

# **Code of conduct on responsible food business and marketing practices**

## **Collaborative Platform Meeting**

20 November 2024

European Union



# The Code in 2024

1/ Communication materials ([Code of Conduct - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-communications/infographic/infographic_code_of_conduct_en.pdf))

2/ Mapping of reports from 2024 reporting period

associations

companies

3/ Best practices (as reported)

4/ Lessons to learn

# Code Communication materials

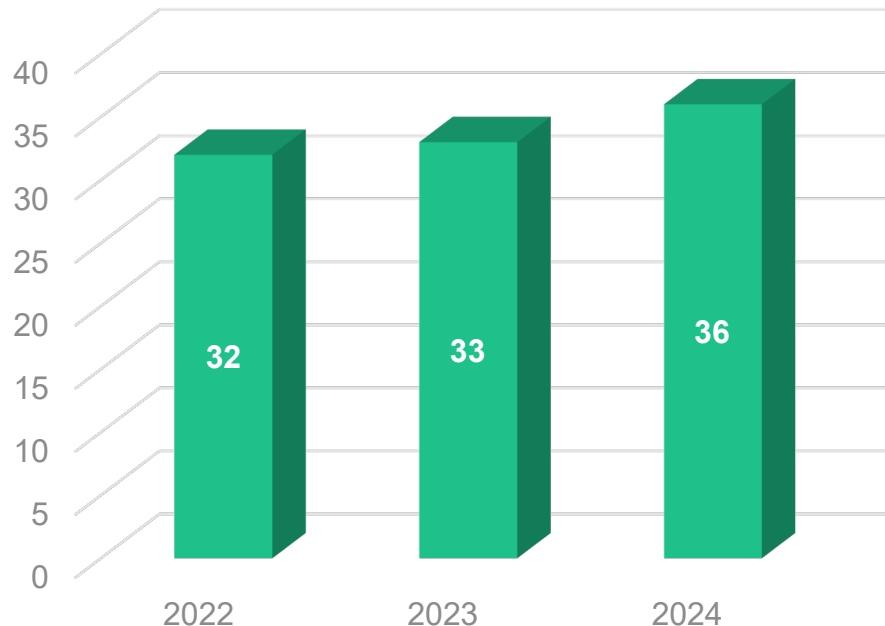
- Developed four main tools to communicate on the Code in 2023 and early 2024:
  - Wheelchart (reporting)
  - Infographic
  - Social media posts (4 posts via SANTE and GROW LinkedIn)
  - Animations

Although some are designed for specific platforms, all materials can be shared through websites, social media channels, as standalone files and repurposed for presentations, events and other initiatives.

Website [Code of Conduct - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/code-of-conduct)

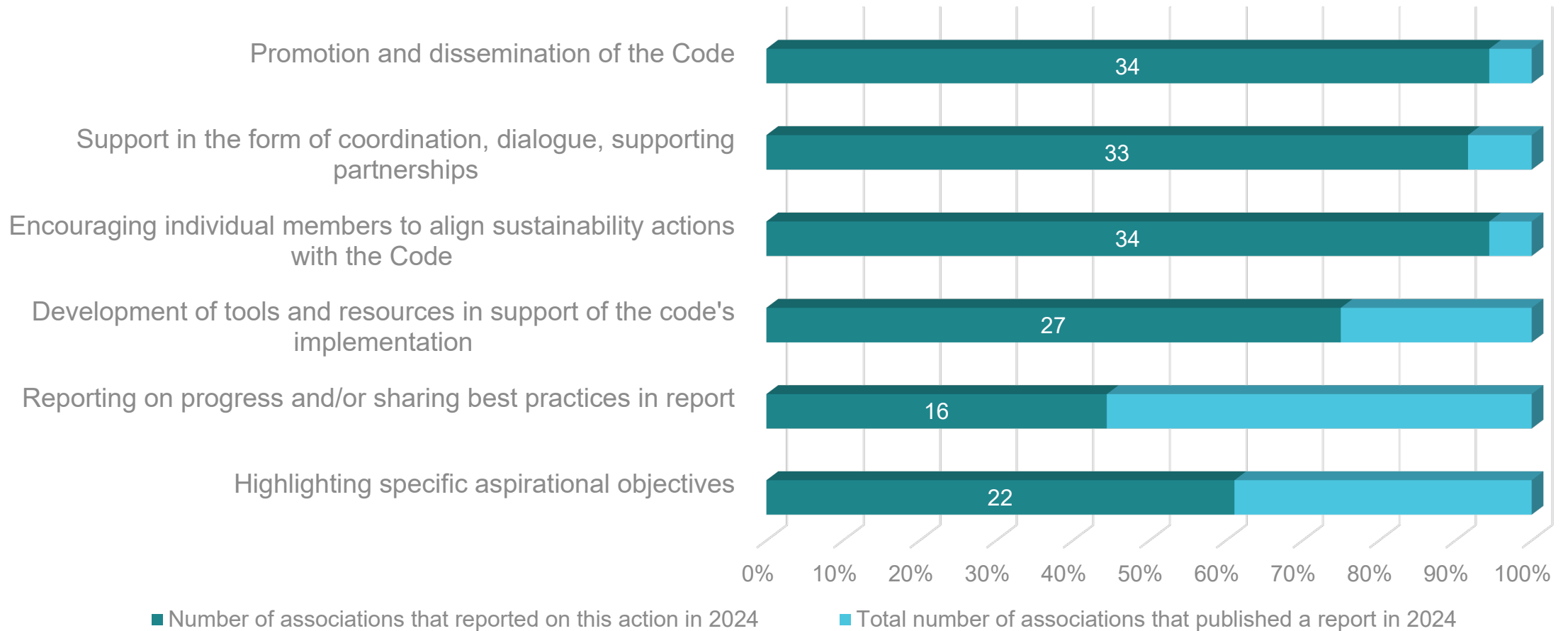
# Analysis of the 2024 reporting round (36 associations)<sup>1</sup>

