

Action plan resulting from the first meeting of Mensa Civica 'The European Alliance for Sustainable Public Food Systems'

Organised by AlimenTerra with support from the Charles Leopold Mayer Foundation in London, January 21, 2008

The following actions were agreed by the participants¹

A. Regarding establishing a common purpose

i. **To create a common charter** (with a positive message),

The charter needs to focus on three key areas

- 🌐 climate change and energy use
- 🌐 individual and societal health and 'food rights'², (in particular relating to children)
- 🌐 biodiversity and the diversity of food culture

Action: *AlimenTerra will write and circulate a draft charter to all the participants in the London meeting and those sending apologies, for their comments and suggestions. A final charter will be produced incorporating revisions. The charter will be no longer than one page*

Once the final charter is produced organisations will be requested to officially sign up; the charter and its signatories will be posted on the Mensa Civica section of the AlimenTerra website.

Timescale: *The draft charter will be circulated by the first week of March, with a three-week timescale for comments the final version will be produced by the beginning of April*

ii. **A clear statement of objectives will be produced** i.e. what we are trying to achieve and within a timescale (for example: that all public Food Systems should achieve and exceed EU greenhouse gas emission targets)

Action: *AlimenTerra will write and circulate a draft set of objectives following agreement on the charter for comments and suggestions by participants in Mensa Civica*

Timescale: *the statement of objectives will be produced in April finalisation in May*

iii. **The membership criteria and charge a membership fee:** organisations wishing to join Mensa Civica 'The European Alliance for Sustainable Public Food Systems' will be required to pay a membership fee and to sign up to the charter.

Action: *AlimenTerra will write and circulate a draft set of membership fees for comment with the draft charter*

Suggested action: a separate Mensa Civica account will be established to receive membership fees and other donations to guarantee transparency.

Timescale: *The Membership fee scale will be issued alongside the charter to enable organisations to become active and official Members as soon as possible.*

¹ (see excel document Participants Mensa Civica - Jan 21 08 for participant list)

² e.g. The right to a contaminant free diet, the rights of producers and workers to a fair return and healthy working conditions

- iv. A list of target stakeholder organisations and other networks for inclusion in the Mensa Civica Alliance will be created (please contribute to this) in order to expand the scope and potential political impact of the Alliance. The strategy for their engagement will also be produced

Action: *AlimenTerra will write and circulate a draft list of targets for comment with the draft charter*

B. Communication and information

- i. **Developing an accessible and user-friendly website and on-line database** of sustainable public food initiatives which includes downloadable documents in PDF format (in particular those produced by existing initiatives and relevant policy documents). This also needs to include an information gathering system to make the site interactive and enable stakeholder organisations to contribute to the body of information.

The website also should serve as a forum or message board, enabling stakeholders and stakeholder organisations to post relevant documents

Action: *AlimenTerra is currently creating an online database with the results of its survey into best practice in sustainable public food (in English, French, Italian and Spanish), this will also include the facility to add new initiatives (there is an online questionnaire in four languages). The database will also include a wide selection of documents submitted by participating organisations in the survey including: menus, charters, studies, contract tenders etc).*

Once we have the trial version up and running we suggest that participants in Mensa Civica comment on its content and accessibility to ensure that the final version (within our budget constraints) meets stakeholder needs.

Timescale: *We aim to have a trial version of the website up and running by the beginning of March*

- ii. **The production of a regular newsletter an/or news roundup** - AlimenTerra produced two newsletters in 2007 current funding envisages two more for 2008, however a more regular news roundup could be produced

Action: *currently the next edition of the newsletter is planned for the spring 2008 – Please forward your ideas for articles and any news items or events you are planning*

Timescale: *two editions are planned for spring and autumn 2008*

- iii. **The development of a communication strategy**

Note: I would suggest that this topic should be the subject of the next Mensa Civica meeting in May or June when we have established and agreed on the charter, membership fees and objectives and when we have an agreed calendar of activities.

Actions: *To be discussed at the next meeting (but please comment on this)*

iv. **Seek advice from MEP's and other key political or stakeholder figures** on:

- 📍 the best strategies that Mensa Civica should adopt to advocate for change
- 📍 how to work together using our respective strengths and connections
- 📍 how to enlist 'champions'

Actions: Create a list/database of existing and target contacts; please send (when these are people known to you please state this as we would like to quote your name in any communication, however it is important that these are real contacts). Ask well known people to be champions for Mensa Civica

Timescale: Ongoing

v. **Stakeholder consultation on the future of public food systems**

Actions: *This idea needs further development, and the lead for this action must come from participant organisations or as the result of future funding applications. AlimenTerra considers this to be a major initiative beyond the scope of its current funding or human resources.*

We would however welcome ideas and could include this on the agenda for the next Mensa Civica meeting

vi. **Sustainable Public Food Roadshow** including a series of special events focused on key elements of the system and linked to the locality + local skills/experience ; each event to be a chapter of the sustainable public food story

Actions: *see above*

C. Calendar of events and actions

i. **Next meeting of Mensa Civica** (suggested dates May/June 2008)

