



## SUMMARY REPORT

### EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE: SUB-GROUP ON ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

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

#### 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

*Brussels, 36 Rue Froissart (Albert Borschette building), Room 2D  
25 October 2017 – From 10:00 to 13:00*

**Chair:** Anne-Laure Gassin, *Policy officer, Unit - Food information and composition, food waste, DG SANTE*

**Commission: DG SANTE:** Dora Szentpaly-Kleis, Bartosz Zambrzycki, Manuela Marcolini;  
**JRC:** Carla Patinha Caldeira.

#### **Member States represented:**

DE, ES, HR, IE, IT, NL and SE

#### **Public entities:**

Committee of the Regions

#### **Private sector organisations:**

BEUC; BOROUME; EUROCOMMERCE; European Federation of Food Banks (FEBA); FOODDRINKEUROPE (FDE); FoodWIN; HOTREC; OSTFOLD RESEARCH, Nofima and Matvett Consortium; STOP WASTING FOOD MOVEMENT DENMARK; WAGENINGEN UR; WRAP; ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND.

## 1. WELCOME AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair, Ms. Anne-Laure Gassin, introduced herself and welcomed members to the first meeting of the sub-group on "Action and Implementation" of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste. She recalled the fact that the sub-group had been established upon the specific request of Platform members, and identified its primary aim as being to help organise information flow on food waste prevention and reduction initiatives amongst all Platform members and help identify priority area for actions.

After a quick "tour de table" in which participants presented themselves and their organisation's work, the Chair indicated that apologies had been received from FR, HU and PT whose representatives would not be present in the first meeting of the sub-group.

The Chair adopted the agenda without any further comments from participants.

## **2. MANDATE OF SUB-GROUP ESTABLISHED UNDER THE EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE TO SHARE RELEVANT ACTIONS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION ON FOOD WASTE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES – PRESENTATION BY THE COMMISSION**

The Commission presented the mandate of the sub-group explaining that the primary objective of the sub-group is to share best practices, information and learning related to food waste prevention activities and their results. Further to this, the sub-group shall also contribute to designing an appropriate framework and tools to facilitate effective sharing of information on food waste prevention between Platform members; it will also aim to foster inter-sectorial cooperation between members. The Commission underlined that the activities of the sub-group shall contribute to monitoring evidence-based progress made by all actors in the context of the prevention of food losses and food waste. The Commission explained that the sub-group had 24 permanent members, with the possibility to invite ad-hoc experts, if needed. Last but not least, the Commission referred to the overall timeline and working procedures of the sub-group.

## **3. PRESENTATION ON THE OUTCOME OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE BY THE COMMISSION, FOLLOWED BY TOUR-DE-TABLE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SUB-GROUP**

The Commission recalled that, in order to prepare the first sub-group meeting, members had been requested to fill in a questionnaire in order to provide their views on: the **priorities** of the sub-group; **specific areas** to be addressed; **initiatives** that members would be willing to share; as well as specific **elements which could contribute to effective information sharing**.

The Commission then provided an overview of the feedback received from members. Regarding the **priorities and deliverables** of the sub-group, members expect that it would promote cooperation between different actors; for instance by sharing information and insights on the elaboration of "framework for actions" as well as insights and experience on public-private and private-public models. Facilitation of the **collection and sharing of best practices** in the area of food waste prevention was also seen as a key deliverable, including sharing examples of business cases, consumer campaigns and initiatives of national, local and regional authorities. In order to promote this exchange, the sub-group would develop a simple tool for reporting purposes.

Following this, the Commission provided an overview on aspects that members considered relevant regarding **measurement and reporting of food waste prevention initiatives**. The majority of the replies identified measurement of the effect of best practices on food waste prevention/reduction as being crucial in helping members to identify priority areas for action; this would therefore require identification of possible impact indicators. Evaluating and reporting results of food waste prevention activities would also provide the evidence base needed to assess progress made throughout the whole food supply chain both at EU and global levels. The replies to the questionnaire also highlighted that the sub-group would **support the development of action plans** including policy frameworks which can facilitate food waste prevention and would consider possible implementation barriers.

In terms of **specific topics** to be addressed by the sub-group, the replies to the questionnaire highlighted the importance and relevance of consumer awareness and behaviour, the issue of date marking and the need to promote recovery of surplus food, amongst others.

The Commission further explained that, as far as **key elements of effective information sharing** were concerned, the following aspects were highlighted in the replies to the questionnaire: the need for simple web-based tools to facilitate information sharing; facilitating access to ready-to-use instruments such as business cases for prevention and reduction of food waste; mapping the knowledge and experience of the members; the use of common definitions; the issue of availability of information in different languages.

In regard to suggestions made concerning food donation and food waste measurement, the Commission clarified that whilst the overall work on developing a methodology and processes to facilitate information sharing and collection of case studies amongst members applied to all aspects of food waste prevention, any discussion of substance on these topical areas would be dealt with in the respective sub-groups.

The Commission explained that, in the interest of time, details on the food waste prevention initiatives which members would be willing to share/present with the sub-group were included in the PowerPoint presentation; they would not be presented in detail at this first meeting. The full presentation would be sent to all members and published both on the Commission's website and the newly launched Digital Network of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste.

