



## SUMMARY REPORT

### 2<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF THE EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE (2022-2026)

#### DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

*Meeting on-site in Brussels/on-line via Interactio*

*20 October 2022 – From 09:30 to 16:10*

**Chair:** Alexandra Nikolakopoulou, Head of Unit E1, DG SANTE

**Commission (8):** DGs AGRI, EMPL, GROW, JRC, MARE, OIB, RTD, SANTE

**EU agencies (3):** European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA), European Environment Agency (EEA), European Research Executive Agency (REA)

**Member States (25):** AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK

**Private sector organisations (34):** BEUC - The European Consumer Organization, BOROUME, CLEAN TECHNOLOGY CENTRE MTU, COPA - European Farmers, Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V. (DUH), ECSLA - European Cold Storage and Logistics Association, EFFPA - European Former Foodstuff Processors Association, EUCOFEL - European Fruit and Vegetables Trade Association, EUPPA - European Potato Processors' Association, EuroCommerce, EURO COOP - European Community of Consumer Cooperatives, EUROPATAT - European Potato Trade Association, FEBA - European Food Banks Federation, FoodCloud, FoodDrinkEurope, FOODSERVICEEUROPE, FOODWIN - Food Waste Innovation Network, FRESHFEL EUROPE - European Fresh Produce Association, FRUTA FEIA CRL, AZTI Foundation, HAROKOPIO UNIVERSITY, HOTREC - Hospitality Europe, HFBA - Hungarian Food Bank Association, IFWC - International Food Waste Coalition, LAST MINUTE MARKET, LES RESTAURANTS DU CŒUR; Matvett, Norsus and Nofima Consortium; REGAL NORMANDIE, STOP WASTING FOOD MOVEMENT DENMARK, THÜNEN-INSTITUT, TOO GOOD TO GO, VENTURIS HORECA, WRAP - Waste and Resources Action Programme, WUR - Wageningen University & Research, ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND

**Public entities (5):** European Committee of the Regions (CoR), European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

**Observers:** Norway

**Invited (2):** Open Evidence, World Resources Institute

## 1. Introduction by the Chair

The Chair opened the meeting and invited everyone to hold a minute of silence to honour the memory of former DG SANTE Director Nathalie Chaze. The Chair announced that due to the preparation of the legislative proposal to set EU-wide legally binding food waste targets, three sub-group meetings (Food loss and waste monitoring, Date marking and food waste prevention, Consumer food waste prevention) would be postponed to next year. She also informed that the Commission will soon organize a Citizens' panel to exchange views on the food waste targets with the public.

## 2. Platform sub-groups: update by co-chairs on ongoing work ([slides](#))

**Venturis Horeca** presented the work of the **Food loss and waste monitoring sub-group**, which, in 2022, focused on food waste measurement in the food services and hospitality sector. At its first meeting, the sub-group identified four types of challenges faced by food businesses in this sector related to measurement and reduction of food waste, while the second meeting will focus on finding solutions to these challenges. Based on these findings, a report will be prepared to help stakeholders monitor and take action to prevent food waste.

**WRAP** presented the work of the **Action and Implementation sub-group**, which focused, at its first meeting, on the role of Voluntary Agreements in reducing food waste and, at its second meeting, on the integration of food loss and waste prevention measures in climate strategies and plans. The sub-group will prepare a report on key learnings from Voluntary Agreements adopted to date.

**FEBA** presented the work of the **Food donation sub-group**, which has centred its exchanges on challenges and opportunities related to the current food redistribution landscape in Europe. The sub-group intends to prepare a report outlining the current state-of-play, based on which recommendations can be made to improve national policies and encourage donation by food businesses, identifying solutions that can be exploited by all Member States.

**WRAP** presented the work of the **Date marking and food waste prevention sub-group**, which agreed to focus its work on two key areas: (1) improving understanding and use of date marking to support behavioural change and (2) date marking practices. The co-chair encouraged all members to share their resources on date marking, labelling, packaging etc. and food waste prevention through the Hub (studies, policy documents and any other useful information).

The **Commission** presented the work of the **Consumer food waste prevention sub-group**, which discussed, at its first meeting, the use of audience segmentation to better target food waste prevention initiatives, and is currently collecting resources on this topic. **Stop Wasting Food Denmark** inquired as to whether members had observed any changes in consumers' food habits linked to rising food prices and inflation (e.g. consuming food past the 'best before' date). **WRAP** indicated that the UK has recently published consumer research in this field, and members were encouraged to share relevant information and/or research as to how the current economic context (e.g., rising inflation and food prices) may influence possible consumer behaviour related to food/food waste.

