

Question for written answer E-004093/2026
to the Commission
Rule 144
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)

Subject: Right to a healthy meal, school canteens and food – tackling territorial inequalities

In an increasingly fast-paced society, eating healthily is often difficult. Access to healthy food depends not only on individual choices, but also on income, prices, local availability and public services. Time and money might lead us to opt for ready-to-eat and ultra-processed food.

This issue is particularly relevant in the southern Italy and especially in Sicily. In its reply to question E-001981/2025¹, the Commission acknowledged the difficulties in accessing school canteens in Sicily and highlighted the resources in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) to reduce territorial disparities². Meanwhile, the cost of the Italian shopping basket has increased by 29.5 % in five years, with the most vulnerable households affected³.

The European Child Guarantee, the implementation of which was further strengthened in 2026, promotes access to at least one healthy meal per school day for children in need⁴. The ESF+ Regulation (EU) 2021/1057⁵ also provides for, where appropriate, a choice of foods that favours a balanced diet for those most in need.

In view of the above:

1. How does the Commission intend to support access to healthy meals in regions with greater territorial inequalities and improve (through the ESF+) nutritional quality and food assistance?
2. Will it strengthen prevention policies and equitable access to healthy food, including in relation to ultra-processed food, taking into account the specific characteristics of Mediterranean, island and peripheral regions?

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¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-001981-ASW_EN.html.

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-001981-ASW_EN.html.

³ https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/topnews/2026/08/31/carrello-della-spesa-piu-caro-del-295-in-5-anni_f6e9de19-e464-42cd-a4ca-10e2e5de009b.html;

https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/economia/2026/08/31/carrello-della-spesa-piu-caro-del-295-in-5-anni_675a53d3-4f87-49d4-854d-19cf42a566b9.html.

⁴ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/social-protection-social-inclusion/addressing-poverty-and-supporting-social-inclusion/investing-children/european-child-guarantee_en.

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R1057>.