

ProVeg International welcomes the EU's ambition to propose a recommendation on education for environmental sustainability for learners of all ages and at all levels of education. It's a great first step in helping EU countries to cooperate and develop stronger policies on education for environmental sustainability, climate education, biodiversity, and related topics.

We call upon the European Commission to take plant-rich diets into account when educating learners of all ages and at all levels of education on climate-crisis mitigation strategies and biodiversity.

When proposing this recommendation for learners, their future and the future of our planet should be the main concern – not corporate interests. If children are to live with the climate crisis, the curriculum needs to be fit for this purpose. Young people today need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to decarbonise the planet, and actively learn to develop green solutions relevant to the most polluting and damaging sectors of the global economy.

The recommendations should therefore provide easily accessible blocks of knowledge and actions to enable learners of all ages to help avoid a climate and biodiversity catastrophe. Sustainability and the environment should be a thread running through every subject, not just on a theoretical level, but also on a practical basis, especially since such practical skills are currently not taught enough and are so urgently needed in order to transition towards a net-zero-carbon lifestyle.

One of the easiest ways to reduce our carbon footprint is by switching towards a more plant-based diet, which can reduce food-related emissions by up to 50%¹²³⁴⁵

Therefore, education should:

¹ Wissenschaftlicher Beirat Agrarpolitik, Ernährung und gesundheitlicher Verbraucherschutz & Wissenschaftlicher Beirat Waldpolitik beim BMEL (2016): Klimaschutz in der Land- und Forstwirtschaft sowie den nachgelagerten Bereichen Ernährung und Holzverwendung. Berlin.

² Scarborough, P., P. N. Appleby, A. Mizdrak, et al. (2014): Dietary greenhouse gas emissions of meat-eaters, fish-eaters, vegetarians and vegans in the UK. *Climatic Change* 125(2), 179–192.

³ Abejón, R., L. Batlle-Bayer, J. Laso, et al. (2020): Multi-Objective Optimization of Nutritional, Environmental and Economic Aspects of Diets Applied to the Spanish Context. *Foods* 9(11), Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, 1677.

⁴ Hallström, E., A. Carlsson-Kanyama & P. Börjesson (2015): Environmental impact of dietary change: a systematic review. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 91 1–11

⁵ Bruno, M., M. Thomsen, F. M. Pulselli, et al. (2019): The carbon footprint of Danish diets. *Climatic Change* 156(4), 489–507. doi:10.1007/s10584-019-02508-4

- Play a key role in enabling learners to access this knowledge in an engaging, fun, and interactive way by, for example, offering sustainable cooking classes and incentivising students of all ages to take part in activities such as the [Veggie Challenge](#).
- Offer high-quality training materials on plant-rich nutrition and health, and on the impact of various diets and agricultural production methods on the environment.
- Offer plant-based meals by default at school canteens in order to turn the school environment into a catalyst to switching towards more plant-based eating. A good example of this is ProVeg's [School Plates](#) project in the UK and [Plant Powered Pupils](#) in Germany (which won the UN Momentum for Change award).
- Train teachers and teacher trainers on the link between diets, the climate crisis, and the decline in biodiversity.
- Focus on the intersection between food production and consumption, climate change, food justice, and global health, including zoonotic risks and antimicrobial resistance resulting from animal-based food systems.
- Create extra-curricular opportunities such as community gardening and cooking projects, as well as advocacy for better and fairer food systems.
- Including outdoor and experiential education will help learners to make better and more informed choices by enabling them to understand where food comes from. People retain knowledge better – and are more likely to act – if they take part in experiential learning, including visiting plant-based farms. Picking fruit and vegetables, and learning about growing, marketing, and preparing food that's good for people and the planet are good examples of important life skills.
- Challenge learners in higher education to develop innovative food solutions. A good example of this is the [ProVeg Food Innovation Contest](#).

ProVeg International thus calls on the European Commission **to take plant-rich diets into account when educating learners of all ages and at all levels of education on climate-crisis mitigation strategies and biodiversity.**