



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Food and feed safety, innovation
Food information and composition, food waste

SUMMARY REPORT

EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES & FOOD WASTE

DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

6th meeting

Brussels, 99-101 Rue Belliard (Jacques Delors building), JDE 52

6 May 2019 – From 9:30 to 18:00

Chair: Sabine Jülicher, *Director, Food and feed safety, Innovation, DG SANTE*

Commission: Vice-President Jyrki Katainen, Marco Valletta (CAB); **DG SANTE; JRC; DG AGRI; DG ENV; DG GROW**

Member States represented (24):

AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK.

Private sector organisations (30):

AECOC: Asociación Española de Codificación Comercial; AIBI: International Association of Plant Bakers AISBL; BEUC: The European Consumer Organisation; BOROUME – "We Can"; CITY OF MILAN; COGECA: European Agri-Cooperatives; COPA: European Farmers; EDA: European Dairy Association; EFFPA: European Former Foodstuff Processors Association; EUCOFEL: European Fruit and Vegetables Trade Association; EUROCOMMERCE: the retail, wholesale and international trade representation to the EU; EURO COOP: European Community of Consumer Co-operatives; EUROPATAT: European Potato Trade Association; FEBA: European Food Banks Federation; FEFAC: European Feed Manufacturers Federation; FEEDBACK GLOBAL; FOODCLOUD; FOODDRINKEUROPE; FOODSERVICEEUROPE; FoodWIN (Food Waste Innovation Network); FRESHFEL: European Fresh Produce Association; HCWH Europe: Health Care Without Harm; HFBA: Hungarian Food Bank Association; HOTREC: Hospitality Europe; INDEPENDENT RETAIL EUROPE; LES RESTAURANTS DU COEUR; OSTFOLD RESEARCH, Nofima and Matvett Consortium; RISE RESEARCH INSTITUTES OF SWEDEN AB; SMEunited; STOP WASTING FOOD; SLOW FOOD; WAGENINGEN University & Research; WRAP: Waste and Resource Action Programme; ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND.

Public entities:

EESC - European Economic and Social Committee; CoR – European Committee of the Regions; FAO – Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations; United Nations Environment Programme.

Observers:

EFTA: Norway.

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME TO PARTICIPANTS

The Chair welcomed participants to the 6th meeting of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste. She extended her thanks to the Committee of the Regions (CoR) for hosting the meeting and reminded participants of the interpretation services available and the web streaming of the event. The Chair then welcomed and gave the floor to Vice-President Jyrki Katainen.

2. OPENING REMARKS BY VICE-PRESIDENT JYRKI KATAINEN – JOBS, GROWTH, INVESTMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS

Vice-President Jyrki Katainen placed food waste prevention among the priority areas for action under the EU's Circular Economy Action Plan, referring to the importance of circular economy and its role in designing sustainable food systems, in a world where citizens become increasingly more aware of the impacts related to their food choices.

Vice-President Katainen mentioned the main EU actions against food waste implemented so far and referred to the next steps needed to achieve more sustainable food systems. He also indicated that the forthcoming recommendations for action in food waste prevention, to be elaborated by the Platform by end 2019, will provide valuable support to stakeholders in adopting more sustainable practices in their daily operations. Vice-President Katainen stressed the importance of listening to all actors in the value chain in order to identify the full spectrum of ideas and innovation, before considering the possible need for legislation. In closing, Vice-President Katainen thanked the Platform for its work and for setting an example of collaboration between public authorities and the private sector, and the Chair opened the floor for discussion.

WRAP inquired about ways to achieve a good balance between prevention of waste and promotion of circularity in the food value chain. Vice-President Katainen confirmed that the priority is to prevent waste from being generated, followed by recycling. He indicated the need to identify food waste hotspots across the supply chain and design appropriate measures to address these, while respecting the principle of profitability for the actors involved.

FEFAC inquired about the Commission's plans for future circular economy actions. Vice-President Katainen explained that the current focus is on the implementation of legislation related to the Circular Economy Action Plan. Both FEFAC and Vice-President Katainen indicated that EU food policy is instrumental in maintaining high animal health and food safety standards.

CoR highlighted the important role of local and regional authorities in implementing food waste prevention policies and welcomed the work of the Platform. Vice-President Katainen confirmed the importance of action at local and regional levels in implementing circularity, pointing notably to gains in energy efficiency.

The Chair thanked Vice-President Katainen for his address and availability for dialogue with the Platform and introduced the following agenda item regarding EU food waste measurement methodology.

