



SUMMARY REPORT

EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE: SUB-GROUP ON FOOD DONATION

DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

5th meeting

Brussels, 36 Rue Froissart (Albert Borschette building), Room 5B

11 March 2019 – From 10:00 to 14:00

Chair: Anne-Laure Gassin, *Policy Officer, Food information and composition, food waste, DG SANTE*

Commission: DG SANTE

Member States represented:

BE, DK, ES, FI, FR, HR, NL, PL, RO and SI

Private sector organisations:

EUROCOMMERCE; EUROPEAN FOOD BANKS FEDERATION; FOODCLOUD; FOODDRINKEUROPE; FOODSERVICEEUROPE; HOTREC; HUNGARIAN FOOD BANK ASSOCIATION; INDEPENDENT RETAIL EUROPE; LES RESTAURANTS DU COEUR and WAGENINGEN UR

Observers:

NO, FAO

Invited organisations:

ECORYS

1. WELCOME AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair welcomed members and presented the agenda. Further on, the Chair announced the Commission had launched a public consultation through the feedback mechanism in order to give citizens and stakeholders the opportunity to express their views on the proposed EU food waste measurement methodology.

2. SECOND SCIENTIFIC OPINION ON HAZARD ANALYSIS APPROACHES FOR CERTAIN SMALL RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS AND FOOD DONATIONS, PRESENTATION BY THE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY (EFSA)

The first EFSA opinion on hazard analysis approaches (2017) targets five types of micro retail establishments, laying down pre-requisite programmes (PRPs) – precautionary measures to avoid contamination (bacterial, chemical including allergens and physical) or bacteria growth. The second opinion (2018) focusses on more often small retailers (restaurants, pubs, caterers, supermarkets and distribution centres); as well as food donation at retail level, in general. It also introduces four new PRPs related to food donation: 'shelf life control', 'handling of returned foods', 'evaluation for food donation and allocation of remaining shelf life' and 'freezing food intended for donation'. The opinion includes flow diagrams for each establishment to serve as a basis for the development of food safety management systems/hazard analysis; as well as simplified food safety management systems for both donors and recipients engaged in food donation activities.

FI inquired about any risks associated with the PRPs. EFSA explained the aim of the opinion is to guide food business operators in setting up their food safety management systems, rather than provide risk assessments for specific food products. In reply to a question raised by Restaurants du Coeur, EFSA indicated that the opinion provides guidance on the steps to take should a problem arise. FOODCLOUD referred to the dissemination process and how stakeholders, including small businesses, would be informed of the opinion; the Commission explained that the document would serve as a basis for a Commission notice to be translated into all official EU languages and published in the Official Journal. The notice would be shared with stakeholders for further dissemination in their respective networks and countries. FEBA proposed to establish dialogue between charity organisations, the Commission and EFSA in order to leverage findings from the scientific opinion. The Commission suggested that the sub-group on food donation would be the appropriate forum for such dialogue.

3. DRAFT COMMISSION NOTICE PROVIDING GUIDANCE ON HAZARD ANALYSIS APPROACHES FOR FOOD RETAIL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING FOOD DONATIONS, PRESENTATION BY THE COMMISSION

The Commission encouraged stakeholders to develop practical sector-specific guidance documents based on the two scientific opinions created by EFSA. Building on the two documents, the Commission will create a notice that will include a section on food donation, providing simplified guidance and recommendations for food business operators, including charity organisations. The draft notice was circulated in January 2019 for input from specialised Commission working groups (*e.g.* hygiene, food information to consumers) and to a wider range of interested stakeholders, amongst which the EU Platform and its food donation sub-group. The Commission announced that the deadline for receipt of comments had been extended to 20 March and encouraged members to provide their input; the document would then be discussed further on 29 April within the Working Group on Food hygiene. Following its adoption, the notice will be translated in all official EU languages and published in the Official Journal.

According to EU food hygiene rules, food business operators are required to put in place procedures based on hazard principles (7 steps), with hazard analysis being the first step including identification of Critical Control Points (CCPs). The EFSA opinion provides a simplified framework for ensuring food safety (food safety management system) based on Good Hygiene Practices and the application of prerequisite programme (PRP) criteria. The

EFSA opinion identifies which PRPs are needed and when, for different retailers and for food donation.

As regards food donation aspects, the Chair indicated that members of the Working Group on Food Hygiene had provided feedback on the draft COM notice in relation to date marking, application of the General Food Law and freezing food for donation. ES requested to include a statement in the notice, clarifying that donors and recipients should consult national rules, as certain practices allowed at EU level such as food donation past the ‘Best Before’ date were not allowed under national legislation. ES also specified that they would come back with further information on why such practices are prohibited at national level.

EUROCOMMERCE suggested the notice should have a simpler format, as feedback from small retailers indicated they had difficulties notably given the length of the draft document. The Commission explained that for communication purposes, the notice could be split into factsheets for each of the 10 establishments covered in its scope. NO highlighted that date marking terminology should be harmonised throughout the notice.

The Chair thanked members for their remarks, indicated that further input from Platform members would be welcome and that the document would be further discussed at the next plenary meeting of the Platform on 6 May.

4. REVISED DRAFT DOCUMENT 'REDISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS FOOD: EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES IN THE MEMBER STATES', PRESENTATION BY THE COMMISSION

The Chair explained that members’ input would be sought on a bilateral basis to resolve the few outstanding questions, with the aim to provide a final draft of the document ahead of the plenary Platform meeting on 6 May when it would be validated. The Chair also highlighted the importance of obtaining the validation of national competent authorities regarding the accuracy of its content. The document would then be updated on a yearly basis to include the latest developments.

