

BRIEFING

Prep for SFSC4FoodSecurity Workshop in Krakow 10-11/07/2025

Food security/sustainability priorities in Krakow's Development Strategy 2030/2050 (in prep)



Kraków in 2050

- ✓ **A knowledge-driven economy** (focused on R&D).
- ✓ **A sustainable, green city** (carbon-neutral, clean air, resilient to climate shocks).
- ✓ **A socially inclusive metropolis** (affordable housing, 15-minute neighborhoods).
- ✓ **A globally connected hub** (strong in tech, culture, and education).

Success depends on **implementation, private sector collaboration, and citizen engagement**.

Strategic Vision includes also food security & sustainability

‘**THIS IS WHERE I WANT TO LIVE**’ is Krakow’s development strategy 2030/2050 – currently being drafted by the Mayor of Krakow - recognizes food policies and programmes for food security as a key element of urban resilience, sustainability, and quality of life.

As a 2024 signatory of the **Milan Urban Food Policy Pact**, the Mayor Aleksander Misalski has committed to building a food system that is inclusive, resilient to crises, environmentally sustainable, and socially equitable. The strategy envisions a city where all residents have access to healthy, affordable food, and where local food production is protected and integrated into the urban fabric. This vision is rooted in a recognition that food systems are not only about nutrition and agriculture, but also about land use, climate adaptation, biodiversity, economic justice, and community well-being.

Key Strategic Goals

The strategy outlines several interlinked goals to shape Krakow’s food policy:

1. **Strengthen Local Food Sovereignty**

The goal is to support small-scale farming and food production in and around the City capable of providing a stable supply of food in times of crisis. This includes promoting short supply chains and direct sales models that connect producers and consumers more closely, creating opportunities for citizens to become small-scale food producers, nurturing allotment food production, school gardens and other initiatives – all to reduce reliance on global supply networks.

2. **Protect Agricultural Land**

The goal is to resist the growing pressure to convert farmland into urban developments. To counter this, the strategy calls for the protection of agricultural zones as part of Krakow’s green infrastructure, recognizing their role in food security, biodiversity, and climate resilience. Combatting the prevailing notion that all ‘agricultural land is future development land’.

3. **Develop Local Food Markets**

The goal is to create economically competitive local food markets—both physical and digital—that reduce intermediaries and transaction costs. Support is envisaged for cooperatives, food clubs, and other forms of organised farmers' markets that make local food more accessible and affordable. Support to be provided to revive, modernise and grow existing food markets, as well as initiate new ones, to incentive both producers and consumers to transact with one another directly. IT-enabled collaborative logistics and distribution solutions to be prioritised.

4. **Promote Food Education and Urban Agriculture**

The goal is to promote food literacy and hands-on learning related to sustainable diets. Education campaigns are to encourage the development of school gardens, community gardens, and shared urban agriculture spaces, while also calling for a clearer policy on the role of allotment and community gardens in the city. In addition, Krakow's tourist industry, especially restaurants will be encouraged to source food products locally.

5. **Green Public Procurement**

The goal is to lead by example by introducing sustainable food sourcing in public institutions, particularly schools. This includes prioritizing local, seasonal, and healthy food in public procurement processes.

Key Dilemmas and Challenges

Krakow faces several structural and policy-related challenges in transforming its food system:

1. URBAN-RURAL AMBIGUITY: Agricultural areas within Krakow's administrative boundaries are excluded from rural development programs. This leaves them in a policy limbo—neither fully urban nor rural—limiting access to funding and institutional support for local farmers.

2. MARKET PRESSURE AND LAND CONVERSION: Farmers on the urban fringe face strong economic incentives to sell their land for development. This trend threatens the long-term viability of local food production and undermines the city's food sovereignty goals.

3. DOMINANCE OF GLOBAL RETAIL CHAINS: Local producers struggle to compete with large retail chains that offer imported food at lower prices. The high costs of logistics and distribution make it difficult for small-scale farmers to reach urban consumers profitably. Supermarkets are being built around Krakow, replacing existing farmer markets, as Krakow expands beyond its administrative boundaries to turn surrounding local municipalities into sleeper communities.

4. LACK OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT: Public institutions in Krakow rarely apply green procurement practices. Moreover, there is no coherent city-wide policy on urban agriculture or the integration of food systems into education and public space planning. No 'green' and 'farmer-friendly' food procurement for schools, for example. Food in all its dimensions has not been hitherto on the political and policy agenda.

5. FOOD SYSTEM VULNERABILITY: Krakow's food supply is heavily dependent on long, complex supply chains that are vulnerable to disruption from climate events, geopolitical instability, or logistical breakdowns. The local food system remains underdeveloped and fragile. Many existing food markets are in decline with the advent of supermarkets and supermarket culture.

6. FRAGMENTED GOVERNANCE: Food policy is not fully integrated across city departments or coordinated at the metropolitan and regional scale. A major challenge lies in ensuring alignment of policies and actions not only within Krakow, but also with surrounding municipalities and the broader Malopolska region. Effective coordination with regional authorities in Malopolska is essential to address shared challenges such as land use, infrastructure, and rural development. Without such alignment, efforts to build a resilient and sustainable food system risk being undermined by conflicting priorities and fragmented implementation.

Strategic Imperatives

To overcome these challenges, the strategy calls for a coordinated, regional-scale food policy and programming that engages surrounding municipalities and regional authorities.

An important opportunity lies in harnessing Krakow's knowledge resources and digital innovation community to work out new organisational and digital market-oriented solutions for reducing costs of connecting food producers with consumers across the city. The ambition is to create a subsidy-free basis for long-term land protection policies, and community engagement in shaping the food system.

Krakow's food strategy is not just about agriculture—it is about building a city that is more resilient, equitable, and connected to its ecological and cultural roots.