



SUMMARY REPORT

JOINT MEETING OF THE EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE

AND OF THE ADVISORY GROUP ON SUSTAINABILITY OF FOOD SYSTEMS

DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

On-line via Webex

13 March 2023

Participants:

DG SANTE

Other DGs: AGRI, JRC, ESTAT, EASME

EU institutions: EEA, EESC, EFSA

Organisations: AIBI - International Association of Plant Bakeries, AIPCE-CEP, Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU countries, Azti Foundation, BEUC, Birdlife, Boroume, Cefic – European Chemical Industry Council, CELCAA, COPA-COGECA, Crop Life Europe, ECVC, ECOFI, ECSLA - European Cold Storage and Logistics Association, EDA, EFFPA, EHPM, EFM, ELO, EUCOFEL - European Fruit and Vegetables Trade Association, Eurocities, EuroCommerce, EURO COOP - European Community of Consumer Co-operatives, Eurogroup for animals, European Council on Foreign Relations, European Flour Millers, European Heart Network, FAO, FEBA, FEFAC, Feedback Europe, Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, FEFANA, FoodServiceEurope, Food Supplements Europe, FOODWIN - Food Waste Innovation Network, FoodDrinkEurope, Freshfel Europe, Harokopio University, HOTREC, IBMA-GLOBAL – the International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association, ICL Group: Global manufacturer of Specialty Minerals, IFOAM Organics Europe, Independent Retail Europe, International Food Waste Coalition, International Union for Conservation of Nature, IPIFF: Promoting Insects for Human Consumption & Animal Feed, LES RESTAURANTS DU CŒUR, Nederlandse Vereniging voor de Bakkerij, OECD, Plants for the Future ETP, Primary Food Processors, PROFEL, Prospero, REGAL Normandie, Restaurants du Coeur, RISE Institute, Safe Food Advocacy Europe, Slow Food, THÜNEN-INSTITUT - Federal Research Institute for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries, Too Good to Go, UBA, Unilever, U.E.C.B.V. – European

Livestock and Meat Trading Union, Università di Camerino, WUR - Wageningen University & Research, WUWM, Zero Waste Europe.

Member States (22): AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK

Observers: NO

1. Introduction

The Chair presented the agenda of the meeting and informed the group about a similar meeting held with Member States on 7 March 2022.

2. New EU food waste data and the first reporting exercise by Member States according to the common EU food waste measurement methodology, presentation by the Commission ([PDF](#))

The **Commission** provided information about the first EU-wide monitoring of food waste levels and invited participants to share observations concerning the findings in each Member State and lessons learned.

Some stakeholders (**FAO**, **Safe Food Advocacy Europe**, **EuroCommerce**) expressed reservations regarding the possible impact of COVID-19 and the Ukrainian war on the monitoring results, asking whether these data will be further reviewed. **Eurostat** explained that in their reporting, countries declared minimum impacts of COVID-19 on food waste levels. **REGAL Normandie** and **Safe Food Advocacy Europe** raised doubts about the decrease in food consumption reported during the pandemic and that levels of household food waste would not have been impacted by this change. The **Commission** pointed to several drivers that overlap for household food waste: while people have eaten/ordered in more food for consumption at home, certain studies have shown that consumers paid more attention to food management, including food waste.

Copa Cogeca and **International Union for Conservation of Nature** inquired whether food losses were covered in the food waste data reported by countries and explained these are difficult to capture in the absence of a standardised definition for food losses. **FAO** asked about how food losses in various sectors were collected. The **Commission** explained that food losses were not covered by the scope of the Waste Framework Directive and thus by the data reported by Member States.

FEFAC and **Copa Cogeca** asked for clearer definitions and categorisation of **food waste vs by-products**, explaining that this interpretation varies across countries and makes it difficult to harmonise data. **FEFAC** and **Federation of Veterinarians of Europe** asked for further coordination between Commission services for a comprehensive biomass strategy, referring to possible competition between feed and energy uses of surplus food and by-products. The **Commission** is aware of the challenges related to defining biomass from primary production and manufacturing and processing sectors, which, based on its treatment, can be considered as animal by-products or food waste. The Commission explained that it was aware of the reporting issue

for food waste (vs by-products) and was working across services to better understand the situation. Several services are involved in defining policies related to biomass and its use, and coordination is required to address possible competition for biomass between different sectors (e.g. bioplastics, cosmetics etc.). **FEFAC** is working on a reporting framework for biomass and its availability for both food, feed and non-food uses in the context of a joint EU expert group managed by DG AGRI.