Action: *We need to decide where - are there any offers from participants to host the event? Content: The following are ideas: Communication and political/advocacy strategy; a practical and launch public event (by May we will have agreed on the charter, objectives and membership conditions).*

Timescale: *To decide on location by early March*

ii. **Partners Meeting to discuss the submission of project on sustainable city and regional food strategies under the Interreg IVC programme**

Timescale: *The meeting will be held in Amsterdam on February 19, for all details contact Clive Peckham*

iii. **Conference at the University of Florence** (suggested dates October/November 2008) *on using contract/ the contract tendering system as a tool to promote sustainability and on the question of waste disposal/reduction and recycling*

Actions: *a draft programme and date(s) will be circulated following discussions between Enrico Peruzzi of Florence University and AlimenTerra*

- iv. **workshop at IFOAM global Congress in Modena, June 2008** (International Federation of organic agricultural movements), Italy on organic food in school and hospital catering

Actions: **Roberto Spigarolo** of the Department of Crop Science – State Univ. of Milan and iPOPY (innovative Public Organic Procurement for Youth) is coordinating this workshop, to be held on June 19 and a draft programme will be sent as soon as possible.

- v. **Study visits/learning journeys** with practical or political objectives, involving multi-stakeholder international groups

Actions:

- 🌐 to identify offers and requests; that is what do people want to visit and what can people offer visitors - if you have any specific requests/offers please state them, one of the Secretariat roles of AlimenTerra for Mensa Civica is to assist with the organisation of study visits, however they must be separately funded
- 🌐 current suggestions or ideas:
 1. A day visit (and possibly a future Mensa Civica meeting) to the **Menjador Escolar Sostenible** project in Barcelona – a social inclusion (re-inserción) project training catering workers for the public sector using sustainable ingredients in the context of a complete sustainable catering service
 2. A 'political' visit to Italy for public officials and politicians from France (this is in reference to the recent announcement of a 20% target for the use of organic ingredients in school canteens in France and a parallel target for the increasing organic production)
 3. A visit focusing on cookery skills and kitchen operations

- v. **The role of educational farms** (also the topic of a separate area action)

Actions: The regional federation of CIVAMs in the Rhone-Alpes region of France has invited participants from other countries to participate and observe in the De Ferme en Ferme open farm weekend on the 26 and 27 April 2008
www.defermeenferme.com

If you are interested contact jean-yves.morgantini@educagri.fr

- 🌐 Biota or sustainable food camps, Aragon, Spain and Rhone-Alpes (July/September 2008)

Actions: This is an AlimenTerra at a project aimed at raising knowledge and understanding of the culture of food among young people through the organisation of 'food camps' where the participants will learn about the food and culinary traditions of a particular area through practical activities and of course eating the food!

The programme for the first such food camps to be held in Aragon will be forwarded as soon as possible.

- vi. Common response to consultation on European Fruit and Vegetable Scheme go to:
http://www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/fruitveg/sfs/public/index_en.htm

Actions: AlimenTerra is working with other European and national NGO's to draft a common response to this proposal, we will circulate this to all participants in Mensa Civica and would request if you agree that the name of your organisation to a list which will accompany our submission and that you submit this response in your own name. We will circulate this document as soon as possible.

We will also pass on specific suggestions for action is to be undertaken under the proposed scheme such as the formation of the European network of educational farms specialising in raising awareness and understanding of fruit and vegetables

vii. **OOOH group (organic out of home) BioFach Feb 22**

Actions: We will circulate the agenda for this meeting (could the organisers/participants please forward this as soon as possible)

D. Project areas

- i. **Creating a DVD or television programme** featuring a range of successful and innovative sustainable public food initiatives from across Europe (and beyond)

Actions: AlimenTerra (we are open to offers of help) will draft a concept paper to attract interest and select a number of initiatives and that could feature (could you please send me your ideas)

Timescale: concept paper with ideas ready by the next Mensa Civica meeting

- ii. **School meals event with public sector or possibly celebrity chefs** working in kitchens in one locality (Brussels/Belgium was suggested in order to target the EC - policy makers and/or key stakeholders groups).

Actions: AlimenTerra draft a very short concept paper and will contact its Belgian partners, this could also be an event held in any appropriate location, if you would like to offer then please state your interest.

Timescale: concept paper with ideas ready by the next Mensa Civica meeting

- iii. **The policy and practice of the localisation of the public (and more general) food system** (models, guides, toolkits, leverage points etc) basically how do we move towards an agricultural and food production/distribution model which minimises greenhouse gas emission and pollution reconnects producers and purchasers whilst maximising social, environmental and economic benefits to both.

Actions: This is potentially a very important but an immense area of work which is outside the scope of our current resources, we would welcome suggestions on how to proceed with this. One potential project which could encompass certain aspects of this topic is the proposed Interreg IVC project on sustainable food strategies.

