

**The session will showcase how policy advocacy can play a relevant role and explore success factors and strategies based on the example of sustainable food procurement, which is one of the target areas of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy. The session is powered by the European Advocacy Campaign [Buy Better Food](#), led by ICLEI.**

- Finland provides free school meals for all children under 18. The school canteens are publicly owned. But one challenge they face is that catering companies in schools (publicly owned) want to be as independent as possible. Catering companies (whether public or private) should be part of the discussion within Procura+ and in a campaign like [Buy Better Food](#).
- Mouans Sartoux has served 100% organic school meals for the past 10 years already. They managed to shift to 100% organic meals without increasing costs – by reducing the amount of meat, reduced portions, and tackling food waste. This effort was achieved thanks to strong political commitment from the Mayor. Being involved in international campaigns like [Buy Better Food](#) is also important to expand transformation beyond one's city.
- The city of Oslo has a new school meal project which started in 2022: they serve a free vegetarian school meal in highschools. Starting 2023, they will also do it for middle schools.
- To trigger change, it was suggested that [Buy Better Food](#) should organize a school meals event at the European Parliament's or at the Commission's canteens. This will show the policy makers directly why healthy and sustainable meals in schools are so essential.
- Local food was an highlight topic in the discussion around public procurement criteria, with cities highlighting the importance of supporting local production, but finding different ways to get around the legal blockage due to fair competition. CO2 emissions or requirements on the freshness of products could be used to get food as local as possible. The campaign from UnPlusBio is also now asking for *Food exception in the public procurement regulation*.
- The participants said the [Manifesto on Minimum Mandatory Criteria for Public Food Procurement](#) is a very good point of start for a European legislation that try to facilitate all European local and regional governments to transition to more sustainable practices in public food procurement.