



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Food sustainability, international relations  
**Farm to fork strategy**

## SUMMARY REPORT

### EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES & FOOD WASTE (10<sup>th</sup> meeting)

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

*Via WebEx Events*

*18 March 2021 – From 10:20 to 17:45*

**Chair:** Nathalie Chaze, Director, Food sustainability, international relations, DG SANTE

**Commission:** European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides; **DG SANTE;**  
**DG MARE; ESTAT; EASME; JRC; OIB**

**Member States represented (26):**

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

**Private sector organisations (26):**

AECOC - Asociación Española de Codificación Comercial; AIBI - International Association of Plant Bakers AISBL; BEUC - The European Consumer Organisation; BOROUME – "We Can"; COPA COGECA - European Farmers and Agri-Cooperatives; ECSLA - European Cold Storage and Logistics Association; EFFPA - European Former Foodstuff Processors Association; EUROCOMMERCE - the retail, wholesale and international trade representation to the EU; EUROCOOP - European Community of Consumer Cooperatives; EUROPATAT - European Potato Trade Association; EDA - European Dairy Association; FEBA - European Food Banks Federation; FOODCLOUD; FOODDRINKEUROPE; FOODSERVICEEUROPE; FoodWIN - Food Waste Innovation Network; FRESHFEL - European Fresh Produce Association; HFBA - Hungarian Food Bank Association; HOTREC - Hospitality Europe; INDEPENDENT RETAIL EUROPE – the European association of groups of independent retailers; OSTFOLD RESEARCH, Nofima and Matvett Consortium; SMEunited; STOP WASTING FOOD movement; WAGENINGEN University & Research; WRAP - Waste and Resource Action Programme; ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND.

**Public entities (3):**

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

**Observers:**

**EFTA:** Norway.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting of the [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste \(FLW\)](#) took place **virtually** via Webex Events on **18 March 2021** from **10:20** to **17:45**. The meeting provided the opportunity to discuss recent developments in food loss and waste prevention across the EU as well as on an international level.

### **1. Opening statement by Commissioner Stella Kyriakides – Health and Food Safety**

In her opening speech, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides reiterated the vital role of the [European Green Deal](#) and the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) in ensuring a green recovery from the current health crisis and accelerating the transition to a sustainable food system. The Commissioner called on all Member States to include food loss and waste prevention in their **recovery plans**, which will be underpinned by the [EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility](#), and urged businesses to take similar steps.

Commissioner Kyriakides stressed that all stakeholders share **responsibility** in fighting food loss and waste. At EU level, the Commission will propose binding targets to reduce food waste and, focussing in particular on prevention of consumer food waste, will revise EU date marking rules and run a pilot project aiming to develop evidence-based best practices for effective consumer-targeted interventions. The Commissioner also welcomed the organisation of the **United Nations Food Systems Summit**, which will promote the global transition to sustainable food systems and bring new impetus in tackling food loss and waste, and to which the Commission is actively contributing. Finally, Commissioner Kyriakides commended the Platform for its work and deliverables, and reminded members that the expert group will be re-established for another 5-year mandate, as of 2022.

### **2. Re-establishing the EU Platform: update on process and timeline, presentation by the Commission [[ppt](#)]**

The Commission recalled the Platform's work and achievements over its first mandate (2016-2021), updated members on the process and timeline for its re-establishment for a second mandate (2022-2026), and provided an overview of on-going and future initiatives, in which the expert group will be involved. The Commission will **seek Platform members' views**, through two online surveys, on the role, operations and deliverables of the current Platform, as well as on the role of the [key recommendations for action](#), adopted in December 2019, and the degree to which these have been implemented. The information collected will feed into the Platform's future operations and work programme. Based on members' feedback, a **Platform's activity report** will be drafted, summarizing the main achievements of the expert group in its first mandate and offering an overview of the status of the recommendations for action. As regards the establishment of the new Platform, a call for expression of interest from private sector organisations is expected to be published in June 2021.

