



**"From Farm to Fork"
Sustainable Food System and
the EU Green Deal**



Transforming food systems

for

Healthy people

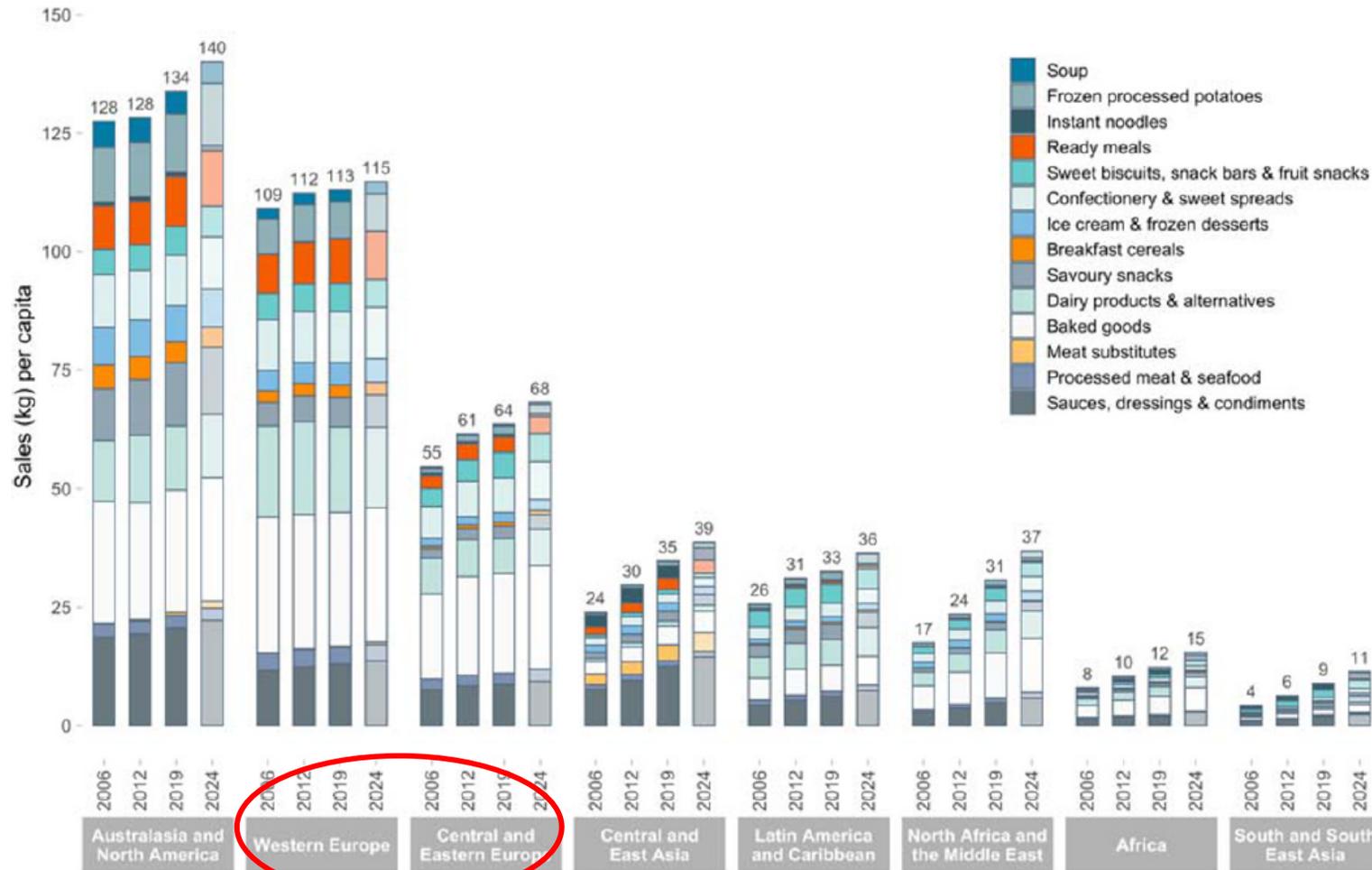
Dr. Stefanie Vandevijvere, Senior Scientist, SCIENANO, Belgium

