



SUMMARY REPORT

EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE

DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

*Brussels, 36 Rue Froissart (Albert Borschette building), Room 4B
16 March 2018 – From 10:00 to 12:30*

Chair: Tim Gumbel, *Deputy Head of Unit, Food information and composition, food waste, DG SANTE*

Commission: DG SANTE: Bartosz Zambrzycki, Anne-Laure Gassin, Dora Szentpaly-Kleis, Manuela Marcolini; **DG ENV:** Jose Jorge Diaz del Castillo; **EUROSTAT:** Hans-Eduard Hauser; **JRC:** Carla Patinha Caldeira.

Member States represented (21):

AT, BE, CZ, CY, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, HR, HU, IT, LT, LV, LUX, MT, NL, PT, SE, SK, UK

Observers: Norway

1. WELCOME AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed participants. Further on, he encouraged Member States to benefit from the expertise of other Commission services present such as the Directorate-General for Environment, EUROSTAT or the Joint Research Centre and clarify on points from the draft delegated act outlining a food waste measurement methodology.

The Chair explained that due to the restrictive timeframe to adopt a measurement methodology by March 2019, early in depth discussions with Member States and relevant stakeholders were crucial in order to meet the expected deadline. However, he emphasized that the discussions would have to respect the requirements set by the European Parliament and Council, who had already reached political consensus on the revision of the Waste Framework Directive and were expected to adopt the legal text around June 2018.

Next, the Chair detailed each of the points agreed by the co-legislators: a definition of food waste, Member States' obligations, the reporting obligation and measurement methodology, the reporting frequency and format. He called for the support of Member States in shaping a measurement methodology that could be easily implemented on a national level. He then expressed his

appreciation for the work carried out by the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste and its respective subgroup on food waste measurement in outlining a common food waste monitoring methodology.

1. DELEGATION FOR THE COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH A COMMON METHODOLOGY TO MEASURE FOOD WASTE – LEGAL PROVISIONS AND PLANNING OF WORK

The Chair presented the procedures behind the adoption of a measurement methodology by delegated act and of a reporting format by implementing act, informing Member States on their respective provisional timeframes.

To PT's request, the Chair confirmed that the implementing act had not been discussed within the Technical Adaptation Committee of Waste Framework Directive as there had not been any meetings of the Committee yet and the delegated act is to be adopted first.

AT inquired whether EU Platform members' comments had been incorporated in the delegated act. The Chair explained that the subgroup on food waste measurement produced an outline document on a measurement methodology on which members were asked to comment, however the document served as a basis for the development of the legal act.

2. SUMMARY OF THE PREPARATORY WORK CONDUCTED WITHIN THE EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE – PRESENTATION BY THE COMMISSION

The Commission offered an overview of the work carried out towards the establishment of a food waste measurement methodology, referring to the need to adapt EU food waste monitoring to the new approach to monitor SDG 12.3, the scope and general provisions on monitoring (including food waste destined to waste treatment or sewer), obligations of Member States, the cost-efficiency of reporting and future steps to be taken. The presentation concluded with a summary of the most frequent comments received from Platform members of the subgroup on food waste measurement.

The Chair explained that the draft delegated act presented to Member States had been drafted by the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety, but had not been endorsed by the European Commission in its current stage. He requested all members to offer their feedback on the draft document, mentioning that input from other relevant Commission services shall also be sought. Apart from some fixed elements determined by the amended Waste Framework Directive, the Commission aims to adopt a proportionate approach and offer Member States flexibility in their new obligations.

The Chair introduced the following presentation, once again calling on Member States to provide input and help shape an EU methodology to measure food waste.

3. THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE DELEGATED ACT – PRESENTATION BY THE COMMISSION

The Commission presented the main elements of the delegated act, offering further details on the definition of food waste and its exclusions, the monitoring process, cost efficient annual monitoring and quality requirements.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion. Several Member States welcomed the work carried out by the Commission in outlining a food waste measurement methodology (HU, UK, IT, SE).