3. UPDATE ON EU FOOD WASTE MONITORING, PRESENTATION BY THE COMMISSION

The Commission thanked Platform members for the work invested in shaping the Delegated Act laying down a common food waste measurement methodology, which had been adopted by the Commission on 3 May 2019. The presentation offered an overview of the document's scope and content, as well as of the comments received through the Commission's 'feedback mechanism', among which the need to cover losses on the farm (in particular, food not harvested). The latter had been the main topic of discussion within the 'Food waste measurement' sub-group meeting on 1 February 2019; it would be taken up again as soon as new data would be available. The

Commission encouraged members to share findings through the [Food Waste Atlas](#) tool (presented by WRAP at the 6 December 2018 Platform meeting). DG SANTE has also requested that the issue of food losses be included in future calls under the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme.

The measurement methodology will be complemented by a reporting format, to be adopted as a Commission Implementing Decision following discussion and vote in the Technical Advisory Committee on Waste, before entry into force of the Delegated Act. The Commission also presented the draft content of the Quality Check Report that will accompany the reporting format.

HFBA asked about the timing of Member States' obligations foreseen in the Delegated Act. The Commission confirmed that the first reference period (baseline year for reporting) would be 2020, with data reported to the Commission 18 months after the end of the first reporting year (i.e. mid-2022). FOODDRINKEUROPE inquired about the likelihood of EU food waste reduction targets being set in future; the Commission indicated that the feasibility of setting such targets would be assessed in a report, to be provided to the European Parliament by 2023, based on data received through the first reporting exercise.

COPA explained that losses at farm and production level were connected to market conditions and opportunities, rather than producers' intentions as such. The Commission reiterated the need to measure food losses in order to obtain data, reassuring COPA that there was no intention to assign responsibility to any one player in the food supply chain. The Commission also indicated that the EU Unfair Trading Practices (UTPs) legislation would help address certain market-related aspects of food losses.

FEEDBACK GLOBAL called for immediate action against UTPs and cosmetic standards for fruits and vegetables and advocated for the inclusion of non-harvested food in the Delegated Act. The Commission explained that the latter was not regarded as waste, due to a long-standing definition framework introduced in EU waste legislation as early as 1975. FAO suggested the need to reconsider the framework, in light of more recent evidence assessing the environmental footprint of food production practices and their impact on climate change. EESC emphasised the advantages of treating waste from the agricultural sector, according to its type and source, and underlined the role of measurement in better planning of dealing with such waste. The Chair reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to tackle food losses once further knowledge becomes available.

WAGENINGEN UR welcomed the adoption of the Delegated Act by the Commission and called for immediate actions to be put in place by Member States in order to ensure its timely implementation;. In reply to a question raised by STOP WASTING FOOD, the Commission clarified that Member States will need to report on the total amount of food waste, while data on the edible fraction could be provided on a voluntary basis.

FOODCLOUD and FEEDBACK GLOBAL inquired about potential grants to promote inter/intra-sectoral collaboration. The Commission informed members that EU research funding can support such cooperation and social innovation initiatives, and indicated that this would be taken into consideration as part of the planning for the Multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027.

WRAP welcomed the adoption of the act, and inquired about ways of promoting such action on a global scale. The Chair indicated that tackling food waste was critical to enhancing resource efficiency and mitigating climate change, topics with increased visibility on the global agenda; and reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to foster further discussions with interested partners in context of all relevant fora (e.g. G7, G20).

4. FOOD DONATION

4.1 PLATFORM DELIVERABLE 'REDISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS FOOD: EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES IN THE MEMBER STATES', INTRODUCTION BY THE COMMISSION AND ADOPTION BY PLATFORM

The document is the first deliverable of the Platform and illustrates how Member States implement EU rules to facilitate food redistribution in practice, whilst following the structure of the EU guidelines on food donation, adopted by the Commission in 2017. After final validation of the document by Platform members through written procedure, it was officially adopted by the Platform in view of its publication on the Commission's website and [Digital Network](#) around the end of May 2019. The Chair thanked members for their valuable contribution and announced the Commission's intention to update the document on a regular basis.

The Commission announced that with the help of the Platform, 10 food donation guidelines had been chosen for translation to English and will be published shortly under the [Resources library](#) on the Commission's Food waste website.