Following the Commission's presentation, members were invited to take the floor and further explain their views on the activities and objectives of the sub-group. A summary of the sub-group's discussion is provided hereafter.

1. Most of the members present highlighted the need to harmonise the presentation of information on food waste prevention activities by creating a simple template for reporting purposes including indicators to assess the effectiveness of actions and to help identify best practices (DE, ES, HR, STOP WASTING FOOD, BOROUME, BEUC, WAGENINGEN UR). Apart from practical details on the type of information to be included (*eg* budget, key components of the action plan etc.), the template should also include background information on the organisation, contact details and also highlight difficulties encountered and lessons learned. The template could be linked to existing digital tools, such as the REFRESH Community of Experts, in order to streamline sharing of information on food waste prevention initiatives and reach a broad network of interested stakeholders.

BEUC and FEBA emphasized in particular the importance of designing a template that would be accessible in various languages, in order to encourage actors from all Member States to share their initiatives, but also help them identify actions which could be replicated. Whilst members appreciated the need for structured reporting on food waste prevention, some stressed that measurement of effectiveness is at times difficult to achieve and absence of such data should not restrict information sharing.

The Chair confirmed that the Commission would be working closely with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in order to develop an easy-to-use reporting tool for key initiatives/strategies in food waste prevention, with a focus on learning and results achieved. When developing such a template attention will be given as to how to best

support actors in identifying meaningful indicators to assess the effectiveness of actions taken and related benefits of food waste prevention (ie financial, environmental, social) as well as the need to streamline efforts and avoid any duplication (*eg* synergies with the REFRESH Community of Experts). Over time, the implementation of such reporting can help all players to gain a better understanding of the drivers and impacts of food waste prevention at each stage in the food value chain.

Several participants identified the large scope of the "Action and Implementation" sub-group as being a barrier in achieving concrete results and bringing added value for the Platform's work in a timely manner (ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND, FoodWIN, EUROCOMMERCE). Members argued that, if the sub-group is to make difference, then actions required by key players (public sector, actors of the food supply chain...) should be prioritised and recommendations made in order to achieve concrete deliverables and bring about needed change (WRAP, ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND). Some Member States (*eg* IT, HR, SE) stressed the importance of effective sharing of national plans and experience including new proposals for policy development and/or work in progress. Given the relatively short timeframe of the Platform's mandate, it was also suggested that a clear timeline be elaborated for the sub-group's outputs with indication as to how these fit into the Platform's overall work programme.

The Chair welcomed the idea and concluded that the Commission would develop - in cooperation with members – a roadmap outlining key milestones and deliverables for the sub-group to achieve by the end of its mandate, i.e. 2019. In regards to the deliverables, key recommendations for action could be developed by the sub-group. These could for example be targeted to address actions needed in three key sectors, proposed by members in the discussion: government, industry and consumers. The recommendations could also be supported by best practices in food waste prevention and reduction, reported and shared through the reporting template to be developed.

2. Most members emphasized that one of the most important issues to be addressed by the sub-group is the need to raise consumer awareness and facilitate behavioural change in order to curb food waste at the level of consumers (IE, SE, WRAP, FoodWIN, EUROCOMMERCE, BEUC). Members stressed however that all stakeholders need to be engaged in order to see how food waste prevention can be made easier for consumers.

Other topics proposed for consideration by the sub-group included date labelling (SE; OSTFOLD RESEARCH, Nofima and Matvett Consortium; FDE; EUROCOMMERCE; BOROUME); food loss and waste in agricultural sector (IT, FoodWIN, BEUC); valorisation of by-products (FDE); and fiscal incentives to support food redistribution (FEBA).

While members agreed that aspects related to food donation and food waste measurement shall be tackled in respective sub-groups of the Platform, HR emphasized that these subject areas should also be considered by this group for issues which fall within its scope, *ie* ensuring effective sharing of best practice and monitoring progress to achieve food waste reduction.

Members further agreed that priority focus should be given to actions that prevented food waste (WRAP, FoodWIN, FDE, FEBA) rather than valorisation of food waste *per se*.

The Chair concluded that there would be value in the sub-group exploring consumer awareness and behaviour given their importance to food waste reduction and prevention. Whilst this is a matter of interest to the Platform as a whole, a more structured and in-depth discussion could take place in the sub-group with outcomes shared with all Platform members. In regards to date marking, the Chair explained that further discussions on how and in which setting to deal best with this issue would be held after the Platform's plenary meeting in November where date marking will be discussed, including presentation of the findings from the Commission's study on date marking practices of food business operators and control authorities. The Chair clarified that agriculture was another area of interest for the broader Platform, and the issue of the classification of by-products (vs waste) was linked to the Waste Framework Directive and thus outside the scope of the sub-group's mandate.

3. In the context of collaboration and information sharing, several members (HR, SE, BOROUME) indicated their on-going efforts to support national action plans against food waste in the form of voluntary agreements or national legislations.