### **3. How has the Platform and its recommendations supported your work on the ground? Introduction by the Commission [[ppt](#)] and interventions from Member States and private sector organisations**

The [assessment of progress](#) in implementing the [2016 Council conclusions on food losses and waste](#), carried out by the German Presidency to the Council of the EU in 2020, recognised the contribution of the Platform and its deliverables in guiding work at EU level and triggering further action on the ground. Through the two surveys, the Commission proposes to further follow-up with members on how the Platform and its key recommendations for action have supported their work.

Feedback from EU survey regarding recommendations for action will provide an overview of their implementation to date. A more in-depth look at how recommendations have achieved results on the ground will be possible through the second exercise to [assess the effectiveness of food waste](#)

[prevention initiatives](#), to be conducted in cooperation with the [European Commission's Joint Research Centre](#) (JRC) (foreseen for Q3/Q4 2021).

Platform members (Lithuania [[ppt](#)], Croatia [[ppt](#)], Germany, FEBA, HOTREC and Zero Waste Scotland [[ppt](#)]) took the floor to provide concrete examples of how the Platform and its deliverables have guided their work. Members emphasized various initiatives undertaken at national level or by their organisation inspired by the Platform's work, as well bilateral opportunities to exchange information and knowledge with other Platform members.

Examples put forward by Member States included the development of [food donation guidelines](#) in Croatia following the adoption of the [EU Food donation guidelines](#), the uptake of [educational materials developed by FAO](#) in Lithuania, and the development of national food waste prevention plans and/or strategies in [Croatia](#), Lithuania and [Germany](#). Germany also pointed to the role of the [Platform's subgroup on Food waste measurement](#) in providing a forum for discussion as regards the various food waste monitoring and reporting methods and approaches undertaken across the EU. Member States also shared their **future plans** regarding food loss and waste prevention, such as the introduction of mandatory separate collection of household food waste as from 2024 in Lithuania and the launch of a digital platform for information sharing in Croatia.

With respect to private sector organisations, FEBA indicated that the EU Food donation guidelines and the [EU pilot project on food redistribution](#) (which looked into practices in the Member States) mobilised some of its members and, in some Member States, fostered the **adoption of legislative measures** to facilitate the recovery and redistribution of surplus food. However, key findings of a survey circulated with FEBA's membership indicate that most food banks are not aware of the Platform's recommendations for action. For this reason, FEBA suggested that organising relevant dialogues at national level could further leverage their implementation. HOTREC underscored that the Platform's work inspired the development of [Guidelines to reduce food waste and recommendations to manage food donations](#) for the hospitality sector. While identifying certain challenges in their implementation, HOTREC members have been using the Platform's recommendations as a basis for the **development of sectorial guidelines** at national level.

Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS) presented their campaign to influence consumer behaviour, which implemented a number of key recommendations for action targeted at consumers. ZWS reported not only on positive results achieved, but also on lessons learned and the reasons why some key recommendations could not be fully implemented. ZWS stressed the importance of drawing learning from this experience, indicating that the EU survey is an opportunity for Platform members to provide input on the **challenges and barriers encountered** as well as on possible negative results associated with implementing the key recommendations for action. Stop Wasting Food movement informed the Platform of on-going work to advocate the introduction of a **Food Waste Prevention and Reduction Fund** to support food loss and waste prevention initiatives in Denmark, as put forward in one of the cross-cutting recommendations for action.

In response to members' interventions, the Commission highlighted that these show a common culture in addressing food loss and waste, based on **measurement** and **evidence-based** interventions. In addition, the Commission welcomed the **integrated approaches** to prevent food loss and waste at national level, with strong inter-governmental cooperation and collective efforts involving both public and private sectors. Members' initiatives also show that the Platform has helped link EU efforts with those of international organisations, as illustrated for instance by Member States' use of food loss and waste prevention materials developed by FAO.

