

## PRESS RELEASE

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Title: **BETTER POLICIES FOR URBAN FARMING**

The European Forum on Urban Agriculture (EFUA) organized on the 21st of June 2022 a policy talk in Brussels on better policies for urban farming. Experts with very diverse backgrounds reflected on bottlenecks and opportunities in current policies. An intense dialogue showed the richness and potential of urban farming in Europe. Furthermore, it also became clear that EFUA connects to other ongoing European projects.

**Urban Farming.** Urban Agriculture (UA) is the practice of cultivating, processing and distributing food in and around urban areas. UA has greater potential to provide answers to pressing global challenges such as food security, climate change, increasing urbanisation and social inequalities. In this context, the European Commission funded EFUA – European Forum on Urban Agriculture – under the Horizon 2020 research and innovation program. EFUA’s objectives are to unlock Urban Agriculture’s potential through achieving better networking, better knowledge, better deployment and better policies in the field.

**Feeding cities.** Urban farming has many different faces. It can be very close to conventional farming, but with the specificity of being close to a city. It can also be within a city, on land or even on roofs or in cellars. However, what most urban farming initiatives have in common, is the close link with urban citizens. Urban farming makes food production visible within an urban environment. In that context, EFUA links up closely with the COCOREADO project, that focuses on bridging the gap between consumers and producers and aims at enhancing the position of the farmer. Moreover, both EFUA and COCOREADO can rely on great interest among youngsters.

Alexandre Lefebvre (Alaube) also brought some innovative examples of urban farming in schools to the debate. Also, he illustrated with the case of the Ferme du Parc Maximilien the social value of urban farming in Brussels. This social value was also emphasized by Romain Guillaud (CDEC), who is involved in the Interreg

project GROOF. Among the GROOF pilots, several have a key social component, such as the link with a kindergarten and community involvement.

From a technology point of view, urban farming is a very interesting domain. Thomas Zoellner, co-founder and the secretary-general of the FarmTech Society, shared his experience on the added value that urban farming can bring to conventional farming and to food security challenges as a whole. Also, Augustin Nourissier, a former IT specialist and founder of Skyfarms, outlined the diverse degrees of innovations within the wide range of urban farming initiatives.

[Tessa Avermaete \(KU Leuven\)](#) highlighted the relevance of urban farming in a context of circular food systems, a topic that is dealt with in the European RUSTICA project. This linkage between regional food systems and the circular bioeconomy was the topic of an international workshop that took place in Leuven.



**Need for adequate policy.** The core topic of the EFUA workshop was the need for better policies. Fabio Cossu, representative from DG AGRI at the workshop, confirmed the value of urban farming for Europe's food system. All participants agreed that urban farming is tightly connected to several policy domains including agriculture, environment, health, economy, education, etc. It will be a challenge in the upcoming years to identify in each of these policy domains the specific added values that urban farming has and formulate adequate policy measures to enhance the positive outcomes of urban farming initiatives.