8 October 2020

Diet-related disease burden in Europe

- Non-communicable Diseases ([NCDs](#)) are the leading cause of disability and death in Europe: cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and respiratory disease account for [77% of the burden of disease and 86% of premature mortality](#).
- Some 2.8 million deaths per year are associated with obesity, and conditions related to obesity absorb [7% of the EU's national health budgets](#).
- [One in three European children are overweight](#) due to high-calorie nutrient-poor diets and sedentary lifestyles.
- Overweight and obesity have been [associated with a higher risk for SARS-CoV-2](#) infection and, when contracted, more severe cases.
- The GBD 2017 study estimates that, in the European Union, over 950,000 deaths and over 16 million DALYs are [attributable to dietary risks due to unhealthy diets](#).
- In Europe [food insecurity](#) is also an issue; In 16 of 24 EU countries, at least 10% of the population experiences financial constraints to eat healthy. This is likely further exacerbated by COVID-19.

Ultra-processed food (UPF) products



Transition towards a more processed global diet

UPF products are generally cheap, available and heavily marketed

Increasing evidence linking high levels of consumption of UPF products to obesity and chronic diseases

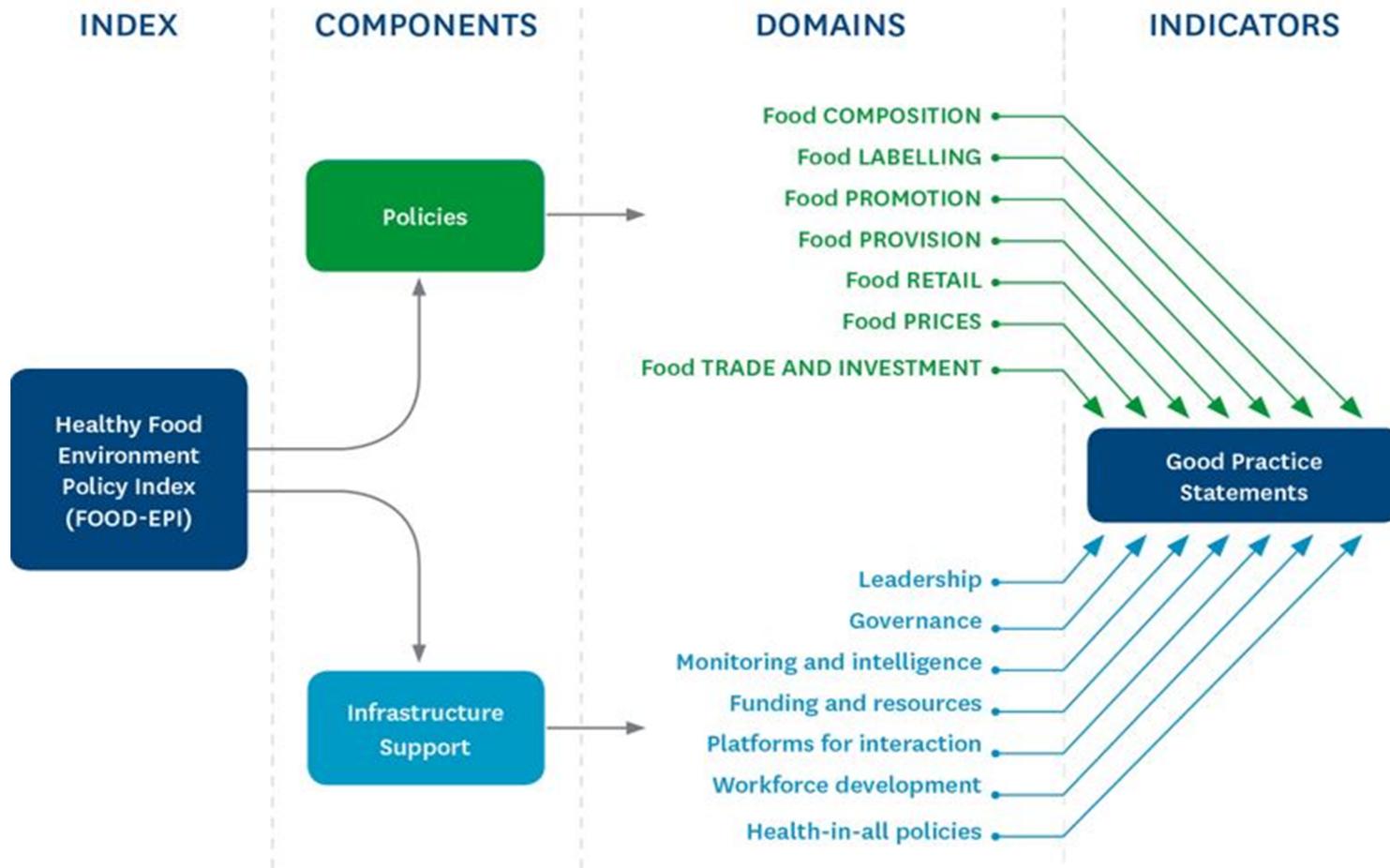
Ultra-processed foods sales (kg) per capita by region, 2006–2019 with projections to 2024

