

## **SAFE calls for EU to legally commit to sustainable public procurement**

SAFE Food Advocacy Europe calls for the EU to legally commit to sustainable public procurement, in the context of today's Food Dialogues, organised by the European Commission. The dialogues looked at ways to improve the contribution of public procurement to sustainability.

**SAFE's Deputy Director Luigi Tozzi said:** "It is time to recognise food as a strategic sector in the EU, in the same way as industry or defence have been, and support small-scale producers through public procurement, promoting local consumption, seasonal food, and short supply chains. Public administrations must behave like conscious consumers and the best way to encourage that is clear EU-wide binding legislation."

SAFE believes that legislation containing stronger standards is perfectly compatible with simplification. We call for the European Commission to establish minimum mandatory sustainability criteria for public food procurement, and to clarify the rules governing how public authorities should engage with suppliers.

**Tozzi said:** "Quality, sustainability, and other social aspects must count as much as price in public food procurement. This means engaging with SMEs and small-scale farmers before launching procurements, to increase their participation. It also means that we cannot be feeding children ultra-processed foods at school canteens. Affordability must not come at the expense of public health."

SAFE also expressed concern that the current geopolitical instability could be used as a pretext for unjustified food price hikes and calls for the EU to strengthen market monitoring mechanisms and to establish fines for deliberate market distortions.