**Portugal** asked whether the new EU food waste data, which dates from 2020 (the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic) could provide representative data for the EU baseline. The **Commission** explained that based

on the Waste Statistics published earlier this year, no impact on Covid has been observed. For instance, the amounts of municipal waste per capita remained within similar parameters. Data on food waste will be published by Eurostat (both as an indicator per capita as well as full data as reported by Member States). Eurostat ensures that the published data are checked for their quality and plausibility. Nonetheless, while no changes in general amounts are expected, the share of food waste per stage of food supply chain may differ for 2020. In particular, it is expected that food waste from the food services and hospitality sector has been impacted by the closure of these establishments and data from this stage will not reflect the usual pattern.

**Austria** inquired about the link between the ‘Date marking and food waste prevention’ sub-group and the legislative proposal to revise EU date marking rules. Following the adoption of the proposal, the **Commission** suggested that the sub-group could support activities to facilitate consumers’ understanding of the new rules. **WRAP** proposed to exchange on any learnings related to implementation of the new rules.

**Europatat** reported on significant food losses due to drought and strict aesthetic requirements imposed on food producers and inquired about the best forum for addressing such topics. The **Commission** answered that understanding the origin and magnitude of food losses would be a subject for the Platform itself, whilst more technical aspects regarding their measurement could be addressed by the ‘Food loss and waste monitoring’ sub-group. The Commission invited Platform members to share any data they may have on food losses.

### **3. Global developments in food loss and waste prevention, update by Liz Goodwin, World Resources Institute ([slides](#)) and Clementine O’Connor, UNEP ([slides](#))**

**WRI** presented an overview of the main challenges to our food systems today and findings from the Champions 12.3 2022 annual progress report towards the SDG Target 12.3. The report shows that businesses are making more progress than governments and that more actions are needed by all players to reach the global target by 2030. WRI announced the publication of the Champions 12.3 [Consumer guide](#) on supporting consumer behavioural change to help more people waste less food.

**UNEP** took the floor to present the [#123 Pledge](#), a call to action for governments, companies, institutions and single entrepreneurs (such as chefs) to prioritize fighting food loss and waste within their climate action agenda. The initiative will be launched at COP27 in November during an online event hosted by UNEP. Platform members were invited to commit to this pledge with food waste prevention actions that include a climate angle, are time-bound and measurable.

**FAO** challenged the idea that a direct link exists between food loss and waste prevention and food security, explaining that food saved and made available [food availability] is only one dimension of food security (a point also supported by **Slovenia**). Research in this area is not available and it is difficult to establish the exact impacts of food loss and waste reduction on food security. **WRI** highlighted that the redistribution of surplus food with the help of food banks can contribute to food security in various countries. The **Commission** agreed that this topic should be covered within the Platform and informed that the Commission is conducting a study on the drivers of food security<sup>1</sup>, of which food loss and waste.

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<sup>1</sup> [Analysis of main drivers on food security](#), published on 04/01/2023.

**IFWC** inquired about a global standard for measuring and reporting on food waste in different sectors in order to understand the real progress made towards the global target by companies across the food supply chain. **WRI** replied that a dedicated group has been set up by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to develop an international standard for measurement and management of food loss and waste: [ISO/TC 34/SC 20](#). The group has submitted a justification study for development of the new standard, which was pending approval of the ISO Committee. Additionally, there are existing standards and methodologies (e.g. Food Loss Index, Food Waste Index, Food Loss & Waste Protocol etc.) which facilitate reporting on food loss and waste. **WRI** referred to the [10x20x30 initiative](#) which engages 230 organisations to report on their data each year, explaining that it is sometimes challenging to convince companies to report due to lack of good quality data available.

**LES RESTAURANTS DU CŒUR** inquired whether there are examples of successful actions that governments put in place to reduce food waste. **WRI** replied that the approach taken by the EU is a good example for other countries (e.g. monitoring obligations, future setting of food waste reduction targets, date marking actions etc.) and also referenced work by China to standardize food waste measurement and the new Chinese law requiring restaurants to reduce food loss and waste. **UNEP** referred to the Republic of Korea's separate collection of food waste accompanied by a pay-as-you-throw system, which led to a significant food waste reduction in households.

#### **4. Reducing food loss and waste, for people and our planet. Remarks by Claire Bury, Deputy-Director General DG SANTE and exchange with members**

The Deputy-Director General reaffirmed the need to transition to a sustainable food system and, in this context, the role of the future framework legislation on sustainable food systems, which will also contribute to food security. She referred to recent EU initiatives in this field (the Contingency plan for food supply and food security in times of crisis etc.) and highlighted that food loss and waste prevention measures can also contribute to food security and to climate change mitigation.