Timescale: Send any proposals/ideas you have and these will be discussed at the next Mensa Civica meeting

iv. **School gardens/plots**

Actions: This was identified as an important area for promotion, networking and information exchange. AlimenTerra would welcome one of the public administrations involved taking a lead on this, a potential funding area is the **Comenius** programme of the EC - http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/comenius/index_en.html. AlimenTerra would assist with identifying potential funding and if resources allow, helping to develop a resulting funding proposal.

This subject could also be the focus for a workshop or conference

Timescale: *proposals to be presented at the next Mensa Civica meeting*

v. **School and other stakeholder educational courses and programmes on sustainable food and cooking skills**

Actions: The education of children and the wider community in the knowledge and understanding of sustainable food and food systems was identified as a key priority area for action. AlimenTerra considers that there are two principal areas of action: firstly to create a database of existing educational materials and courses and secondly to develop a network to enable educators and trainers to meet and discuss approaches, successes and barriers.

Re: the first area of action this is something that we can do with existing resources; regarding the second, which is project proposal as with School gardens and plants we would welcome one of the public administrations or an educational/training NGO to take the lead. AlimenTerra would assist with identifying potential funding and if resources allow, helping to develop a resulting funding proposal.

As with the previous area of work, this could be the focus for a workshop or conference.

Timescale: *proposals or ideas to be sent and then presented at the next Mensa Civica meeting*

vi. **Training for educators**

Actions: This would need to be done on two levels firstly courses to raise awareness and understanding of sustainable food and food systems and secondly regarding practical teaching methodology and materials used in transmitting this understanding to the target audience, in particular schoolchildren.

Here as with the two previous points, appropriate funding schemes need to be identified for the organisation of the conference or network or the development or replication of training courses.

Timescale: *proposals or ideas to be sent and then presented at the next Mensa Civica meeting*

vii. **Training for cooks**

This would need to be done on two levels firstly on an educational level to raise awareness and understanding of sustainable food and secondly practical skills and menu/recipe development.

Actions: Here as with the three previous points, appropriate funding schemes need to be identified for the organisation of the conference or network or the development or replication of training courses.

Timescale: *proposals or ideas to be sent and then presented at the next Mensa Civica meeting*

viii. **Strategies and education/training activities** on how to raise awareness and understanding of sustainable food and food systems among **decision makers and opinion leaders** and gain their support for the introduction and implementation of sustainable public food systems.

Actions and timescale: See above

ix. **Working with the private sector** (food and catering service companies; private sector canteens; producer organisations and food processors)

Actions: *AlimenTerra's current resources do not permit them to work directly with the private sector however we believe it is important to involve them in future events, in particular conferences and workshops by including topic areas which are relevant both to public and private (and third) sector stakeholders.*

For example: at the proposed conference at the University of Florence where one of the topic areas contract tenders and contract specifications a workshop could be organised examining how contract caterers have responded to the inclusion of sustainable criteria.

Another suggestion (to be expanded below) is the organisation of conference focusing on the question of sustainable fish and catering services.

x. **A conference on sustainable fish and catering services** - This idea is being developed by AlimenTerra and a partner network 'The Responsible Fisheries Alliance'.

Actions: A concept paper is currently being written

Timescale: This will be circulated within the next two weeks

xi. Establish **Mensa Civica as an expert group on sustainable public food systems**, in order to increase its profile and facilitate its meetings

Actions: Investigate sources of EC funding for expert groups or topic networks

Timescale: *as soon as possible*

xii. **Develop links with the European Technology Platform** in order to make connection with private sector and research

Actions: *This was suggested by Maurizio Mariani from Risteco who will forward his ideas on how to do this*

E. Adding political weight to member organisations and local actions

- i. **Join Mensa Civica**, once the charter, objectives and membership criteria have been agreed

Actions: *once the above have been agreed we will develop a membership form and circulate to participants and other networks*

- ii. **Invite non-local members to participate in local actions** to help add or raise profile

Actions: *in any event that you wish to include in the calendar of events please state where the participation of stakeholders from other countries would help you in this respect*

F. Creation of specific area working groups

- i. a technical working group focusing on the life cycle analysis of public food systems, in order to:
 - a. be a platform for the exchange of information on reducing natural resource use in and the environmental impact of public food systems;
 - b. discuss where in the public food system are there the greatest opportunities to impact on greenhouse gas emissions and what are the best solutions
 - c. understand how to transfer this knowledge to policy and practice at local level
 - d.

Could Maurizio Mariani and Tully Wakeman please add detail

- ii. Kitchen skills group with the focus areas

- a) The definition of sustainable catering
- b) Education/training of staff
- c) Exchange menus, techniques, recipes etc re using quality ingredients and reducing 'unsustainable' ingredients improving

Could the participants who suggested this add detail, thank you

Note 1. If there are any points missed please send them with your comments and suggestions

Note 2. Regarding translation: could participants send me any translations they make of this document; The AlimenTerra team will do translations from Spanish, French and Italian into English for newsletters and to assist with communication, however translations from English are very time-consuming (and inaccurate) for non-native speakers.

Thank you once again for your contribution to the meeting in London, and I look forward to working with you, and hopefully meeting again at the next meeting.

Clive Peckham