# of reports published by associations



- Elaborate reports that promote individual commitments and activities well
- Of the 23 associations with concrete commitments, 14 published a report in 2024
- First-time reports (3) as well as reports sent in on a two-year basis (3)
- Numerous very inspiring **best-practices** included in reports, and interesting **tools** presented that foster members' **transitions to sustainable business practice** and achieving the **Code's aspirational objectives**
- Commitments based on Code's objectives, as well as own commitments brought forward

# Analysis of the 2024 reporting round (36 association)<sup>2</sup>



# Analysis of the 2024 reporting round (50 companies)<sup>1</sup>

- Picture on the aspirational objectives remains valid (number of companies with commitments):
  - 1/Healthy, balanced, and sustainable diets for all European Consumers: **26**
  - 2/ Reduction of food loss and food waste: **20**
  - 3/ A climate neutral food chain in EU Code of Conduct: **40**
  - 4/ An optimised circular and resource efficient food chain in Europe: **30**

# Analysis of the 2024 reporting round (50 companies)<sub>2</sub>

- Picture on the aspirational objectives remains valid (number of companies with commitments):
  - 5/ Sustained, inclusive economic growth, employment and decent work for all: **24**
  - 6/ Sustainable value creation in the European food supply chain through partnership: **16**
  - 7/ Sustainable sourcing in the food supply chain: **22**

# Conclusions from 2024 reporting round

- Number of reports received: 50 from companies, 36 from associations (out of 133 due, 65%)
- Annual reports have become more consistent; signatory companies **report more explicitly and clearly** on the activities undertaken under their commitments and their results, incl. progress against targets.
- Several commitments have been **fulfilled** – and several signatories have **updated or expanded** their original pledges, often by making targets more specific and/or ambitious. This is a positive response to the call made last year.
- BUT, most commitments go not beyond legal requirements



# Best Practices *(extracted from reports and as defined by the Commission)*

- Commitments beyond legal requirements e.g. to be carbon-neutral before 2050, higher animal welfare standards;
- Awarding good practices via independent organisations (offers visibility, pride and recognition);
- Verification of efforts e.g. on GHG reduction by Standards Based Targets Initiative, and certification (e.g. on energy management);

# Best Practices *(extracted from reports and as defined by the Commission)*

- Looking for smart solutions and win-wins through innovation, tailor-made work, (e.g. on packaging materials);
- Call for policy support in certain areas with **concrete** proposals;
- Important focus on regenerative farming, on water, on investment in training;
- Transparent information on hurdles and try-out of alternative solutions;
- Full transparency on evolution of (e.g. animal welfare) practices on company's website;

# Best Practices *(extracted from reports and as defined by the Commission)*

- Partnerships with suppliers, with non-profit organisations, with schools, other associations, establishment of Foundations, charity work, with independent international initiatives and consortia... all types of collaborations that can bring together the private sector, government and academia to work out solutions;
- Partnering upstream and downstream.

# Best Practices *(extracted from reports and as defined by the Commission)*

- Numerous examples of **impactful communication measures** – both towards associations' members as well as non-members and the public;
- **Workshops and events** that promote the Code's aspirational objectives and its benefits, show individual best practices, and present tools that can help to reach objectives;
- **Surveys**, e.g. to investigate current engagement with sustainability-related business practices, individual awareness of the Code and alignment with its goals, or the current state of following circular economy aspirations;

# Best Practices *(extracted from reports and as defined by the Commission)*

- **Competitions**, such as one that awards the most sustainable small and medium sized enterprises;
- **Tools and programmes** to monitor business operations, e.g. to measure and improve the environmental performance of products, or to reduce waste;
- **Link to EU, national, and local initiatives**, e.g. Pact for Skills and Transition Pathways.

# Limited progress still....

- Code '**membership**' **still insufficient** to achieve the desired far-reaching systemic change; some countries and sectors, and SMEs, under-represented;
- The levels of ambition of commitments, and the extent to which they have SMART targets and indicators, still **vary considerably**;
- Full potential of the **role of industry associations** not being exploited (e.g. more concrete commitments, promoting cooperative intersectoral commitments), there are **exceptions**;
- Very **small number** of new signatories in 2024, however mainly SMEs.

# Potential Learnings from other Initiatives

- Look for more 'common ground' in specific areas
- Strengthen / clarify the Code's 'aspirational targets' (incl. common indicators)?
- Encourage / require signatories to align commitments with these?
- Foster greater accountability and transparency
- Create synergies with other initiatives for monitoring and reporting?
- For *some* objectives, use specific KPIs developed by other initiatives?
- Strengthen the networking element
- Could the Code become more of a forum for generating information, research, tools, resources?
- Facilitate more dialogue between signatories.

# Way forward?

- Associations exchange with national associations/members
- Active involvement of collaborative supporters
- Active involvement of NGO's/civil society
- Establishment of subgroups to discuss progress in areas of common interest (e.g. circularity, regenerative agriculture, ....)
- .....



**Thank you**

European Union