5. UPDATE ON EU PILOT PROJECT ON FOOD REDISTRIBUTION INCLUDING PRESENTATION OF TASK 2 DELIVERABLE CONCERNING OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR FOOD REDISTRIBUTION IN EU MEMBER STATES – PRESENTATION BY ECORYS/WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY

The contractor presented an overview of the project’s Task 2: mapping of existing operational frameworks for food redistribution across Member States, focussing on the methodological approach and results obtained.

ES inquired about the difference between the amounts of food donated and redistributed; the contractor explained that the study did not focus on the destination of surplus food that does not reach its end beneficiary. Concerning the impact of food waste prevention actions on the availability of surplus food (FoodServiceEurope), the interviews did not reveal a direct link between the two. FOODCLOUD indicated a decrease of traditional food surplus sources and explained that donors with an awareness of food waste put in place measures to prevent surplus from arising.

Restaurants du Coeur noted that redistribution organisations with a “for profit” model did not appear to be considered in the analysis, notably for Facilitator organisations (FO). The

Commission reiterated that, whilst such analysis is of interest, the scope of the EU guidelines was limited to non-commercial food redistribution. FOODCLOUD pointed out that tax incentives or encouraging legislative frameworks as being the main determinants for “for-profit” redistribution organisations to arise.

FR informed regarding an ongoing evaluation of the 2016 legislation on food waste prevention (obligations regarding food donation) and that the obligation to donate food would be extended to other sectors of the food supply chain (i.e. beyond retail).

Concerning legislative barriers to food redistribution, interview respondents reported different issues depending on their respective countries. Regulatory barriers and other limitations (*e.g.* financial resources) affected redistribution organisations differently, in accordance to the model of their operations.

The Commission announced that Platform members would receive fact sheets detailing operational models existing in each country for their revision. Based on input received from Member States, the conclusions of the Task 2 report would be updated and a final draft of the document would be available at the end of April. Following the finalisation of the Platform document on Member States’ food redistribution practices, the contractor would also update the Task 1 report.

6. INFORMATION SHARING ON FOOD DONATION ACTIVITIES IN MEMBER STATES BY SECTORIAL ORGANISATIONS

6.1 FOOD RESCUE: THE NEW FUTURE OF FOOD DONATION, PRESENTATION BY FOODCLOUD AND FEBA

The presentation focussed on the delegated distribution model, a new operational model for food banks, where increased amounts of surplus food are redistributed in smaller volumes directly from actors in the supply chain to smaller-scale charities. Under this model, food banks manage the relationships between partner organisations (donors and receivers) whilst a digital network facilitates the redistribution process. FEBA and FOODCLOUD indicated considerations to keep in mind when setting up a delegated distribution model, highlighting its challenges and opportunities. A skill-sharing workshop on the topic had been organised by FEBA in collaboration with FOODCLOUD in Dublin (10-11 December 2018) and the report is available [here](#).

DK inquired about the information on food surplus available for charities through the app utilised to facilitate redistribution. FOODCLOUD indicated that the digital tool could support traceability: it was explained that basic information was always accessible (*e.g.* category and quantity of food), while some donors encoded more detailed information depending on the technology employed. In reply to a question by EuroCommerce, FOODCLOUD confirmed they met resistance from retailers to enter data via the software application. The solution was to align the food redistribution process to the usual operations of the retailer through continuous improvements.

HR asked about the logistics aspects and how the choice of charity is managed through the digital tool. FOODCLOUD explained that the main criteria were firstly the availability of charities to pick up the food, followed by their proximity and interest.

In reply to a question raised by FAO regarding FOODCLOUD's terms of collaboration with other food banks, FOODCLOUD mentioned that in IE they have set up networks of food banks and charities. In the UK, FOODCLOUD provides support and technology to FairShare, which manages the national network. The cooperation between the two organisations has boosted the UK network of charities from 3000 to 7000.

6.2 INCREASING CHANNEL CAPACITIES IN FOOD SURPLUS REDISTRIBUTION IN HUNGARY, PRESENTATION BY THE HUNGARIAN FOOD BANKS ASSOCIATION (HFBA)

HFBA has noted an increase in availability of food for donation, which has led to capacity issues in redistribution operations. It was explained that while the traditional food bank model has grown slowly, the delegated distribution model was strongly developing, however limited by operational capacity (*e.g.* staff, financial resources).

Further, HFBA offered an overview of their project, focussing on analysing the current food redistribution system in Hungary and opportunities for development/improvement. Among the results, HFBA mentioned the establishment of a new local redistribution network in Paks and a food bank in Debrecen, as well as a preliminary agreement to finance food redistribution activities under the upcoming FEAD programme. It was estimated that through usage of FEAD funds, the redistribution capacity increase would be three-fold. Learnings from the project also indicated that public-private cooperation opportunities were underutilised and that organisations needed to secure external funding in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of their operations.

6.3 DIGITAL NETWORK OF THE EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE, PRESENTATION BY THE COMMISSION

The presentation provided an overview of the [Digital Network](#)'s main functionalities and the ways in which it supports the work of Platform members.

In closing the meeting, the Commission announced members would receive a new draft of the Commission notice providing guidance on hazard analysis approaches for food retail activities, including food donations for further input and comment, as well as a draft of the Platform document on Member States' redistribution practices for final validation. Furthermore, as many of the food waste prevention actions collected during the JRC exercise to assess food waste prevention initiatives concerned food redistribution activities, the Commission was considering organising a joint meeting of the Food donation and Action & implementation sub-groups in the end of September/ beginning of October.