The Commission underlined the Platform's role in guiding **work at EU level**. The Platform has supported the Commission in identifying key areas of intervention and prioritise actions to be taken at

EU level, including any barriers to be addressed. It has also helped shape relevant legislation and guidelines. Members' interventions attest to a wide range of ongoing activity at national level: the future EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub website (to be launched in 2021), with its dedicated section on Member States' policies, will aim to be a living information resource for all stakeholders.

As regards **food waste measurement**, the [Commission's Statistical Office](#) (Eurostat) thanked Finland, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Scotland for their participation in the **voluntary exercise**, organised by Eurostat in 2020, in parallel with the plug-in reporting exercise, which was supervised by the Directorate-General for the Environment. Eurostat invited all Member States to take part in this exercise and send in their available 2020 food waste data, collected according to the EU common methodology, or any other data from previous years, collected according to national food waste measurement methodologies. Eurostat reiterated that the [model for food waste measurement at EU level](#), which is based on mass flow analysis and was developed by the JRC, will be utilised by the Commission as a complementary method to compare the food waste amounts reported by Member States.

Concluding on the morning's discussions, the Chair stated that these had shown support for the work of the Platform and its contribution to food waste prevention in the EU. It would appear, for example, that the Platform had already delivered results in the area of food donation, helping to facilitate such practices in the Member States. She welcomed the preparation of an activity report for the EU Platform on FLW, which would take stock of the Platform's overall contribution and help to transfer its learning and experience in context of its re-establishment as of 2022, and looked forward to members' responses to the two EU surveys which would help inform future work of the EU Platform.

## **4. Date Marking**

### **4.1. Update on EU date marking activities by the Commission [[ppt](#)]**

The Commission provided an update on the process and timeline for the Commission proposal to revise EU rules on date marking ('use by' and 'best before' dates), as foreseen in the Farm to Fork Strategy. An [inception impact assessment](#) published last December allowed citizens and stakeholders to provide feedback on the Commission's initiative. The majority of the comments received regarding date marking were in favour of maintaining the current rules, which make a clear distinction between safety and quality. In addition, almost all comments highlighted the need of finding means to improve consumer understanding of date marking. The Commission also referred to the **consumer behaviour research** that will support the impact assessment as well as to the second part of EFSA's **guidance on date marking**, foreseen for publication in April 2021 (the [first part](#) was published in December 2020). Finally, the Commission affirmed that the Platform will be closely associated with Commission's work on date marking, together with the Member States Working Group on Food Information for Consumers.

### **4.2. Insights on household food waste, including role of date marking: findings from a consumer survey in Sweden, presentation by Karin Fritz, Swedish Food Agency, Project leader for the Government Commission in Reducing Food Waste [[ppt](#)]**

Sweden presented the results of their most recent [consumer survey](#) on attitudes, knowledge and behaviours related to food waste (also in the context of Covid-19), which included several questions on date marking. Key findings indicate that Swedish consumers recognise the negative impact of food waste on the environment, as well as their own responsibility in taking action to reduce food waste at home. It is noteworthy that, whilst consumers have good understanding of the 'best before' date, they wrongly think that food can be eaten after the 'use by' date. BEUC was interested to know more about the reasons behind this misconception. Sweden explained that consumers' misunderstanding of the

'use by' date could be due to its limited use in Sweden (only for fresh meat and fish). Efforts to increase consumer understanding of date marking need to be pursued in Sweden in order to ensure proper use of both "use by" and "best before" dates.

