

Food Charter of the Barcelona Metropolitan Region



Barcelona
Demà

Compromís
Metropolità 2030



Pla Estratègic
Metropolità
de Barcelona

Preface

We live on a finite planet with limited resources. We also live in globalised societies which are influenced by rapid changes and great challenges, where multiple emergencies converge. The climatic and ecological emergencies we face are directly linked to the current health emergency and, incidentally, to the resulting food emergency.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the weaknesses of a globalised food system that was already under severe strain. We are facing an extraordinary situation; one which offers us an opportunity to incorporate what we have learnt from these intense times, to redefine a joint vision and mission, and to rebuild a more localised, healthy, fair, low-carbon and ecological food system that can respond to the needs of all persons.

Crises lead us to ask questions about what is essential, necessary and vital, at a personal, and social and economic level. **Food is a basic need**, a fundamental element in people's lives. It is therefore necessary to raise it to the level of public policy. **Food is both a personal and political issue, with significant impact from social, ecological and economic angles.** In this sense, territorial and cross-sectional approaches are essential to assert and defend **food as a fundamental right.**

Many emphasise the importance of metropolises as the great centres of consumption, and therefore as a driving force for profound transformation. Food policies, however, transcend consumer policies, despite the prominent and structuring role they play. Therefore, it is not only a question of guaranteeing supply to the metropolis, but of **balancing the relationship between the urban world and its surroundings.** Urban and rural contexts are in fact characterised by complex continuities and interdependencies. The role of city leadership should not be detrimental to the quality of life in rural areas, but rather the opposite: **if the city looks after the countryside, the countryside looks after the city.**

In Catalonia, 6,800 small and medium-sized agricultural farms disappeared between 2006 and 2016; the proportion of agricultural labour as a work force is only 1.6% (2013)¹ and the contribution of agriculture to GDP is 0.94% (2019)². Since 1956, 80% of agricultural land has been lost in the river valleys and mountain areas of the Barcelona metropolitan area³, increasing external dependence and reducing the resilience of our food system.

The food model influences the territorial model. Our relationship with food is, and always has been, a fundamental organising principle in the places we inhabit and the relationships we establish between people and the environment. Faced with the growing disconnection between the rural world and the urban world, an urgent rethink is needed regarding the relationship between urban consumption and agriculture. Spaces of confluence must be created between the person who produces and the person who consumes, so that the consumer can be recognised as a co-producing citizen. This connection, along with a recognition of the real value of food, strengthens our capability to decide and to become subjects of change and well-being.

Understanding food as just another commodity gets us nowhere. On the one hand, it increases social inequality, and on the other, it drives us towards an emergency situation, threatening the life of the planet as we know it.

The relationship between food and health is undeniable. Health does not just include human health, but the health of our planet too. It not only deals with the absence of disease, but the maintenance of the physical, mental, social and ecological well-being of individuals and their ecosystems. Ensuring the health and safety of what we consume has become one of the principal aims of food policy, but there is still much to do.

Unfortunately, imbalanced diets among the population are a growing trend and a clear symptom of lifestyles which are unhealthy and disconnected to the origin of the product, as well as the lack of information about different systems of agricultural, livestock and fish production. In fact, overeating and malnutrition are two sides of the same coin. What is more, malnutrition is a new form of food inequality.

The food and beverage industry, together with restaurant sector, have considerable economic and strategic importance in our country. The transformation of food, in any case,

1 Food Sovereignty Indicators in Catalonia (2018). <http://indicadors.arrandeterra.org/infografies/>

2 Compiled by authors based on IDESCAT data. <https://www.idescat.cat/pub/?id=aec&n=354>

3 Progress of the Metropolitan Urban Master Plan (2019). <https://urbanisme.amb.cat/pdu-metropolita/reptes-oporunitats/infraestructura-verda>

requires the highest quality standards, both in nutritional and environmental terms, and in the jobs they create. Respect for these standards must always be guaranteed.

The agri-food industry is the leading industrial sector in Europe and the driving force for the industrial network of Catalonia (11.9% of GDP), mainly through small and medium-sized companies (2020)⁴. In the province of Barcelona, more than 10% of the total number of registered companies work in areas directly related to food (2020)⁵, while only 1% of the working population is employed in the agriculture, livestock and fishing sectors (2001)⁶.

