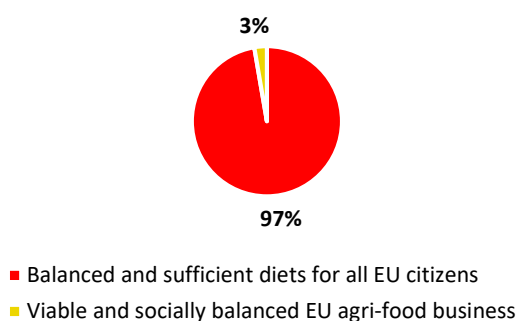


### A3.7 Policy actor: Food services & School food services

In times when traditional home cooking is being gradually replaced by **eating out** and ordering **ready-to-eat food** at home, food services are gaining increasing importance in the agri-food economy. They include all those businesses, institutions and companies that are responsible for any meal prepared outside the domestic environment and distributed to consumers. Moreover, with children eating 1-2 meals in schools each day, **schools, after school** and **early childcare programmes** are important opportunities for promoting healthy eating. Indeed school meals, if well balanced, have been linked to improved concentration in class, better educational outcomes and fewer sick days. In light of this, schools are always more regarded as **primary targets** to counteract the increase of childhood obesity levels. According to the JRC analysis of European National School Food Policies (SFP), all EU-28 Member States acknowledge the important contribution of school food to child health and development, and provide either **voluntary guidelines** or **mandatory regulations** on what food and drinks should be served in school canteens.

#### Proportion of food services-targeted mapped policies by GOAL



As many European countries have designed policies to help schools provide nutritionally balanced meals to scholars at all educational levels, the most hit policy goal is the achievement of **balanced and sufficient diets** (97%). This is particularly true in circumstances where lunch is not usually home-made and brought to school but received from a central food service point.

*Considering that food services represent a highly **competitive sector**, could it be worthful to increase policies aimed at making this business more viable and balanced?*

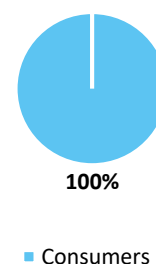
*Being an ever-growing sector, should more food services-target policies address **jobs creation**?*

*None of the mapped policies insist on the 'Equitable outcomes and conditions' goal: **are equity standards generally respected among the different existing job positions in food services?***

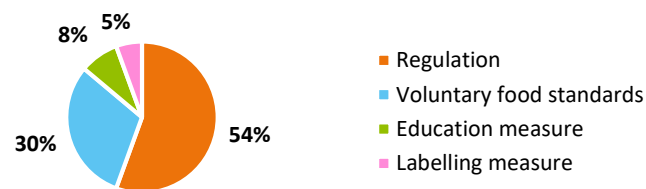
#### Proportion of food services-targeted mapped policies by ULTIMATE BENEFICIARY

As expected, all mapped policies intend to reach and benefit consumers, as they provide services thought to be immediately consumed, independently of the social environment considered.

*May **farms, food industries and SMEs** become ultimate beneficiaries as well, if food services begin to rely more on **local, short food supply chains** and adopt the '**farm-to-table**' (or farm-to-school) approach?*



## Proportion of food services-targeted mapped policies by INSTRUMENT



**Regulations** on how to handle food in caterings, restaurants and canteens are important instruments in the fight against food scandals, food contaminations and unsafe food preparation and storage, which is the reason for which they are the most used instruments in the food services policy area (54%).

Mandatory regulations are followed by **voluntary food standards** (30%), mainly in the form of guidelines to be applied in school environments. *Would they be more effective if converted into **mandatory food standards** to be complied with by all schools at EU level, while respecting nation and regional culinary traditions and dietary habits at the same time?*

There is general consensus on the need to accompany school policies with **education measures**, as they are important for both providing scholars with adequate explanation on the nutrient value of the food they receive by food services, and for **training school catering staff** on how to handle food in the safest way possible.

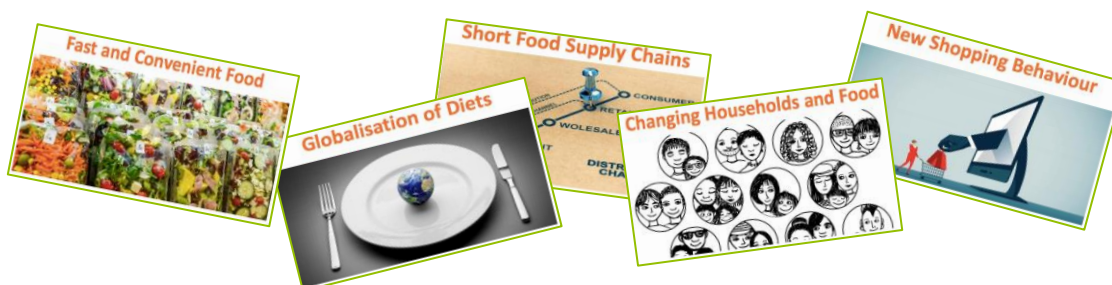
*Are **education measures** sufficiently employed?  
In the absence of them, may the effectiveness of school policies be limited?*

The benefits derived from school policies risks being compromised by the compensation effect outside schools, namely the availability of restricted food in other school-based (or near school) outlets.

*Are there food services measures targeting children also outside school environments?  
What kind of **information measure** could best target schoolchildren families?*



## Relevant related trends in the food system



Source: FIT4FOOD2030 (2018), "Trends in the food system", D2.1