The Commission also offered an update on the status of the pilot project on food redistribution, asking members to provide suggestions concerning upcoming events where discussion on food redistribution could be beneficial (under Task 3 - dissemination of EU guidelines on food donation).);.

4.2 DRAFT COMMISSION NOTICE PROVIDING GUIDANCE ON HAZARD ANALYSIS APPROACHES FOR FOOD RETAIL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING FOOD DONATION, PRESENTATION BY THE COMMISSION

The Commission presented the draft Notice, which builds on two scientific opinions issued by EFSA on hazard analysis approaches for small establishments, with the second one including a flow diagram for simplified food safety management systems for donations. The Commission explained that the notice offers recommendations on how to implement EU legislation and acknowledged that a number of Member States have also issued national guidelines in this area. The draft notice will be further discussed in the Food Hygiene Working Group meeting on 7 June, in view of finalising the document by September/October 2019.

EUROCOMMERCE welcomed the draft notice, indicating that the document would serve as a basis to update existing guidance. In reply to a question from DK, the Commission explained that Member States have the possibility to develop national rules to simplify the application of food hygiene provisions.

SMEunited pointed out the main obstacles that small establishments face when donating food and suggested the guidance be digitalised in a user-friendly manner. The Chair explained that the draft notice was designed to provide food business operators with simplified food safety management systems in order to support the implementation of food hygiene legislation. Establishments were expected to incorporate the provisions of the guidance in their routine operations, rather than apply them on a case-by-case basis.

The Chair encouraged members to provide their written comments on the draft notice by 31 May and announced that, as for all Commission Notices, the document would be translated into all EU languages.

4.3 FOOD RESCUE: THE NEW FUTURE OF FOOD DONATION, PRESENTATION BY ANGELA FRIGO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF FOOD BANKS (FEBA)

The presentation focussed on FEBA's new project called 'The Future of Food Banks in Europe' (financed through a DG SANTE grant), which aims to support member food banks to acquire new skills and competences through workshops and skill-sharing sessions. The [first skill-sharing workshop](#), held in Dublin on 10-11 December 2018, concentrated on the delegated distribution model, for which FEBA highlighted the challenges and opportunities and offered examples of innovative projects in food redistribution (e.g. recovery of high quality surplus food from cruise ships). The second skill-sharing workshop, held in Brussels on 4-5 February, focussed on data collection.

FEBA indicated that learnings from the workshops and events could be found on their [website](#), as well as the [Digital Network](#).

BOROUME highlighted the benefits of a delegated distribution operational model, implemented by the organisation in Greece since 2012.

FI inquired about whether FEBA had any data on the nutritional quality of the donated products. FEBA explained that assessing the nutritional value is challenging as the typology of donated foods fluctuates on a daily basis. In addition to surplus food, food banks utilise other sources of supply such as fruit and vegetable market withdrawals, citizens' donations and food procured through FEAD funds.

4.4 EU WORK ON DATE MARKING: STATE-OF-PLAY, PRESENTATION BY THE COMMISSION

The Commission offered an overview of the on-going work on scientific/technical guidance to promote more consistent date marking practices, carried out with the support of the Task Force that was set up for this purpose. EFSA's scientific opinion will be sought, to be delivered in two stages: the first part related to factors that should guide FBOs in choosing between 'Use By' and 'Best Before' dates (by end September 2020), and a second part addressing other labelling aspects (by end March 2021).

In reply to AT's question on the differences highlighted by the Commission's Study¹ on date marking practices applied by food business operators in the various national markets (same type of food marked with either a 'Use By' or 'Best Before' date), the Commission replied that the guidance document aims to support harmonisation of date marking practices across the EU by supporting food business operators in making science based decisions when choosing between dates.

5. ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Commission presented the [overall work programme](#) followed by the Platform to develop future recommendations for action in food waste prevention. A workshop will be organised in September to discuss the recommendations drafted by rapporteurs with the 'Action and implementation' sub-group and additional volunteers from the Platform (max. 10 participants). Platform members wishing to participate were asked to express their interest via email.

¹Market study on date marking and other information provided on food labels and food waste prevention <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e7be006f-0d55-11e8-966a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

5.1 ASSESSMENT OF FOOD WASTE PREVENTION ACTIONS, PRESENTATION OF KEY FINDINGS FROM THE JOINT RESEARCH CENTER TECHNICAL REPORT AND EXCHANGE WITH MEMBERS

The presentation started with an overview of the evaluation framework for food waste prevention actions developed by the JRC, with a focus on the assessment criteria considered within the framework. Environmental impacts have been quantified using Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and a digital calculator has been developed in order to calculate net economic benefits and net environmental savings of food waste prevention initiatives.

