies that target local authorities, should be particularly applied based on changes implemented by cities on ecological transportation taking into account what their starting point is. It is the European Union, by means of its legislation, who should establish some performance indicators with regards to pollution measures and the proportional reduction. It should be done taking into account the starting points of each city.

We recommend this because cities have been affected by air pollution, which has raised some health issues. Developing green transportation would improve people's lives and health and reduce the greenhouse effect. Subsidies and sanctions are effective measures to promote changes and help adapt to different situations existing in different cities.

We recommend that EU legislation limits and regulates the use of short distance flights and cruise ships. Ecological alternatives to people when it comes to transport must be provided. One of such alternatives should be the standardisation of railway tracks in order to connect the European capitals. We also recommend the EU to give subsidies to change the transport of goods to make them more environmentally friendly, such as transport by train and boat (in short distance trips).

We recommend this because short distance trips are too frequent, polluting and easy to be substituted. Cruise ship limitation would reduce maritime pollution (a critical environmental problem) and the negative impact in coastal cities. Hence, we need to create more affordable alternatives compared to more polluting ones. Having the same railway track width would improve railways connections between European capitals.

Stream 5: Caring for all

Substream 5.2 A broader understanding of health

We recommend that the European Union, in line with its HealthyLife4All campaign also promotes initiatives such as sportive social events, sport activities in schools, bi-annual Olympiads open to all ages groups, and to all sports [not for professionals]. We also recommend the development of a free European sport app to incentivize collective sport activities. This app should help people connecting with each other through sports. Furthermore, these initiatives should be widely publicized and communicated.

In order to have a healthier European population, the European Union must promote sport and healthy lifestyles. Furthermore, very often the population is not aware of the relation between sport and a healthy life. The app is important because people are more prone to do sport if they do it collectively.