HU asked for a clarification concerning the categorisation of animal by-products collected at household level. The **Commission** explained that such waste should be reported as municipal waste. **WUWM** inquired about the attribution of wholesale and business-to-business trade waste to a specific sector of the food supply chain. The **Commission** replied that such waste would be considered under retail and other distribution of food.

Norsus and Thunen Institute inquired about the availability of data on waste related to edible and inedible parts of food, waste drained with wastewater and donated foods – all data that can be reported by Member States on a voluntary basis. **Safe Food Advocacy** reported that, in their food redistribution projects, charity organisations often receive products very close to the end of their shelf-life, making their redistribution difficult. In this way, the organisation noted that food waste may be shifted from the donors (food businesses) to redistribution organisations such as food banks.

EUFRAS inquired about ways to quantify the environmental impacts of food waste (CO₂ emissions) based on mass.

3. Setting food waste reduction targets – feedback from stakeholders on modelling approaches and on progress towards SDG Target 12.3 ([PDF](#))

The **Commission** presented a state of play on the legislative proposal, explained the different policy options considered in the ongoing preparation of the impact assessment and the analysis of related impacts using the MAGNET model. The Commission welcomed stakeholders' feedback on the modelling of the different target levels and also on their own progress towards SDG Target 12.3.

Several stakeholders (**FAO, Federation of Veterinarians of Europe and IFWC**) raised concerns about the comparability of Eurostat data with earlier estimates (FUSIONS, 2016), highlighting that setting targets based on data (which some considered) of questionable quality would be risky. The Commission indicated that data from Eurostat are broadly comparable with previous estimates, in particular, after removing (from FUSIONS estimates) food waste discarded with wastewater, food losses from primary production and the impact of UK data on the EU food waste estimates.

EuroCommerce and **Regal Normandie** doubted the choice of 2020 as the baseline year for the targets due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food supply chain. Representatives of the retail sector (**EuroCoop, EuroCommerce**) warned against setting a common target for consumption covering both retail and households, arguing that reducing consumer food waste would be more difficult and could shift the burden to retailers. The **Commission** explained that

the approach proposed is in line with the global (SDG) food waste target, which addresses retail and consumption together.

Some stakeholders (**Harokopio University, BEUC, Regal Normandie and Norsus**) expressed the wish to differentiate between edible and non-edible parts of food; moreover, due to differences in dietary patterns in the Member States, this may introduce significant biases when setting targets across the EU. **Norsus** further inquired whether the targets would consider the share of inedible food in the total share of food wasted at consumption level. The **Commission** indicated that targets would be set in accordance with the legal definition of food waste and reminded that the decision to measure total food waste was made, together with Member States, when defining the EU measurement methodology taking into account the difficulties in defining and quantifying the edible/inedible fractions of food.

Concerning the expression of the targets, **IFWC** and **Regal Normandie** advocated for setting reduction targets in kg per capita.

Several stakeholders (**Feedback Global, Regal Normandie, IFWC, Restos du Coeur**) noted that the target options considered in the impact assessment were not ambitious enough in the light of the global SDG Target 12.3. The **Commission** explained that three target options were tested in the impact assessment modelling and one of the options was aligned with the ambition set out in the SDG. It was not possible to consider more options in the modelling exercise due to limited time and resources. Moreover, the Commission reiterated the difference between a political commitment made to set direction and mobilise players and the setting of legally binding targets which need to be both ambitious and feasible in order to ensure compliance.

As regards the coverage of the targets, a few stakeholders (**Feedback Global, Norsus, IFWC**) asked for a full coverage of the food supply chain to avoid shifting food waste from one stage to another, and other stakeholders warned that setting targets for selected stages only could create silo actions (**Profel, EuroCommerce, Thunen Institute, IFWC**). The **Commission** explained that differentiated targets were considered given the higher potential to reduce food waste at the consumption stage compared to earlier stages of the food supply chain.

Stakeholders expressed opposing views concerning setting targets for primary production: representatives from **Feedback Global, Regal Normandie** and **EuroCoop** were in favour of doing so, while primary producer organisations argued against (**PFP, Copa Cogeca**) given the absence of an agreed definition for food losses and that, in this sector, waste may occur due to factors beyond producers' control (e.g., weather conditions). In response to **PFP's** concern that targets would be a penalizing measure for food businesses, the **Commission** highlighted that targets would be an enabler for EU's bioeconomy.

The Commission closed the meeting by informing stakeholders of the expected adoption of the proposal in Q2 2023, and that this meeting, together with the meeting held on 7 March 2023, are part of the ongoing stakeholder consultations. The Impact Assessment will be published together with the legislative proposal.