Next, JRC offered an overview of the assessment of the actions submitted by the Platform during the collection exercise based on their type. Where data were sufficient, initiatives have been presented in fact sheets. Key findings of the evaluation indicate a lack of data concerning food waste prevention actions and highlighted the need for actors to define SMART objectives, related KPIs and a monitoring system to assess progress in comparison with an established baseline.

OSTFOLD RESEARCH, Nofima and Matvett Consortium welcomed the report and highlighted the need to evaluate initiatives in a systematic manner, while also recommending a more accessible format for the document. FEEDBACK GLOBAL inquired about the number of actions submitted related to retailer policy and the status of the collection exercise. JRC explained that the latter was closed and explained that very few such initiatives have been received. The Chair suggested that the future collection exercise could analyse the uptake of the Platform's future recommendations for action.

The Commission encouraged members to send in their comments on the JRC report by the end of May 2019.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION IN EU FOOD WASTE PREVENTION: ROUND TABLE WITH RAPORTEURS ON KEY FINDINGS FROM JRC REPORT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EU PLATFORM

The round table gathered six rapporteurs: five corresponding to the stages of the food supply chain, and the latter for food donation: COPA COGECA (primary production), FOODDRINKEUROPE (manufacturing), EUROCOMMERCE (retail), HOTREC (hospitality and food services), ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND (consumer/household) and FEBA (food donation). The Commission addressed two questions for each rapporteur:

Q1: *What type of food waste prevention actions are being carried out in your sector? What are your views on the feasibility and value of adopting a common evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of food waste prevention actions?*

Q2: *What implications do the key findings from the JRC report have on the future recommendations of the Platform (with particular attention to the lack of data on food waste levels)?*

A summary of the replies and further discussion with Platform members is outlined hereunder.

ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND offered information about their work in the field of household food waste and pointed out the main challenges encountered. The organisation expressed support for a common evaluation framework and indicated the need for further monitoring to improve available data; while capturing the impact of actions from other sectors of the food supply chain on consumer food waste. ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND encouraged members to learn through experience and share both success models and failures.

HOTREC provided a few main figures on the hospitality and food service sectors and identified the main types of food waste prevention actions in these areas. The organisation referred to key challenges linked to the sectors' specificities: and recommended that initiatives should take into account the resource benefits for businesses and ways to optimise their operations, while also engaging consumers. HOTREC highlighted the importance of inter-sectoral cooperation and the need for companies to receive external support for monitoring and collecting food waste data. The Chair asked about the most effective interventions carried out so far; HOTREC indicated consumer awareness campaigns.

EUROCOMMERCE outlined some of the actions carried out by retailers and identified several challenges of the sector. In terms of recommendations for action, EUROCOMMERCE suggested closer collaboration between suppliers and retailers; implementing monitoring systems; setting relevant KPIs; and designing actions with an impact on the consumer.

FOODDRINK EUROPE identified food waste prevention as a top priority among resource efficiency initiatives in the manufacturing sector and mentioned some of the organisation's work in the area, outlining the most common types of actions. The organisation announced an on-going exercise to evaluate food waste prevention actions submitted by their members and expressed interest in the *Food Waste Atlas*, as a useful data-sharing tool.

COPA COGECA explained that the agricultural sector is inherently circular, as it is in the interest of primary producers to sell or repurpose as many agri-food products as possible. COPA COGECA stated that, differently from cosmetic standards, the EU marketing standards are not contributing to food waste as products may anyway be utilised by e.g. the food industry. The organisation pointed out causes beyond the sector's control (e.g. political embargos, climate change, animal and plant diseases etc.) and emphasised the need to fight food waste through circular practices and the use of technology, a closer inter-sectoral cooperation and recommended the development of an easy-to-use, harmonised measurement methodology. The Chair welcomed the latter as a positive signal on behalf of the agricultural system.

FEBA emphasised the role of donation in fighting food waste and ensuring food security for people in need. As for challenges, FEBA reported difficulties in collecting consistent and comparable data on donated food. Food donation was described as an integral part of the food supply chain and the organisation indicated a positive knock-on-effect on food waste prevention within companies that donate, but also on the behaviour of actors involved in the process.