Baker et al, 2020, Obesity Reviews, as derived from Euromonitor data 2006-2019

Increasing # recommendations to improve population diets for both health and sustainability



Healthy Food Environment Policy Index Europe



Expert panel

Representation from Public Health, Nutrition, Epidemiology, Policy:

Academia

NGOs

Other organisations

~49 invitations sent to experts, 35 completed the evaluation



The Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (FOOD-EPI): European Union

An overview of EU-level policies influencing food environments in EU Member States

July 2020



Detailed evidence report

Served as a basis for the evaluation and the formulation of priority actions by experts

A reference document for documenting progress in the future

Evaluation of existing policies has been conducted; proposed actions currently being prioritized.

Evaluation: Policies to create healthy food environments

Domain	Indicators	No/very weak policy	Weak policy	Moderate policy	Strong policy	Very strong policy
Food Composition	Food composition targets processed foods					
	Food composition targets out-of-home meals					
Food Labelling	Ingredient lists and nutrient declarations					
	Nutrition and health claims					
	Front-of-pack labelling					
	Menu board labelling					
Food Promotion	Restricting unhealthy food promotion to children (broadcast media)					
	Restricting unhealthy food promotion to children (social media)					
	Restricting unhealthy food promotion to children (non-broadcast media)					
	Restricting unhealthy food promotion where children gather					
	Restricting unhealthy food promotion to children on packaging					
Food Prices	Reducing taxes on healthy foods					
	Increasing taxes on unhealthy foods					
	Food subsidies to favour healthy foods					
	Food-related income-support for healthy foods					
Food Provision	Policies in schools promote healthy food choices					
	Policies in public sector settings promote healthy food choices					
	Healthy Public procurement standards					
	Support and training systems (public sector)					
	Support and training systems (private companies)					
Food Retail	Zoning laws limit unhealthy food outlets					
	Zoning laws encourages healthy food outlets					
	Promote relative availability healthy foods in-store					
	Promote relative availability healthy foods service outlets					
Food Trade	Risk impact assessments trade and investment agreements					
	Measures to manage investment and protect regulatory capacity					

