

Food Waste
prevention in the
hospitality sector
—
food for thought

Marta Machado,
Deputy Director General

25 February 2021



HOTREC at a glance

- **Umbrella Association of Hotels, Restaurants, Bars and Cafes in Europe**
- **44 National Associations**
- **33 European countries**
- **The voice of the hospitality industry at EU level**



- 2 million companies (90% of them are micro-enterprises)
- 12 million jobs, 20% aged under 25
- Contributed with 5% of the GDP to the EU economy
- Key pillar of Tourism
- Impact supply chain

An unprecedented challenge...

- Second wave restrictive measures across Europe since October 2020
- Restaurants, bars closed in most EU countries – delivery/take away only. Late night establishments closed since March
- Many hotels shut down entirely. Where open, occupancy rates were lower than 5% in most European countries.
- Companies report between **80-90% loss in turnover**
- Some companies report 100% loss
- Cash flow down; liquidity shortages - fixed costs still running – increasing issue of solvency
- Estimates point a possible loss of up to **6,4 million jobs** for tourism



HOTREC commitment to reduce Food Waste

- Promotion of actions to reduce food waste in the hospitality sector → contribute to EU's commitment to halve food waste by 2030 as per the UN SDG 12.3
- HOTREC issued [guidelines to reduce food waste and recommendations](#) to manage food donations in hospitality businesses
- HOTREC calls on public authorities and stakeholders **to cooperate** → support actions to reduce food waste in the hospitality sector + implement the [EU recommendations](#) for action in food waste prevention (EU Platform on food losses & food waste)

Food services generate only 12% of the total food waste. Hospitality represents only a share of this percentage, as food services also cover other sectors.

Actions at national level by the hospitality sector

- Government's promotion of the Commission guidelines

e.g. <https://voedselverlies.be/en>

- Flemish authorities highlighting actions being taken
- To be updated in future with next steps



- HOTREC members are developing their guidelines, based on the Commission

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION IN HOSPITALITY/FOOD SERVICES

- 90% are micro-enterprises
- No standardized meals (as a rule) + work small kitchens
- Guidance + cooperation with third parties is key
- Need to engage business + customers
- **Companies to develop good practices**
- **Decrease food waste prevention → part of normal operation + daily work**



Provide support to small businesses to increase their knowledge and capacity-building

- ✓ Disseminate guidance + training materials for businesses → promoting food waste prevention + reduction in all processes (ordering, storing, preparing, serving and waste managing of food products)

Also:

- Good planning is essential
- Different materials for restaurateur + staff
- Schools + educational establishments involvement



Motivate and engage businesses to adopt measures against food waste in their operations



- ✓ Showcase examples where such measures led to a fast return on investment/ short-term economic benefits
 - Important to help businesses see the economic value of preventing food waste
 - Preventing food waste also costs. Maybe positive to concentrate on:
 - a) Most valuable waste
 - b) Waste that is easy to prevent
 - Trade associations to pass message when discussing with researchers + public authorities + media

Identify solutions to the logistical challenge linked to the collection of small quantities of food in multiple locations

- Use public-private and inter-sectorial cooperation to foster the development of technological solutions that can better connect offer and needs
- Challenge to some members:
 - Batches of food are small + diverse
 - Food is microbiological perishable
 - Positive to use on occasions



Monitor actions' efficiency and effectiveness by setting SMART objectives and KPIs

- When measurement is possible → suggestion to measure percentage of food waste (food waste in kilograms / food prepared during the same period, e.g. day, in kilograms)



- When exact measurement is not possible → maybe useful to estimate the share of food waste compared with the total amount of organic waste

Help to influence consumer expectations/behaviour to reduce and prevent plate waste



Some ideas/challenges:

- Pay per food weight + charging customers for plate waste → probably feasible only in certain types of business models.
- Challenge for customer to understand why small portions cannot be much cheaper (e.g. labour costs / quality product)
- Customers should understand the reason of doggie bags
- Consumer behavior can be influenced by price (e.g. last hour half-price buffet)

Conclusions

- HOTREC to continue collecting information from members
- Public authorities to disseminate the guidelines
- HOTREC to encourage members to develop best practices





Thank You

For Your Attention