Following the contributions of the rapporteurs, the Chair opened the floor for comments and questions. EURO COOP indicated that for food waste at consumer level, lifestyles are often a barrier when it comes to change discarding behaviours. For example, many people who are very conscious about the issue are nevertheless left with the sole choice of doing their shopping on Saturdays and planning for the whole week may be challenging and leading to higher levels of food waste. Lifestyle changes should then be factored in when designing systemic policies to tackle food waste at consumer level. CITY OF MILAN reported a decrease in food waste levels across all sectors, due to an increased awareness of the issue, monitoring by relevant actors and fiscal incentives offered by municipalities for waste prevention. FEEDBACK GLOBAL welcomed recommendations on strengthening inter-sectoral cooperation and offered the example of TESCO's discount action on cauliflowers to address agricultural surplus. FI and ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND highlighted the importance of consumer segmentation in order to design effective intervention and communications strategies.

WRAP highlighted the importance of capturing failure without passing judgement and learning from international experiences in order to inform EU actions, while also considering the scale of

initiatives (small pilots can also have impact on larger organisations). RESTAURANTS DU COEUR emphasised that redistribution organisations should not carry the burden of food waste transferred from other parts of the food supply chain. It was also suggested that these organisations should have a holistic view of their operations. DK indicated that more attention should be given to the direction of flow of resources in the supply chain, for instance surplus from retail can, in some instances, also be utilised by food manufacturers (i.e. not only for food donation). EUROCOMMERCE commented that such practices are controversial due to their associated costs and potential liability issues.

6. INFORMATION SHARING BY PLATFORM MEMBERS

6.1 PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR FOOD WASTE PREVENTION – GERMANY, PRESENTATION BY DR. ANTJE TOPFER, SUSTAINABLE NUTRITION, REDUCTION OF FOOD WASTE, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

DE presented the National Strategy for Food Waste Reduction, adopted in February 2019. The strategy introduces a political framework for cooperation, economic process optimisation, achieving behavioural change among all actors and exploring the potential to prevent food waste through research and digitalisation. DE also provided a roadmap for future actions including sector-related dialogue forums, international workshops etc.

6.2 REFRESH – PRESENTATION OF MAIN PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IDEAS TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE AND VALORISE SURPLUS FOOD BY HILKE-BOS BROUWERS, WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY

Hilke Bos-Brouwers offered an overview of the REFRESH project, aiming to contribute towards reaching the SDG 12.3 Target through its main areas of work. In the area of policy, the project focussed on changing consumer behaviour, feeding surplus to omnivorous non-ruminant livestock, voluntary agreements and Unfair Trading Practices; policy briefs on these topics can be found on REFRESH's [website](#). Related workshops have been organised to provide participants with the practical tools to implement the policy recommendations issued by the project.

FEFAC inquired about the availability of the final report on feeding surplus food to animals and the risk profiling carried out in connection to catering waste, while also recalling the sensitivity of the topic due to major associated animal and public health issues encountered in the EU. FEEDBACK GLOBAL (a partner of the REFRESH consortium) indicated that safety aspects had been carefully considered and announced further testing would be needed in order to remove pathogens without affecting the nutritional value of food. The Chair explained that whereas current EU legislation prohibits such practice, this does not preclude reviewing such an issue in the light of new evidence, and provided that appropriate scientific safeguards in place.

6.3 UPDATE ON FAO'S PROGRAMME ON FOOD LOSS AND WASTE IN THE EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION BY ROBERT VAN OTTERDIJK, AGRO-INDUSTRY OFFICER, SAVE FOOD – INITIATIVE ON FOOD LOSS AND WASTE REDUCTION, REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA, FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION (FAO)

FAO presented the regional and national levels on which the programme on Food Loss and Waste Reduction in Europe and Central Asia operates. The regional dimension of the programme aims to help countries reduce food losses and waste through raising awareness, establishment of partnerships and fostering collaboration and capacity building. On a national level, the programme developed strategies to reduce food losses and waste through various actions designed to address specific country needs.

7. CONCLUSION AND WRAP-UP BY THE CHAIR

The Chair thanked all Platform members and invited speakers for their participation in the meeting and valuable contributions to the work of the Platform. She then reiterated some future actions and important dates on the Platform's agenda: the publication of the document on Member States' practices in food redistribution (end May); call for input on the Commission Notice providing guidance on hazard analysis approaches for small establishment (by end May); workshop on future recommendations for action (September 2019), call for input on the JRC report and the future plenary Platform meeting, organised in collaboration with the Finnish Presidency (12 December 2019).