

Press Release

Berlin, 23.02.2023

A look at challenges facing the agrifood system Publication of a contribution to the debate on the food transition

Members of *Die Junge Akademie's* Research Group "Sustainability" have published a contribution to the debate on the food transition. Titled "Die Zukunft der Ernährung in Europa: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven" [The Future of Food in Europe: Interdisciplinary Perspectives], the team of authors examines what it considers to be necessary changes in the agrifood system.

War, climate change, and the extinction of species pose major challenges to global food security. Disruptions to supply chains as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war on Ukraine have made the threat palpable for much of the world's population. The increasing frequency of extreme weather events and the spread of pests are leading to lower agricultural yields in many places. The interdisciplinary team of authors asks what potential sources of instability must be feared in the future and what societies can do to counteract them.

"Industrial agriculture and factory farming, as well as malnutrition and the resulting impact on health, mean that all of us must change the way we think about the agrifood system," says Linus Mattauch, spokesperson of *Die Junge Akademie's* Research Group "Sustainability" and Professor at the Technische Universität Berlin (TU Berlin) and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK). Possible solutions discussed include socially just pricing for the environmental costs of animal products, keeping livestock in better conditions, diversification of diet and trade relations, as well as international strategies for climate change adaptation that take into account vulnerable points along the entire supply chain.

Hermine Mitter, member of the Research Group "Sustainability" and researcher in the Department of Economics and Social Sciences at Vienna's University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), adds: "As part of the younger generation of researchers, we consider interdisciplinary dialogue and exchange with representatives from outside academic structures indispensable. The topic transcends not only specific topics such as species extinction, hunger and disease, structural change in agriculture, climate change and pollution, but also benchmarks we use to assess issues such as ethical judgements, economic efficiency, and participative dialogue."

The team of authors, which includes two researchers who are not members of *Die Junge Akademie*, regard their contribution as an invitation to further the discussion on the challenges facing the agrifood system from a multidisciplinary perspective, in order to reflect its diverse aspects. *Die Junge Akademie* itself is preparing a *ClimateLecture* on the topic for summer 2023.

Authors

- [Franziska Funke](#), Technische Universität Berlin and Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany
- [Linus Mattauch](#), *Die Junge Akademie*, Technische Universität Berlin, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany, and University of Oxford, United Kingdom
- [Thorsten Merl](#), *Die Junge Akademie*, Philipps-Universität Marburg, Germany
- [Hermine Mitter](#), *Die Junge Akademie*, Department of Economics and Social Sciences at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) Vienna, Austria
- [Viola Priesemann](#), *Die Junge Akademie*, Max Planck Institute for Dynamics and Self-Organization, and University of Göttingen, Germany
- [Leonie Wenz](#), *Die Junge Akademie*, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change, Germany
- [Anna Wiese](#), Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam, the Netherlands

The contribution to the debate is partially based on the activities of several members of *Die Junge Akademie* at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities' event "Salon Sophie Charlotte" on 21 May 2022. Information on the Research Group "Sustainability" is available [here](#).

The debate contribution can be [downloaded as a PDF here](#). The "debate contribution" format reflects the views of the authors. It does not necessarily reflect the views of *Die Junge Akademie* as a whole.

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Please contact presse@diejungeakademie.de with requests for interviews.

Die Junge Akademie
at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities
and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina

Die Junge Akademie was founded in 2000 as the world's first academy for outstanding young academics. Its members – who come from all academic disciplines as well as creative fields – explore the potential and limits of interdisciplinary work in new projects, aim to encourage dialogue between academia and society, and provide new impetus in discussions about scientific policy. *Die Junge Akademie* is supported by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. Its office is located in Berlin.