Evaluation: Infrastructure support

Domain	Indicators	No/very weak policy	Weak policy	Moderate policy	Strong policy	Very strong policy
Leadership	Strong visible political support					
	Clear Population intake targets					
	Food-based dietary guidelines					
	Comprehensive implementation plan for nutrition					
	Priorities for reducing health inequalities					
Governance	Restricting commercial influence on policy development					
	Use of evidence in food policies					
	Transparency in development of food policies					
	Public access to nutrition information					
Monitoring & Intelligence	Monitoring food environments					
	Monitoring nutrition status and intakes					
	Monitoring overweight and obesity					
	Monitoring NCD risk factors and prevalence					
	Evaluation of programmes & policies					
	Monitoring progress towards reducing health inequalities					
Funding & Resources	Population nutrition budget					
	Funding obesity and NCDs prevention research					
	Statutory health promotion agency					
Platforms for Interaction	Co-ordination (between local and national government)					
	Platforms between government and food sector					
	Platforms between government and civil society					
	Systems-based approach with local and national organisations					
Health in all policies	Assessing public health impacts of food policies					
	Assessing public health impacts of non-food policies					

Priority recommendations (under consideration)

Policy recommendations related to:

- *mandatory, ambitious food composition targets for added sugars, salt, and saturated fat*
- *mandatory declaration of added sugars on label*
- *harmonized easy-to-understand front-of-pack label, which is mandatory for Member States to display on all prepacked foods.*
- *evidence-based nutrient profiling system to prevent the use of claims on less healthy foods*
- *policies to restrict marketing of foods containing high levels of saturated fat, trans fat, salt and added sugars to children up to 18 years old on food packages.*
- *Gradually remove the sponsorship of foods high in saturated fat, trans fat, salt or added sugars from major EU sporting and other events.*

Infrastructure support recommendations related to:

- *Harmonizing the promotion of healthy diets with other issues like climate change & environmental protection*
- *Increasing the EU financial contribution for Member States (i.e. through EFSA) to conduct regular food consumption surveys.*
- *Making health impact assessments mandatory for all policies, including the CAP.*
- *Establishing an EU health promotion agency (e.g. such as the European Environment Agency) to support the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies on food environments, population nutrition, diet-related NCDs and their inequalities*

Europe lagging behind other world regions

- Chile (2016)



+ Restrictions on marketing to kids; food standards schools

Reformulation impact: Reduction of “high in” sugars products from 80% [95% CI 73–86] to 60% [95% CI 51–69] and in “high in sodium” products from 74% [95% CI 69–78] to 27% [95% CI 20–35] after 1 year implementation

- Mexico (2020)



+ Regulation of nutrition and health claims:

Claims impact: About 40% of current products with claims will be prevented from displaying health and nutrition claims

THE LANCET

January 2019

www.thelancet.com

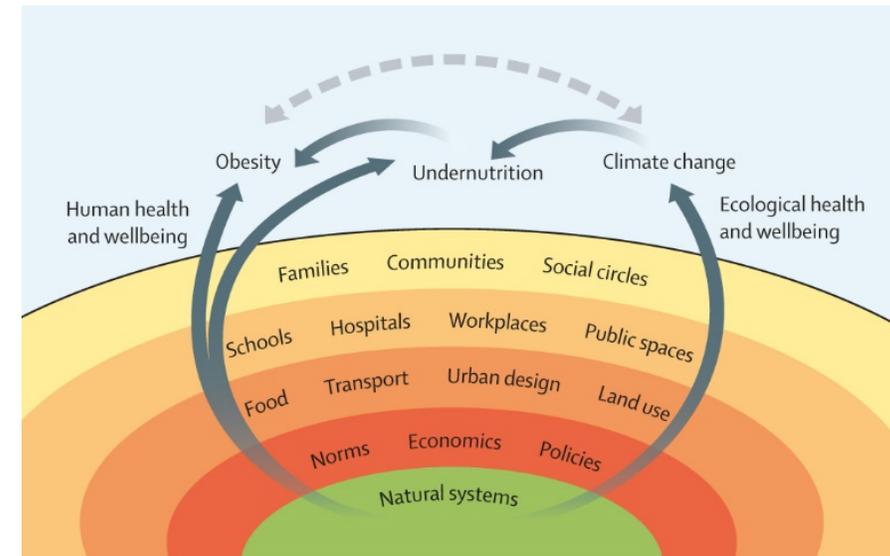
The Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition and Climate Change: The Lancet Commission report