## 5. Codes of conduct

### 5.1. Update on the development of the Code of Conduct for sustainable business practices by the Commission [ppt]

The Commission provided an update on the process and timeline for developing the [EU Code of Conduct for responsible business and marketing practices](#), one of the first concrete deliverables of the Farm to Fork Strategy. The Code of Conduct (CoC) will put forward a number of aspirations and actions that actors in the middle of the food supply chain (food processors, wholesalers, retailers, food service and food hospitality operators) can **voluntarily commit to undertake** in order to improve their sustainability performance, including food waste prevention and reduction. The Code of Conduct will be co-designed by stakeholders across the food supply chain and relevant work is currently underway. The Code of Conduct is foreseen for signature for June 2021 and Platform members wishing to submit their questions, suggestions and ideas as regards commitments related to food loss and waste prevention may do so through the [Platform's Secretariat](#).

### 5.2. Update on the development of the Voluntary Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste Reduction, presentation by Divine Njie, Deputy Director, Food Systems and Food Safety, FAO [ppt]

The presentation focused on the development of an international voluntary [Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste Reduction](#), led by FAO at the request of its [Committee on Agriculture \(COAG\)](#) in 2018. The CoC will lay down a set of **voluntary, global, internationally agreed, nationally adaptable guiding principles and practices** that different stakeholders can adopt in order to achieve food loss and waste reduction. The CoC is being developed through an inclusive process, by running extensive consultations with several actors, amongst which the European Commission.

The Chair asked how the FAO's voluntary CoC will contribute to the discussions held at the [United Nations Food Systems Summit](#) in autumn 2021. FAO explained that, according to the timeline, the CoC will be presented at the FAO Conference for endorsement by FAO members in June 2021, which could allow for its presentation at the Summit as a '**game-changing**' instrument. The Chair stated that the Summit would provide an important opportunity to present initiatives addressing food systems sustainability.

The Chair further inquired as to the main difficulties encountered in reaching agreement at the different stages of the consultation process. FAO pointed to the inherent challenges in agreeing on actions and standards that are acceptable and applicable by the various stakeholders expected to implement the CoC, whilst also ensuring that these actions and standards do not undermine any existing obligations under national and international law or other commitments under regional and international instruments.

Finally, the Chair asked if FAO could further elaborate on the key aspects that will make the monitoring of the application and implementation of the CoC successful. FAO underlined that the first step was to ensure that the monitoring process is not too burdensome for stakeholders, who are likely to participate in other similar exercises (e.g. reporting on progress made in achieving Sustainable Development Goals). FAO also stressed the delicate balance to be maintained between the voluntary character of the CoC and the aspiration of involving as many stakeholders as possible in both its implementation and reporting on progress made.

## 6. Food waste measurement

### 6.1. Update on EU food waste measurement activities and work on setting EU-level targets by the Commission [[ppt](#)]

The Commission outlined the planned work for establishing EU level targets for food waste prevention by end 2023, as foreseen in the Farm to Fork Strategy, including a roadmap for the **inception impact assessment**, which will be subject to **public consultations** on the Commission's [Have your say](#) portal later in 2021. The Platform will be closely associated with this work and a dedicated meeting of the Platform may be organised to discuss the inception impact assessment roadmap, following its publication.

The Commission took stock of the meeting of the [sub-group on Food waste measurement](#), which was held virtually on 4 March 2021 and provided the opportunity to discuss food waste monitoring and reporting activities by food business operators. The Commission announced that a **3<sup>rd</sup> webinar** on food waste measurement for Member States is tentatively planned for mid-April 2021, subject to availability of the speakers. Member State experts will be invited to the webinar, as soon as more information is known, while discussions will be web streamed for interested stakeholders. The Commission invited Member States willing to share their experience with food waste measurement activities in their country, to express their interest by contacting the [Platform's Secretariat](#).

### 6.2. Measurement in support of food waste policy, presentation by Daniëlle Kretz, Team Coordinator for 'Sustainable Food' of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality [[ppt](#)]

The intervention from the Netherlands focused on national food waste measurement efforts, with examples and data provided for households, supermarkets and restaurants<sup>1</sup>, and showcased how the results of this monitoring have influenced the choice of policy options. Findings from the various food waste measurement activities conducted provide **valuable insights** into a number of areas (e.g. food waste levels, internal processes, related costs), guide **decision-making** (e.g. by identifying hotspots) and inform on the **effectiveness of actions** taken.