Replying to **Finland's** request for further information about the legislative framework for sustainable food systems, the Commission explained that the framework is one of the flagship proposals of the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy and it will help define food sustainability and objectives in this area, laying down a series of measures to support the transition to a sustainable food system.

**Europatat** inquired about the way in which the Commission would assess the impact of the new proposal for a Regulation on the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products (including EU-wide targets to reduce the use of pesticides) and its impacts on food waste. **Europatat** pointed out that the agricultural sector is struggling with pests that are spreading much faster due to climate change and without access to substances to treat these pests, large amounts of potatoes and other produce would be lost. The **Commission** replied that the chemical pesticides should be used as a last resort, highlighting the need to encourage farmers to use alternatives available on the market. The Commission is aware of the opportunities and challenges related to developing and using biological pesticides and is collecting feedback on their use from stakeholders. The transition to sustainable plant protection products has to be balanced and take into account several aspects such as the development of alternative products, new genomic techniques, shift towards organic farming and precision agriculture etc. **FAO** pointed out that food crops affected by pests and therefore lost before maturity, are considered neither as foods nor food losses. However, according to **FAO**, if harvested produce are unfit for human consumption, due for instance, to presence of pesticide residues, these count as food losses.

**IFWC** raised a question about the link between the quality of food and food waste, and inquired whether the quality of food is determined by sustainability or other characteristics, such as taste. According to IFWC, further research is needed in this field of work. The Commission pointed out that consumers have high expectations regarding quality and it is necessary to assess the different related factors that influence their expectations. The Consumer food waste prevention sub-group could address the issue of sustainable sourcing of food, improving quality and links with food waste prevention.

In reply to **Slovenia's** request about how food loss and waste would be included in the mandatory procurement rules, the Commission explained that minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable food procurement in schools and public institutions could be introduced through the legislative framework for sustainable food systems, as indicated in the [Inception Impact Assessment](#) (September 2021). The [EU Green Public Procurement \(GPP\)](#) criteria for food, catering services and vending machines can already be used on a voluntary basis, to increase the uptake of organic food products, increase the offer of plant-based menus and prevent food waste in catering services.

**LES RESTAURANTS DU CŒUR** pointed out that 25% of the 120 000 tons of food that the organisation redistributes each year is covered by FEAD funds and asked whether the fund could be employed to prevent food loss and waste. The Commission replied that it is possible for Member States to use FEAD to finance activities related to surplus food redistribution, but this remains challenging to implement in practice, and the Commission is looking at simplifying this process together with stakeholders such as FEBA. FEBA confirmed that both the FEAD Regulation and the ESF+ Regulation foresee the possibility to use FEAD funds to cover the recovery, storage and redistribution of surplus food and referred to the case of the FEBA member in Estonia, which applies this in practice (only FEAD has been used to date in Estonia as implementation of ESF+ has not yet started). FEBA's Estonian member would share their experience at the second Food donation sub-group meeting<sup>2</sup> ([presentation here](#)).

#### **5. Setting EU-level food waste reduction targets and monitoring food waste levels across the EU, update by the Commission and exchange with members ([slides](#))**

The Commission presented the state-of-play of the legislative proposal to set food waste reduction targets and updated members on the results of the public consultation carried out between May-August 2022, the data collection exercises to gather information on the costs and benefits of food waste prevention initiatives and the assumptions underlying the modelling study for the Impact Assessment for the legislative proposal.

**FoodDrinkEurope** inquired further details about the timing of the publication of the impact assessment and the conclusions from stakeholders' consultations. The Commission explained that the impact assessment includes all feedback collected from stakeholders (including through surveys and interviews) and will be published together with the legislative proposal. JRC held eight interviews with selected stakeholders, with the aim of collecting additional data and insights on their initiatives. The Commission will continue to engage with stakeholders after the adoption of the proposal, to discuss its implementation.

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<sup>2</sup> The sub-group meeting has since taken place on 8 November 2022. The agenda and presentations of the meeting can be found on the dedicated webpage: [https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/eu-platform-food-losses-and-food-waste/thematic-sub-groups/food-donation\\_en](https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/eu-platform-food-losses-and-food-waste/thematic-sub-groups/food-donation_en)

**Norsus** inquired whether the Commission would consider including reductions that Member States had already achieved prior to 2020 when setting the targets. The Commission explained that the baseline year for the impact assessment is 2020; however, an earlier baseline could be considered for Member States providing evidence and documentation of progress achieved before 2020.