Main topics debated:

1. Measuring food waste going to sewer

Various Member States (HU, DK, UK, IT, SE) have raised the issue of monitoring food waste going to the sewer; with some inquiring on methods while other sharing their experience in the area.

DK emphasized that due to uncertainties related to measuring food waste going to sewer, the value of data might be affected. Referring to data from the UK, DK explained that kitchen grinders were not a common feature of Danish households as compared to UK homes. The latter clarified that grinders were not a common appliance in British homes; moreover some parts of the UK such as Wales or Scotland had actually looked into banning food going to sewer. The Commission confirmed that the main focus was to quantify liquid food waste going to sewer, rather than food waste disposed through kitchen grinders which were not necessarily a general feature of European households.

UK pointed out a study undertaken by WRAP focusing on household food waste going to sewer, which collected data through diary entries and modelling. The country emphasized that such studies were carried out with an approximate frequency of 6 years; however their scope did not cover the business/private sector. SE also shared information on a households' study which indicated that a quantity of 26 kg of food waste (corresponding to mass) per capita went to the sewer every year.

Through their experience, IT proposed to focus on domestic food waste going to sewer through a combination of methods such as waste statistics, compositional analysis, interviews and questionnaires. At the same time, data from industry could be obtained through voluntary reporting commitments. The Commission thanked IT for its proposed approach and reiterated that it sought Member States' opinion on how to effectively measure such waste from households, food services and industry. Further on, the Chair mentioned the support received on behalf of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and EUROSTAT on ways to monitor food waste going to the sewer. JRC confirmed it will collect examples of best practices from Member States and recommend relevant tools to address the issue.

The UK welcomed the flexible approach of the Commission and emphasized that based on the country's experience with measuring food waste; a rolling monitoring programme was needed with a focus on the most important food waste outlets.

2. Methods of measurement

PT and DK asked for further support in defining the methods to quantify food waste, with SE suggesting that Annex II of the delegated act should include a common list of methods for all sectors

of the food supply chain considered. The Chair explained that the methods recommended in Annex II were based on the experiences made available by Platform members, clarifying that Member States were free to choose their own also in view of available resources.

DK inquired whether the Commission would look into measurement methods even further and provide estimates of the costs entailed by compositional analysis. The Commission explained that Member States will be given the flexibility to choose their own methods and the size of the representative sample considered, pointing out the most recent data available on compositional analysis costs from the 2014 impact assessment study which preceded the previous Commission Legislative proposal on waste (approximately 500/600.000 euros for larger countries).

The Chair reiterated the fact that the Commission is looking for a proportionate approach which minimizes the burden of monitoring and reporting for Member States, however basic minimum quality requirements will be set to ensure data comparability. Further on, the Commission will request Member States and members of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste to disseminate their knowledge on food waste measurement methods via existing digital tools in order to identify best practices. He also encouraged Member States to strengthen working contacts between relevant national agencies in charge of statistics, food, trade, environment etc.

To DE's question on whether unified EU measurement methods would be established in order to ensure data comparability, the Chair explained it was too early to decide on such an approach.

3. European Waste Catalogue codes for food waste reporting

HU recommended the creation of a new code for food waste reporting for groups 02 and 20. The Commission explained that the list of waste codes had been updated in 2014; however the establishment of a specific code for food waste will be considered once the legislation is revised.

Member States were asked to give their views on the list of codes proposed under Annex III of the act and update it according to their practical experience should it be required.

On EUROSTAT's role in food waste monitoring and reporting (PT), the Commission underlined that waste statistics could not ensure a thorough reporting on food waste. Thus the new reporting obligation had been introduced through the Waste Framework Directive, rather than by extending the scope of the Waste Statistics Regulation. In the absence of a coordinated approach between Commission services, EUROSTAT declined to add further comments on the issue.