In this sense, **technological, social and environmental innovation** is what allows us to rethink some aspects of the current food model, which has shown to be inefficient, suffering high production costs and low product value. Although, it is also necessary to rely on traditional knowledge and methods. The return to a more **respectful relationship with natural cycles** and the connection between food and territories is fundamental to a new food model.

The food system, according to the IPPC, is responsible for between 21% and 37% of greenhouse gas emissions⁷.

This Food Charter of the Barcelona Metropolitan Region wishes to support and reinforce the processes carried out at local level, for the transition to a model of greater food sovereignty, to strengthen the resilience of a fairer, safer, more sustainable and healthier food system, shaped by social, ecological and local criteria.

The resilience of food systems refers to their capacity to provide sufficient, adequate and accessible food for all people in adverse or unforeseen circumstances, or in situations of risk.

The Food Charter of the Metropolitan Region therefore provides a **narrative and a strategic framework** for action, directly challenging the structures and mechanisms of the system that feeds the cities and towns in the Barcelona metropolitan area.

For this reason, the framework must include spaces for participation, strategy and action for the development of **food**

4 Strategic Plan for Food in Catalonia 2012-2026 (2020). Current state of food in Catalonia: Technical diagnosis. Framework of Economic Sustainability. http://agricultura.gencat.cat/web/.content/04-alimentacio/consell-catala-alimentacio/enllacos-documents/fitxers-binariis/PEAC_Diagnosi-tecnica-Sostenibilitat-Economica_Abril-2020.pdf. According to data in this report, 98.2% of companies in the Catalan agri-food industry have fewer than 200 workers.

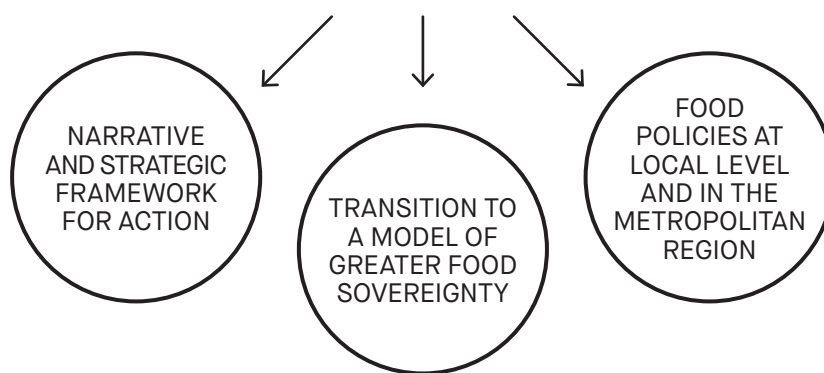
5 Compiled by authors from HERMES, Local Statistical Information. Barcelona Provincial Council. <https://www.diba.cat/hg2/presentacio-prov.asp?prid=1127>. The areas directly related to food are: 1) food and beverage services, 2) food products industries, 3) drink manufacturing and 4) agriculture, livestock and hunting, and related service activities.

6 HERMES, Local Statistical Information. Barcelona Provincial Council. <https://www.diba.cat/hg2/presentacio-prov.asp?prid=1358>

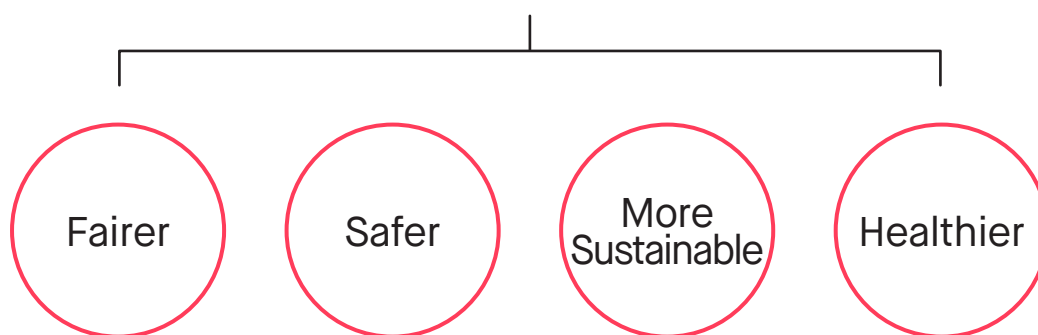
7 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). <https://www.ipcc.ch/>

policies at local level and in the metropolitan region, with the involvement of a wide range of actors: public administrations, the manufacturing sector, universities and research, and citizens and their organisations. We also highlight the role of the media as a spokesperson for the challenges and values associated with this transition.

