



**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE
WORKING GROUP ON FOOD LOSSES/FOOD WASTE OF THE
ADVISORY GROUP ON THE FOOD CHAIN, ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH**

Brussels, Centre Borchette, meeting room AB-4B

Friday 5th October 2012 from 10:00-16:00

Stakeholders represented¹

Members of the Advisory Group: AESGP, BEUC, CEFIC, COPA-COGECA, ECCA, ECSLA, EDA, EMRA, ESA, EUROCOMMERCE, EUROCOOP, EUROPABIO, FEFAC, FERCO, FOODDRINKEUROPE, FRESHFEL EUROPE, FVE, HOTREC, PFP, SLOW FOOD INTERNATIONAL, UEAPME, UECBV, UGAL.

Non-members of the Advisory Group: AIBI, ANDES, BFaN, CEEREAL, EUPPA, EUROPEN, FEAD, FEBA, FEDERATION OF BAKERS, Life Science Centre University of Hohenheim, PRO EUROPE.

EU Commission

DG SANCO: Chantal Bruetschy, Birgit Van Tongelen, Ladislav Kucera (E6), Felix Mittermayer, Arianna Pisanello (Dir. E), Giovanni Saccarola (F5);

DG ENV: Ben Caspar, Patrice Gruszkowski;

DG AGRI: Notis Lebessis.

Chair: Chantal Bruetschy, Head of Unit DG SANCO E6 – Innovation & Sustainability

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed the participants and explained that the objective of the meeting is to analyse the issue of food losses/food waste throughout the food chain, to exchange views on possible actions with an EU added value and to present a number of good practices. She acknowledged that food waste is not officially defined and that different terms are used (food losses, food waste, food wastage, wasted food, etc.) in different contexts. It is necessary to clarify what is meant behind the concept of food waste in particular in light of the waste hierarchy (see 2.3.iii).

An overview of the EU food waste reduction activities was given by Mrs Van Tongelen (see presentation).

¹ Detailed participantslist attached

2. ANALYSIS PER SECTOR

2.1 Prior to the meeting the Working Group was asked to reflect upon and send replies to three questions: (1) Could you describe the problem of food losses/food waste in your sector ? What are the reasons and do you have data about the amounts ? (2) How could food losses/food waste be reduced in your sector ? (3) What are the constraints to reduce food losses/food waste in your sector ?

The replies from the different stakeholders were summarised as follows: (1) There are no extensive data available; (2) There is an acknowledgment that waste occurs at all levels of the food chain and for various reasons; (3) There is a variety of food waste reduction initiatives on-going; (4) The constraints are mainly technical, economic and legislative, but also awareness and cultural.

Mrs Van Tongelen presented a summary of the stakeholders' proposals for EU actions (see presentation). The Working Group was asked to make a selection of the 3-4 most important actions or to propose additional actions in order to discuss these in more detail in the next meeting.

2.2 Presentations were given by Copa-Cogeca, FoodDrinkEurope, FEFAC and EUROPEN. The presentations (attached) underlined the efforts done by farmers, food and feed industry to optimise the use of resources; they also demonstrated that the different sectors are reflecting on how to make further progress and on how to overcome existing barriers. EUROPEN indicated that packaging is part of the solution to combating food waste by preventing food being damaged in the food chain and in the home.

2.3 During the discussion the following issues were raised:

- i. The need to recognise economic opportunities (benefits of food waste reduction for businesses and other economic operators), in parallel to social (donation to most deprived) and environmental (resource efficiency) opportunities;
- ii. The need to find the right balance between preventing food waste and reducing food packaging waste. Prevention of food waste should not take place at the expense of not complying with EU waste and packaging waste legislation;
- iii. The need to increase the valorization of food outputs and to optimize resource use at every stage in the food chain in line with EU legislation². According to the waste hierarchy, food produced for human consumption should go to human consumption in the first place; if this is not possible, it should be used for the production of feed; if this is not possible it should be used for the production of bio-energy and compost.

It was stressed that food that does not go to human consumption, should not systematically be considered as food waste; and that the use of former foodstuffs for the production of feed is not in competition with human consumption (donation to food banks); in addition it is about converting food into food of animal origin.

^{2 2} without compromising EU Food Safety legislation and EU legislation on Marketing Standards for Fruits and Vegetables

A lot of surplus food is not reaching the food banks due to a lack of information on how to donate food and due to fiscal barriers. The German guidance document for companies who want to donate to food banks could be used as good practice for other Member States;

In parallel to the existing marketing standards for fruits and vegetables, it would be useful to examine necessary conditions to create specific markets for not perfectly shaped fruits and vegetables.

- iv. The need to develop awareness raising campaigns and educational tools (in particular for children and teenagers) to empower consumers.

3. GOOD PRACTICES ON FOOD WASTE REDUCTION INITIATIVES

DG SANCO explained that a wide range of food waste reduction initiatives exist and that the facilitation of exchange of good practices has been identified as an action with EU added value. DG SANCO has started to compile existing good practices in a user-friendly format and will integrate this information in its food waste website. A template to collect the summary information was presented (presentation attached) and the Working Group was requested to send examples of good practices using this template to the Commission by the end of November. A more elaborated database on good practices will be developed by FUSIONS – the FP7 project on food waste.

Presentations were given by Colruyt (Belgian retailer), by the Italian food bank, by the University of Hohenheim and by Copa-Cogeca and ARLA. The presentations demonstrated a wide range of good practices: on food redistribution to food banks (how retailers organise it, how Italian law was changed in order to facilitate donation), on shopping planning devices (food waste app on smartphone), on re-design of packaging, on campaigns to involve consumers. Information was also given on the recently launched FP7 project on food waste FUSIONS (2012-2016) that will set up an EU multi-stakeholder platform (1st scheduled in spring 2013).

During the discussion it was emphasised that such good practices on the Commission website are extremely useful and need to be disseminated actively. The Working Group could play an active role in this.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- The Working Group agreed to have a 2nd meeting in early February 2013 (provisional date 8/2); this meeting would focus on 3 to 4 issues and possible EU actions;
- In order to efficiently prepare the 2nd meeting, the Working Group was requested to provide input to Birgit.van-tongelen@ec.europa.eu on:
 - Issues and possible EU actions to be discussed: first ideas by the end of November; elaborated input by mid January at the latest;
 - Further details on questions 1 -2 -3 – by the end of November;
 - Good practices (using the presented template) – by the end of November;
- The Commission will continue to have bilateral technical meetings with different stakeholders to prepare the next Working Group meeting.

- The work on food waste reduction will also feed into a specific food waste chapter in the forthcoming "Communication on Sustainable Food" (contact point: Ben Caspar, DG ENV). In this context a Workshop-Hearing on sustainable food will be organised on 19-20 November 2012 in Brussels "*Feeding the planet sustainably: from foresight to better integrated policies*". Contact person: Notis Lebessis (DG AGRI)

Annexes: presentations and participantslist