4. Baseline for reporting

Concerning the baseline for reporting (PT, DE), the Chair clarified that the issue was going to be debated in the margin of the feasibility report for setting reporting targets across the EU (in 2023). For the moment, Member States will be asked to start the measuring exercise and provide data for 2020.

To PT's inquiry on the first report to be delivered to the Commission, the latter confirmed that it would contain food waste data for the year 2020 and it would be reported after 18 months (in 2022).

5. Scope of the measurement methodology

Lacking data on food waste resulted during primary production, the UK expressed concern on gathering such data within the given timeframe.

In terms of monitoring edible and inedible parts of food, AT highlighted that the interpretation given by the Commission in the delegated act that 'food should comprise substances or products which include parts intended and parts not intended to be digested' did not cover the same scope as the definition of food given under the General Food Law. Further on, AT highlighted that if reduction targets for food losses and food waste will be established, those targets can only refer to the avoidable parts of food, as the unavoidable parts cannot be reduced. The Commission explained that food legislation addressed foods in their entirety (eg meat and bones considered as a whole), with both edible and inedible parts. Following a preliminary consultation with lawyers on this topic, a legal verification will also take place.

Norway explained that the scope of the food waste definition included under the Waste Framework Directive was restricted compared to the scope of the Norwegian approach, which also quantifies food going to animal feed or the use of by-products. Norway argued that excluding certain food waste flows might reduce the ability of Member States to document the potential of research efficiency across the food supply chain. In this sense, the country recommended the Commission to include more ambitious requirements in the delegated act and encourage Member States to develop more detailed systems of monitoring food waste on a voluntary basis. The Chair thanked Norway for its comments, highlighting that due to large discrepancies between EU countries in carrying out food waste monitoring activities, it was necessary to find consensus on minimum requirements that could be implemented across the EU. Calling for a proportionate approach to be employed by all Member States, he emphasized that the first reporting (on year 2020) would inform a future decision to be taken in 2023 on whether to introduce EU-wide targets in order to reach the 2030 ambitious target.

6. Monitoring frequency

IT requested a point of clarification for Article 5, point 3 regarding the frequency and the type of monitoring. The Chair clarified that Member States should carry out a detailed analysis of food waste levels every four years and provide estimates for the remaining years by considering other relevant data from which food waste levels could be inferred; by including data corrections etc. The Commission added that the choice of estimators would be decided on a national level and asked members to share their experiences in order to identify best practices.

AT supported the idea of estimating data via correlation, in the case that relevant information is missing. Correlation can be used for forward projection. However if measures are taken to reduce food losses the correlation will be changed. Consequently, a monitoring of changes in food losses due to measures taken based on correlations is not possible. UK emphasized that data should be updated only for sectors where new data is available, giving the example of households where annual updates were not expected. BE explained that doing all the different studies (e.g. composition analysis, kitchen diary study, mass balance study, questionnaires etc.) in one specific year for a detailed analysis was not feasible due to Member States' practice of spreading costs and FTE related to the process in time. The Chair confirmed that concerns raised will be reflected upon in order to find a practical solution to comply with the yearly reporting obligation introduced by the co-legislators.

7. Specific section comments

SE emphasized that in the 'Context' section of the delegated act, points 10 and 16 seemed to refer to the same issue: 'streams of waste containing food waste in negligible amounts'.

In closing the discussion, the Chair invited all Member States to provide their written input on the first draft of the delegated act outlining a food waste measurement methodology by 20 April 2018. He also announced a future joint meeting between the Member States' Expert Group and experts from the Waste Committee to take place in mid-May. Next, he encouraged all members present to share their best practices and relevant food waste measurement experiences with the rest of the participants via existent digital tools (the SANTE FOOD WASTE functional mailbox and the Digital Network of the EU Platform on FLW). The Chair also emphasized that comments received during the meeting would be further analysed within the Commission, where different services had to coordinate views. Last but not least, he thanked all experts present for their contributions and the interpreters for their hard work.