Milken Institute School
of Public Health
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

The Global Syndemic

- **Definition: the interactions of the pandemics of obesity, undernutrition, and climate change in time and place, negatively affect each other, and have common economic, societal, or environmental drivers**
- **Climate change considered a pandemic**
- **Driven by food, transport, urban design, land use systems**
- **Double – and triple duty actions needed**



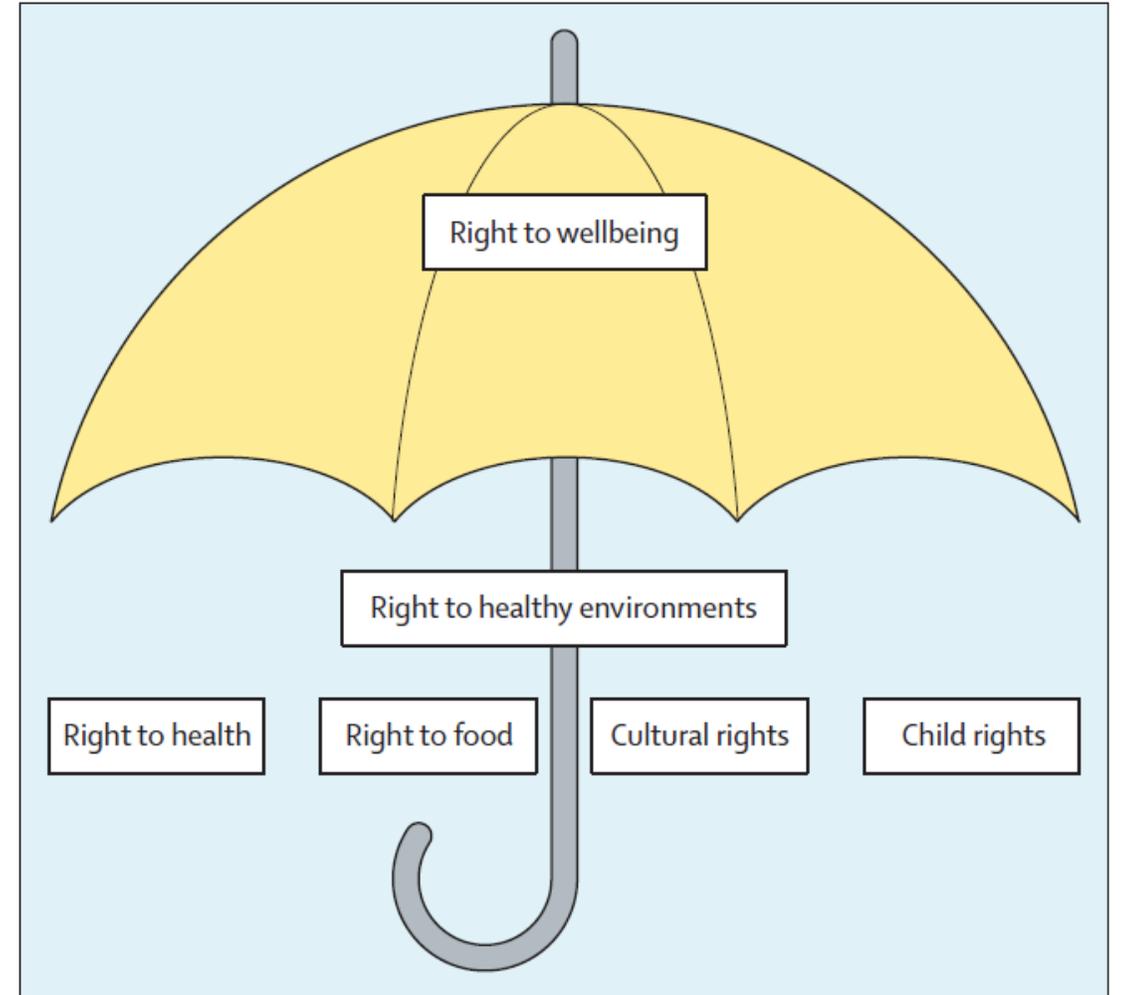
Actions for governments

1. Reduce poverty and inequities
2. Fully implement human rights under the Right to Wellbeing
3. Change subsidies for harmful products (eg fossil fuels, foods that damage health and/or the environment) and reorient them towards sustainable agriculture and energy