The Netherlands also highlighted the benefits for businesses that invest in food waste monitoring activities. The opportunity to be eligible for bank loans linked to sustainability goals is one of the above-mentioned advantages as well as the validation of reporting on a material non-financial topic. The Commission inquired about the extent to which the latter has been explored by Dutch businesses. Netherlands replied that whilst there are no specific data, a growing number of businesses are reporting on food waste levels. In addition, Rabobank has recently attributed the first loan that [rewards the reduction of food waste with lower interest rates](#).

Ireland reported on comparable levels of food waste occurring at retail level which accounts for 1.8% of sales, with bakery, fruit and vegetables making up more than half (56%) of the total food waste (vs. 1.7% and 50-75% respectively, in the case of the Netherlands).

### 6.3. Presentation of UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2021 and SDG Target 12.3 Reporting, by Clementine O'Connor, Programme Officer, Sustainable Food Systems, United Nations Environment Programme [[ppt](#)]

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<sup>1</sup> Related links and reports:

- [Synthesis report on Food Waste in Dutch Households in 2019](#), The Netherlands Nutrition Centre Foundation
- [Dutch supermarkets provide insights into food waste](#), WUR, 2020
- Rabobank, [Food Waste Challenge](#)

UNEP presented the [Food Waste Index \(FWI\) report](#), published in March 2021, providing information on the methodology employed and its key findings. UNEP's first FWI report outlines a **methodology** that enables countries to measure food waste at household, food service and retail levels, to track national progress towards 2030 and to report on Sustainable Development Goal Target 12.3. UNEP encouraged governments to align their food waste measurement activities with the FWI approach, in order to ensure consistency in reporting and possibility for benchmarking. UNEP also invited the Platform to share its expertise within the **Regional Food Waste Platforms**, launched by UNEP to mobilise action in Asia Pacific, West Asia, Africa and Latin America.

FoodWIN stated that food waste estimates presented in UNEP's report led to misunderstandings in Belgium, due to the different definition of food waste, which includes only the latter stages of the food supply chain. As a custodian of the **Food Waste Indicator**, UNEP clarified that this comprises food discarded from the supply chain at the levels of retail and consumption. FAO is leading work on the **Food Loss Index (FLI)**, which focuses on food losses that occur from primary production (post-harvest) up to (but not including) retail. FAO's [State of Food and Agriculture report](#) from 2019 provides new estimates of the world's food losses. FAO also took the floor to inform participants about the [e-learning courses](#), developed in cooperation with UNEP, aiming to provide training on the two indexes described above.

## **7. Preparations for the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021: Food waste workstream and “game changers”, presentation by Dr. Liz Goodwin, Senior Fellow and Director, Food Loss and Waste, World Resources Institute (WRI) [[ppt](#)]**

Dr. Liz Goodwin, who is co-chairing the food waste workstream under [Action Track 2 ‘Sustainable consumption’ in preparation of the UNFSS](#), informed the Platform about the on-going process of putting together a list of **‘game changing’ actions** that companies, governments and citizens can adopt in order to accelerate progress towards SDG Target 12.3. Through an extensive consultation process, three game-changers have been identified so far. Dr. Goodwin indicated that the Commission is involved in the process, discussing areas of synergy between planned EU actions under the Farm to Fork Strategy and future country commitments under UNFSS.

Following queries about the next steps in the development of the game-changers, Dr. Goodwin explained that the goal is to bring together stakeholders, from governments to consumers, who will work on accelerating progress and start mobilising action, even before the Summit takes place in September 2021, when the game-changers will be presented.

