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UN IMPEGNO DI GIUSTIZIA

THE MANI TESE MANIFESTO:
ANOTHER FOOD SYSTEM IS POSSIBLE!

Food is a human right and must be healthy, fair, sustainable and accessible to everyone. Yet today's food system continues to generate inequalities, put small-scale producers under pressure, and have serious consequences for the environment, public health and working conditions.

WE HAVE GATHERED THE DEMANDS OF YOUNG ACTIVISTS BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THINGS CAN CHANGE.

We believe food can be produced in ways that respect the land, workers and people's health. We believe agroecology offers a concrete path towards building fairer food systems, bringing together scientific research, farming practices and community participation.

But transforming the food system means more than asking people to change their individual choices: **it also means changing the rules that shape how food is produced, distributed and purchased.**

Public institutions have a key role to play. Through public policies and procurement, they can support sustainable food production, strengthen local economies and ensure access to high-quality food. Every day, school, hospital and university canteens purchase food for **millions of people**. These choices shape which producers gain access to the market, which supply chains receive support and what kind of food system can take shape.



With the revision of the European Public Procurement Directive underway, we urge policymakers

TO TAKE DECISIVE ACTION AND RESHAPE THE WAY FOOD IS SOURCED AND VALUED

TURN THE TABLES

Cofinanziato dall'Unione europea

1 PUT FOOD QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY AT THE HEART OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

We call for public procurement to prioritise food quality, freshness, seasonality, sustainable production methods, animal welfare, and respect for human rights and working conditions throughout the entire supply chain. **Price cannot be the only criterion**: people's health and environmental protection must be central to purchasing decisions.
We want public canteens to serve healthy, balanced and affordable meals for everyone, while promoting sustainable diets and quality food. However, sustainability cannot be measured solely in kilometres travelled: short supply chains and locally sourced food are not necessarily the same thing. **We need to consider production methods, environmental impacts, working conditions and the characteristics of supply chains as a whole.**

2 OPEN UP PUBLIC PROCUREMENT TO SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS AND LOCAL FOOD NETWORKS

We call for rules that make it easier for **small-scale producers, cooperatives and agroecological organisations to participate in public tenders**, through smaller lots, proportionate requirements and accessible administrative procedures.
We want to strengthen **local food networks** and create more opportunities for those who produce food sustainably. Farmers' markets, distribution hubs and bio-districts must also receive greater support, helping to build networks that connect producers, consumers and communities. **The food supply chain must offer fairer opportunities, ensuring that small-scale producers are not disadvantaged by the market power of large commercial players.**

3 TURN FOOD SERVICES INTO A DRIVING FORCE FOR CHANGE

Public canteens and private catering services can help transform eating habits by promoting balanced menus, more plant-based foods, and fresh, seasonal produce.
We also need concrete action to prevent and reduce food waste, recover surplus food and promote its redistribution. Food packaging must also be rethought to reduce its environmental impact, in line with European regulations and without placing disproportionate burdens on small-scale producers.
Canteens, especially school canteens, should also be spaces for food education. We call for information and awareness-raising initiatives that help students, families and citizens understand where their food comes from, the work involved in producing it, and the connections between food, health and the environment.

4 ENSURE TRANSPARENCY AND VERIFIABLE RESULTS

Change must be measurable. **We call for accessible data, monitoring and indicators to assess meal quality, the sustainability of food supplies, the participation of small-scale producers, working conditions and progress in reducing food waste.**
Monitoring must also consider the effects on health, food quality and safety, animal welfare and the environmental impacts of food production, including emissions and water quality.
We want students, families, canteen workers, farmers and citizens to be able to participate in decision-making and assess the results of the policies adopted. **Transforming our food system requires public responsibility, transparency and community involvement.**

CHANGE STARTS WITH OUR EVERYDAY CHOICES

We will know things are changing when public tenders prioritise clear environmental and social criteria, when small-scale producers have genuine opportunities to access the market, when canteens offer healthy and sustainable meals, and when public resources help strengthen fairer supply chains.

We cannot leave the responsibility for change to individual choices alone. Change also happens through a public tender, a supply contract, a farmers' market, a research project and the food served every day in canteens.

This manifesto brings together the ideas and proposals of those who believe another food system is possible. It is a commitment to keep working together to ensure that words are followed by concrete action.

**CHANGE BEGINS WITH EACH OF US,
BUT TO TRULY TRANSFORM THE FOOD SYSTEM,
WE MUST ALSO CHANGE ITS RULES.**