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4. Reduce the influence of commercial vested interests in policy development and increase the roles for civil society
5. Re-orient business models for people and planet as well as profits (reduce externalities)
6. Provide clear information on the health and environmental effects of products to consumers
7. Accelerate SDG actions and accountability systems



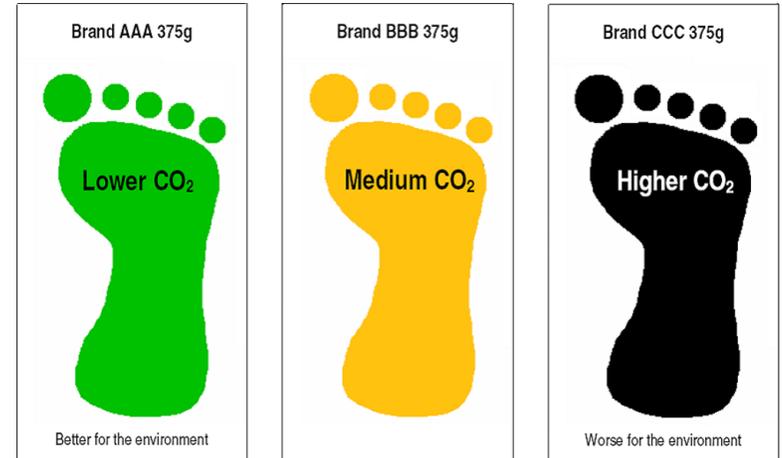
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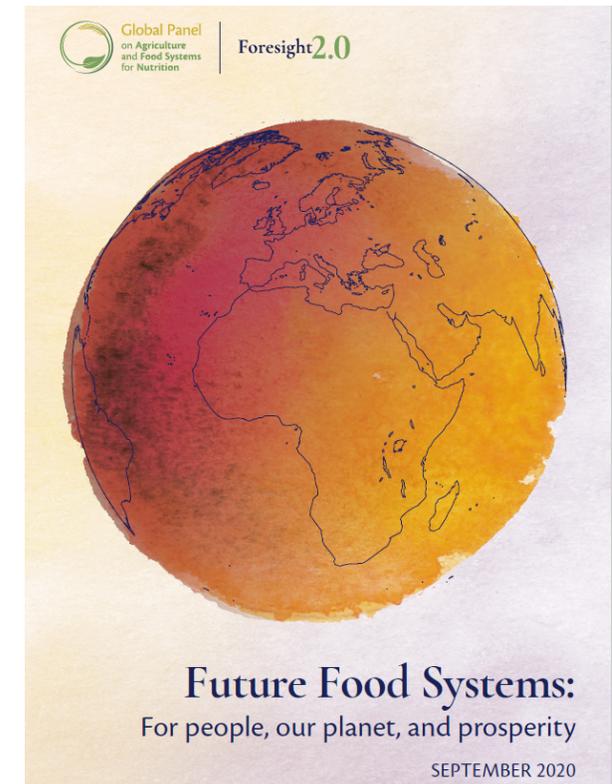
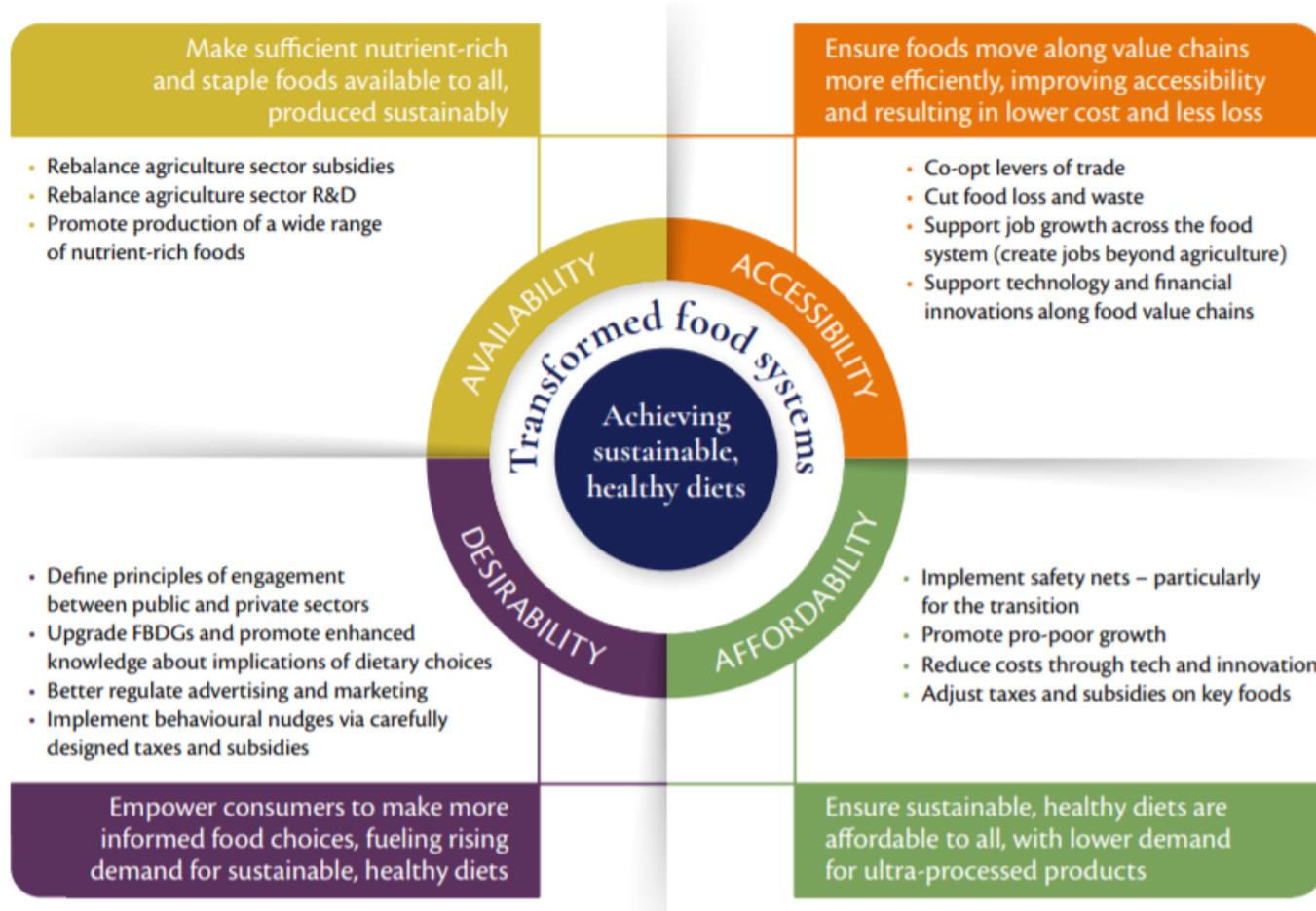


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Priority policy actions to transition food systems towards sustainable, healthy diets



Conclusions

- Europe is lagging behind other regions in terms of strong and comprehensive health/nutrition policies
- Implementation of best buys or practices is slow due to policy inertia, including commercial vested interests
- Need to shift narrative away from individual responsibility towards a focus on the structural determinants of health and sustainability.
- Need to develop more integrated approaches to tackle health and environmental crises at once and to ensure policy coherence and synergies
- Emphasizing such double and triple duty actions can help prioritize policies
- Momentum for food systems transformation is increasing