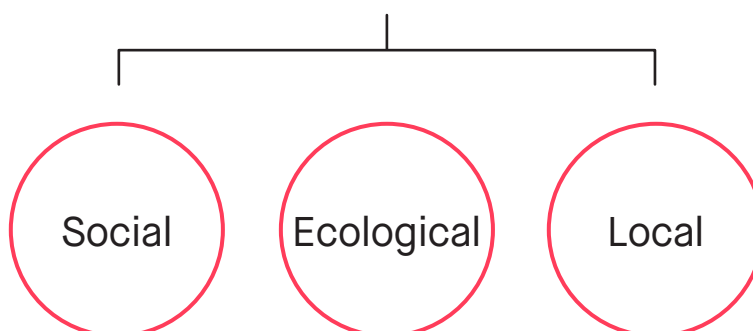
Food Charter of the Barcelona Metropolitan Region



Strengthening the resilience of a food system being



and shaped by these criteria:



Commitments

In this framework:

Take into consideration the horizon of the **Metropolitan Commitment 2030**, whose main focus is to foment **social and economic progress as a mechanism for reducing inequality and spatial segregation in the metropolitan territory, in the context of the climate emergency and the post-pandemic world.**

Take into consideration the commitments of different international agendas towards a fairer, more sustainable and healthier food system. In particular the *2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Objectives, New Urban Agenda, United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), European Charter of Territorial and Nutritional Governance (2011), Charter for Food Sovereignty from our Municipalities (2014), Mayors' Pact for the Climate and Energy (2015), Milan Urban Food Policy Pact -MUFPP- (2015) and Barcelona Food Policy Promotion Strategy (2016-2019).*

Member entities of the Barcelona Metropolitan Strategic Plan association, mayors, representatives of governments and local entities, producers, companies and entities of the social framework, we express our support for this Food Charter of the Metropolitan Region and commit ourselves to:

01.

Facilitating participation and governance for creating an engaged social and institutional base

02.

Defending a living agricultural environment that promotes local production and its social and ecological value

03.

Prioritising social and economic equality in the face of the climate crisis and the post-pandemic world

01. Facilitating participation and governance for creating an engaged social and institutional base



- Rethinking food systems using a **holistic approach** that sees food as a **right** of territories and people, placing **the care of life and people** at the centre of our values and practices. This vision contemplates the food cycle from field to plate (production, storage and transport, distribution, elaboration and processing, packaging, marketing, consumption and waste management) and also the cross-sectional areas which are impacted by the food system (environment, health, culture, heritage, job-entrepreneurs-hip, gender, education, social services, etc.).
- Contemplating a greater **diversity and plurality of actors** in the food system in terms of a **five-layered helix**: public administrations, the primary processing sector (agriculture and primary food transformation) and businesses in the food cycle, universities and research, citizens and their organisations, and the media.
- Identifying and transforming experiences of **good practices** in public programmes and public policies, favouring transitions, pilot-tractor projects and changes of scale, with the corresponding academic, research and resource support.

- Exploring and facilitating the creation of **spaces or frameworks of multilevel governance and transparency** that gather and respond to the needs expressed by the territories and by the actors that define the metropolitan political subject.
- Generating understanding, discussion and consciousness through a **coordinated strategy of communication and awareness.**

Associated actions:

- 1.1 Design and implementation of **new indicators**, information systems and data generation aligned with the already existing MUFPP Indicator Framework that would be integrated into the Observatory of the Metropolitan Food System. Bringing together talent and lines of research to help solve the challenges of the current food system. Exploring the potential of Big data and citizen science.
- 1.2 Elaboration of comprehensive diagnoses and recommendations for the metropolitan food system that allow **local food strategies coordinated on a metropolitan scale** to be defined through reference spaces, shared practices and inspiring experiences.
- 1.3 Establishing, where deemed appropriate, **local agri-food councils**, to recognise different interests, manage conflicts and balance power relations to enable future agreements and pacts based on mutual vision and trust.