BEUC announced the launch of a collection of best practices in food waste prevention from their national members from different regions and cities across the EU and offered to present it at one of the following sub-group meetings.

Members also reiterated the importance of developing digital tools in order to facilitate collaboration and sharing of best practice (HR, NL, HOTREC, FEBA, BEUC). The tool should be accessible to all interested stakeholders, and easily searchable in order to promote collaboration and information transfer through an accessible and well defined structure (BOROUME). WAGENINGEN UR indicated that while digital tools can support interaction, the challenge remains as to how to attract and encourage their use by stakeholders concerned. In this regard, the REFRESH Community of Experts is developing functionalities to facilitate a direct interaction between stakeholders and access to expert advice on food waste prevention from actors on the ground.

BEUC expressed its concern that the Digital Network of the EU Platform on FLW and the REFRESH Community of Experts could overlap, to which the Chair explained that the first tool had been designed as a working tool for the internal use of the Platform; while the latter addressed a more broader community of interested stakeholders in food waste prevention and reduction initiatives. In order to avoid duplication of efforts, the Commission is collaborating actively with REFRESH on developing its Community of Experts as an open knowledge centre of resources and best practice on food waste prevention to which Platform members are encouraged to contribute.

4. WRAP, WAGENINGEN and FoodWIN explained that media coverage and publicity were crucial in raising awareness around the topic of food waste, which could be done through press coverage, international events and awards *etc.*, but also through online tools such as social media. The value of face-to-face meetings and networking were also highlighted by members notably to support inter-sectoral cooperation and innovation (FoodWIN).

Finally, the Chair closed this agenda item by thanking all participants for their open exchange of views and reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to develop a roadmap outlining the key milestones and deliverables of the sub-group, together with a draft reporting template for food waste prevention initiatives that would be presented and discussed at the next sub-group meeting (February/March 2018 – date to be confirmed).

#### **4. PRESENTATION OF DIGITAL TOOLS RELEVANT IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD WASTE PREVENTION**

##### **4.1 The Digital Network of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste**

The Commission presented its recently launched digital tool specific to the Platform's work, created to facilitate communications and collaboration between Platform members and with the Commission. The main objectives of the digital tool are to facilitate the on-going exchange of information, initiatives, news on food losses and food waste developments and mutual learning between Platform members; to facilitate the ongoing work of the Platform and its sub-groups and to streamline communication between the Commission and Platform members and support meeting preparation and follow-up.

The Digital Network of the EU Platform on FLW is restricted to Platform members only and features several discussion areas or 'networks', clustered according to relevant topics in food waste prevention (date labelling, food donation, food waste measurement etc.). The digital tool offers various functionalities such as the ability to create an event; upload and download documents; post news, updates or opinions and start discussions. Users would be able to interact with one another by endorsing or commenting on posts and would have the possibility to contact other members through the information displayed on their personal profile pages.

Platform members would be kept up-to-date via a weekly newsletter, according to their membership to various networks.

The Commission highlighted the fact that the digital tool was undergoing transformations and improvements, and encouraged members to provide their feedback on the type of functionalities they would like to see developed in the future. ES suggested the creation of a forum area where users could interact easily, together with a direct messaging possibility.

In reply to HR inquiry on the number of users which are allowed to register (per Member State) on the Digital Network of the EU Platform on FLW, the Chair replied that all permanent representatives to the Platform or its sub-groups would be given access to the tool, regardless of the size of the country's delegation.

##### **4.2 REFRESH Community of Experts**

WRAP presented the REFRESH Community of Experts (CoE), a knowledge sharing site for initiatives and best practice on food waste prevention developed under the REFRESH project and in collaboration with the Commission. The main objectives of the website were identified as the following: to provide an engaging web-based platform to share best practice, research and insights to address the topic of food waste; to enable replication of the Framework for Action methodology; to host tools and resources to support action along the whole value chain and to demonstrate and promote the potential of cross-sector collaboration.

Members were instructed on the functionalities of the website through user journeys on how to search for content, contribute with resources or engage with other members. The

REFRESH CoE also featured a recently developed tool related to animal feed which helped actors of the food supply chain understand whether they could use their surplus food for that purpose. While the tool is based on guidance provided by the UK government specifically, REFRESH intends to extend the tool by incorporating legislation from other Member States as well. Other future developments envisioned by the REFRESH team include enhancing the profiles of experts with information on their background and expertise and the ability to ask a question to the community or to tag an expert (to be launched in January 2018).

At the end of the presentation, members raised questions regarding the type of resources that could be shared (IT, FEBA), as well as the registration process (ES). When inquired about pre-screening the documents before being uploaded to the website, WRAP replied that resources were verified in order to ensure their relevance, rather than validate their content.

Before closing the meeting, the Chair reminded all present that their replies to the questionnaire had been uploaded to the Digital Network of the EU Platform on FLW for all Platform members to consult. In ending the discussion, she thanked members for their constructive contribution and restated the Commission's commitment to develop a drafting template in collaboration with the Joint Research Centre, together with a roadmap outlining the key milestones and deliverables of the sub-group. Both documents would be presented and discussed during the following sub-group meeting expected to take place in February/March 2018.