With the help of the Slido digital tool, Dr. Goodwin sought the Platform's views on the importance of the three game-changers presented. **64%** of respondents rated the third game-changer **‘Food Is Never Waste’** as **very important**, gathering more votes than the actions ‘150x50x30 Public-Private Partnerships’ (50%) and ‘Encouraging Grassroots Action’ (34%). Stop Wasting Food movement was interested to know whether the Summit will take place virtually and Dr. Goodwin stated that the organisation team leans towards a **digital format** to ensure broad participation.

Regarding campaign messages and terminology used, EASME reflected on how negative messaging (e.g. calling food discarded as ‘waste’) could be more effective than focusing on **positive messages**. Dr. Goodwin recalled that evidence shows that positive messages tend to be more effective than negative ones, pointing to campaigns launched by WRAP and in the Netherlands as relevant examples. WRAP agreed and reiterated the importance of linking food waste to climate change, which seems to be particularly relevant for younger generations. Stop Wasting Food movement underlined that, while positive messaging is essential, linking food waste to climate change can have the opposite results for certain audiences. Dr. Goodwin referred to the second game-changer and the importance of working with grassroots stakeholders to **develop the right messages** for the various target groups.

Denmark invited the Platform to participate in the virtual [World Food Summit 2021](#), hosted by Denmark this year, where game-changers will also be discussed.

The Chair confirmed that the Commission was actively following and contributing to the preparations of the UNFSS. She informed participants that the Commission will organise **citizens' dialogues** on the topic of food loss and waste, in order to gather their feedback and help inform the UNFSS process. The meetings will take place virtually (probably in May/June) and the Platform will be kept up-to-date as regards its possible involvement in these dialogues.

**8. EU LIFE Programme funding for food waste reduction and prevention initiatives, presentation by Angelo Salsi, Head of Unit, LIFE & CIP eco-innovation, Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME) [ppt] & publication on green practices in the food sector, presentation by Guido Lena, Director for Sustainable Development, SMEunited [ppt]**

EASME focused its intervention on **financing opportunities** for food loss and waste prevention actions through the [EU LIFE Programme](#), the latest changes to the LIFE Regulation, as well as their impacts on future calls for proposals. The publication of the **next call for proposals** (2021-2027) is foreseen for June 2021. EASME encouraged Platform members to contact their [national contact points](#) for more information and to spread the word within their networks. EASME highlighted examples of impactful and practical projects related both to food waste prevention and valorisation that received funding through LIFE across Europe.

EASME also referred to its partnership with SMEunited, to **support Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in their sustainable transition**. In a joint **publication**, they gathered a list of hands-on tips, as well as examples of good practices (including valorisation of food waste streams), to provide inspiration and guidance to SMEs in the food sector to adopt sustainable practices. SMEunited presented the publication 'Green Perspectives in Food Production', at the **webinar** '[How to finance the greening of your food chain](#)'.

WRAP asked whether stakeholders from the United Kingdom are eligible to apply for LIFE funding. EASME indicated that this was no longer possible as the UK was no longer eligible and had chosen not to be an associated country to the LIFE programme.

**9. Conclusion and wrap up by Chair**

The Chair thanked Platform members and speakers for their participation in the meeting and commended them for their continuous efforts to drive food waste out of the food system. The Chair reminded all members to send their input to the **EU surveys** on the role and operations of the Platform and its recommendations for action, within the set deadlines. Members' insights will be instrumental in fine-tuning the role of the new Platform, so that it can further support all players in taking effective action to prevent and reduce food waste.

The Chair highlighted that the **last meeting** of the Platform under its current mandate, initially foreseen for 14 October 2021, will take place at a different date, as this coincides with the [annual Farm to Fork conference](#). Platform members will receive further information, as soon as the date for the final meeting is set, and are also invited to join the discussions at the Farm to Fork conference. In closing, the Chair informed participants that the recording of the meeting, the agenda and the presentations will be published on the [European Commission's Food waste website](#) shortly.