**The Netherlands** expressed support for the legislative initiative and suggested that targets should apply to the entire food supply chain for transparency reasons and to prevent shifting food waste from one stage to another, an idea also highlighted by **FAO**. Asked about the feasibility of such an approach, the Commission explained that this will be evaluated as part of the impact assessment supporting the proposal. **Copa Cogeca** suggested a cautious approach for establishing food waste reduction targets for the primary production and processing sectors, as these sectors are dealing with several challenges due to the increase in energy costs, availability of foods due to the war in Ukraine etc.

**FAO** developed the [EX-Ante Carbon-balance Tool](#) (EX-ACT) for the assessment of economic and environmental impact of food loss and waste reduction, which is publicly available and was applied in a few countries on selected food supply chains. **FAO** inquired whether **JRC** included both economic and environmental (CO<sub>2</sub>) costs in their study and whether the EU targets would apply to the whole food supply chain. The Commission clarified that **JRC** collected data on the costs of setting up and maintaining food waste reduction initiatives. **JRC** will also calculate the environmental impacts of initiatives as part of the impact assessment for the legal proposal. While the proposal will define the target levels and their coverage of the food supply chain, Member States will decide what actions would work best in their respective contexts.

**Venturis Horeca** pointed out that donated food items should not be automatically considered as food saved, referring to an analysis conducted with a food bank in Poland which revealed that a significant quantity of donated foods went to waste due to logistical challenges. **LES RESTAURANTS DU CŒUR** stated that, in their case, only a small amount of food goes to waste.

## **6. Results of the consumer research study, presentation by Frans Folkvord, Senior Policy Researcher, Open Evidence and exchange with members ([slides](#))**

After a brief introduction by the Commission, **Open Evidence** took the floor to present the results of the consumer research carried out to identify new ways of expressing date marking that meet consumers' information needs whilst minimising food waste.

**Open Evidence** exchanged with **Finland** on the study's findings regarding the relevance of visual cues versus text to facilitate consumer understanding of date marking.

**FoodDrinkEurope** highlighted that, from a technical point of view, it is not possible to place a visual cue or text next to the date marking and questioned whether the policy options tested with consumers would be feasible to implement in practice. The Commission explained that the policy options for the legislative proposal have been further refined in line with feedback from stakeholder consultations and the impact assessment (which considered the different policy options and their feasibility).

**Norsus** asked about the publication of the study. The Commission replied that the study would be published at an appropriate stage in the development of the legislative proposal.

## **7. Other EU actions to reduce food loss and waste, update by the Commission and exchange with members ([slides](#))**

The Commission gave an update on data collection on food waste prevention initiatives carried out by the Commission between July-October. The data will feed into two projects: (1) to strengthen the evaluation framework of food waste prevention actions developed in 2019 and (2) to collect initiatives, at consumer level, for the [European Consumer Food Waste Forum](#) project. The Commission also presented an update on two new EU-funded research projects under the Horizon Europe call 'Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption', under the topic *Research and innovation for food loss and waste prevention and reduction through harmonised measurement and monitoring*: **[FOULOU](#)** (focusing on food losses at the primary production stage) and **[WASTELESS](#)** (focusing on developing/testing tools and methodologies for food loss and waste measurement, monitoring and data). Finally, the Commission provided an overview on the grants awarded to support Member States and stakeholders in food waste measurement and prevention and the activities carried out by the Commission and Platform members to mark the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste and their respective outreach.

**FoodDrinkEurope** asked whether the Commission will share any communication materials for COP 27, linking food waste to climate. The Commission will create a folder in Teams so that members may share key messages and visuals related to this event.

**Lithuania** asked whether other Member States were planning to implement legislation to make food donation obligatory, such as Czech Republic or France. The Commission answered that this topic will be addressed during the Food donation sub-group meeting on 8 November. Furthermore, the Commission invited Member States to regularly update their pages on the [EU FLWP Hub](#) in order to allow all members to follow policy developments related to food waste prevention as these are implemented.

**Norway** inquired whether as an observer of the Platform, they could have a dedicated page on the Hub. The Commission will consider this request and encouraged Norway to continue sharing news and resources on the website.

## **8. Conclusions and wrap-up by the Chair**

The Chair thanked the Platform members for their contributions to the work of the Platform and encouraged members to continue to provide contributions to help shape the deliverables of its different sub-groups (e.g. report on voluntary agreements to reduce food waste, data collection on changes in consumer attitudes and behaviour as regards food waste due to the economic context and increased food prices, overview of food donation practices in the EU...). The Member State food waste data will be published on 25 October and the Commission will organise a dedicated meeting to discuss these. The next plenary Platform meeting will take place in Q2 2023 and the Commission will set new dates for the sub-group meetings<sup>3</sup> and share these with the Platform in due time.

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<sup>3</sup> Following the Platform plenary meeting, a meeting of the Consumer FW prevention sub-group was convened on 16/02/2023.