02. Defending a living agricultural environment that promotes local production and its social and ecological value



- Protecting, recovering and revitalising **agricultural land** as a strategic asset within metropolitan territorial and urban planning.
- Defending farmers, as well as their forms of organisation, ensuring the economic, ecological and social viability of farms and agricultural production with **decent agricultural incomes**. Facilitating **generational replacement and access to land** and supporting the incorporation of sustainable agricultural practices with approved equipment, and technical and economic resources for training and innovation.
- Boosting **local marketing channels** that reinforce direct, collaborative and reliable links between the different agents of the food cycle, placing value on local products and building an alliance between small and medium-sized local producers and local businesses.
- Influencing the flow of goods. Investigating and implementing logistics systems that facilitate the **joint distribution** of local agri-food products. These help to boost the network of municipal markets and local commerce that revitalises

the streets and town squares, promoting social cohesion.

- Promoting **social agriculture**, which supports urban agriculture, for the benefits it brings to social cohesion and the revitalisation of community life, and the economy of the common good.

Associated actions:

- 2.1 Preservation, evaluation and shielding of agricultural land and fertile soils, through specific legislation, **favourable forms of land use** and **concerted management tools**, such as agricultural parks and participatory custody agreements, which are reflected in the metropolitan Master Plan of Urban Planning for Barcelona and in the different Management Schemes for Metropolitan Urban Planning.
- 2.2 Creation and support of **marketing and distribution channels for local, fresh, organic and seasonal food products**, especially with reference programmes in the network of local markets and trade.
- 2.3 Implementation of mechanisms to strengthen the **collaboration between producer, consumer and commercial establishments**, such as food hubs.

03. Prioritising social and economic equality in the face of the climate crisis and the post-pandemic world



- **Democratising food based on a principle of social justice**, guaranteeing conditions of access for the entire population to healthy, balanced and delicious food, using local and organic products wherever possible, at the same time as recognising the cultural diversity of communities.
- Empowering citizens and making them aware of the challenges to the food system. Working towards healthier, more responsible and sustainable **consumption models and lifestyles**.
- Placing value on the **strategic potential and commitment of the food industry and the agricultural sector in terms of social innovation, the circular economy and sustainable territorial development** to provide solutions from an environmental, social and economic perspective. This will encourage quality employment and the use of local raw materials, and will help the creation of synergies with the various multi-actor innovation processes.
- Raising awareness in **waste prevention, the culture of use and the zero-waste horizon** to reduce environmental impact.

In turn, this will favour a more rational use of packaging and plastic, and the recovery and redistribution of safe, fresh and nutritious food destined for human consumption, which originates from the entire food cycle and is for the whole population.

Associated actions:

- 3.1 Interventions on the supply side to ensure the availability and access to fresh, local, organic and seasonal food for all citizens, particularly in neighbourhoods and for the most vulnerable, through the management of commercial licenses, and support for mobile markets and home delivery systems.
- 3.2 Deployment of **information and food awareness programmes** based on prevention and the promotion of healthy diets, involving local actors.
- 3.3 Use of responsible contracting and public procurement which is organic and local, in the context of a social economy which supports solidarity and sustainability in the area of mass catering, and specifically in school dining rooms.
- 3.4 Incentives for **circular economy** practices and the closure of material, water and energy cycles in the different processes related to the food cycle, particularly in the transformation and distribution of food and the HORECA sector.

The Food Charter of the Barcelona Metropolitan Region will be provided together with the corresponding spaces and instruments for coordination and monitoring.

Likewise, adherence to the Food Charter of the Barcelona Metropolitan Region implies a linking of the signatory institutions and organisations with the principles, values and objectives enshrined in the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact in an integrated territorial approach, and the willingness to collaborate in the proper development of the activities associated with the Barcelona World Capital of Sustainable Food 2021.

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